Righteous Anger

The purpose of this workshop is to investigate scripture and learn what it tells us about anger and how we should deal with anger and other emotions.

Workshop Guide:
- Before the workshop begins, read through the following summary of anger to have in mind during discussion.
- Begin by asking participants to share a recent experience when they really felt angry.
- Explain that scripture has a lot to say about anger. Take turns reading scripture verses cited below then ask the group to talk about how it might apply to a situation they, or someone else, has shared.

We all get angry and some of us have grown up believing anger is a "bad" emotion. So, it can be hard to admit when we get angry, much less to learn how to express those feelings righteously! Thankfully, scripture sets clear parameters for getting peeved/irritated/vexed/frustrated/exasperated.

The bad news for people easily irritated is that scripture contains many more verses warning believers against blowing their cool than verses advocating such behavior. For instance, the writer of Proverbs connects anger with foolishness:

"Fools quickly show that they are upset, but the wise ignore insults" (Proverbs 12:16).

And the apostle Paul recommends letting God fight our battles: "My friends, do not try to punish others when they wrong you, but wait for God to punish them with his anger. It is written: 'I will punish those who do wrong; I will repay them,' says the Lord" (Romans 12:19). Even in His anger, God’s motivation is love for people; to restore the relationship.

Sometimes, however, God allows his people to get fussy and remain faithful. Like when Nehemiah gets upset after learning about the wealthy Israelites’ exploitation of the poor:

"Then I was very angry when I had heard … these words" (Nehemiah 5:6, NASB). What's noteworthy is that Nehemiah was angry because of ungodly people or activities.

And Jesus expressed anger to convey extreme displeasure over anything that separates us (or others) from God (sin). This is the key to righteous anger. He was angry at the Pharisees who exhibited such hard hearts (Mark 3:1-5) and at the commercialism that sullied the temple (Matthew 21:12-13; Luke 19:45-48)

How does this affect us? It’s totally appropriate to get upset over evils such as abuse, racism, pornography, and trafficking, that should incense us. But no matter how reprehensible the people or activities we're condemning, we still aren't justified to sin in our responses: "When you are angry, do not sin, and be sure to stop being angry before the end of the day” (Ephesians 4:26). Those of us with confrontational personalities might want to ask ourselves the question, Is my motive to be right or to be righteous? before ripping into the offending parties.

Such considerations also help us be slower in getting peeved: "Let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God" (James 1:19–20, ESV). Instead of replying immediately, simply counting to ten before reacting usually leads to much better results in a contentious situation.

Then after we take offense, we should take redemptive action. Christians must get involved with organizations working to free children from slavery and volunteer at shelters working to protect battered women. We must lead the charge against hatred and oppression and cruelty!

Ultimately, if our outrage results in restoring people into loving, healing relationships with Jesus, it's righteous anger.

Some additional discussion questions might include: Where does anger come from? When can anger be good? What to do when you’re angry for a good reason? When is anger wrong? How can we handle “bad” anger? What about forgiveness? What to do when you’re angry at yourself? How can I calm myself down? When does talking to other people help? Or hurt?
Righteous Anger Workshop

There are always going to be times in your Christian life when you become angry or sad. However, it is a Christian value to not let angry emotions control our life. If you're looking for help with anger issues or dealing with someone else with anger problems, reading scripture can help. It's definitely not easy, but turning to God can make you a more peaceful person.

Reading these Bible verses about anger can help you find a better way to cope with problems. Although these Bible verses on anger may not be your cure, they should help soothe your soul and put you back on the right path.

Don't let others be affected by your anger any longer. Bible verses on anger can put everything into perspective for you. Scripture not only teaches us how not to be so angry, but it can also help us forgive whoever or whatever we're angry at. God Bless you!

Nehemiah 9:17 And refused to obey, neither were mindful of your wonders that you did among them; but hardened their necks, and in their rebellion appointed a captain to return to their bondage: but you are a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and forsook them not.

Psalms 37:8 Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not yourself in any wise to do evil.

James 4:1-2 What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God.

Psalms 145:8 The LORD is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy.

Proverbs 14:29 A patient man has great understanding, but a quick-tempered man displays folly.

Proverbs 15:1 A soft answer turns away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.

Proverbs 15:18 A hot-tempered man stirs up dissension, but a patient man calms a quarrel.

Ecclesiastes 7:9 Do not be quickly provoked in your spirit, for anger resides in the lap of fools.

Proverbs 19:11 A person's wisdom yields patience; it is to one's glory to overlook an offense. OR Sensible people control their temper; they earn respect by overlooking wrongs.

Proverbs 29:11 A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control.

James 1:19-20 My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires.

Ephesians 4:26-27 Be you angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down on your wrath: and do not give the devil a foothold.