

judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, 'Raca,' is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell.

²³ "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, ²⁴ leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.

²⁵ "Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are still together on the way, or your adversary may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison. ²⁶ Truly I tell you, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny.

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still a problem, even today.

In **Matthew 5:22**, Jesus turns it upside down and addresses it from not just an **external rule** to follow but to an **internal way of being**. We read **verse 22** and said, "so now we can't even get angry?!?" Not exactly. First of all, Jesus said anyone who **IS** angry, present tense. In other words, don't BE or STAY angry.

We noted that Jesus got angry so getting angry could not be a sin. But, what about **STAYING** angry? Not exactly. We said it's really not about getting or staying angry but what we do while we're angry.

We looked at **Ephesians 4:26** to find two extremely important points that Paul made to the Ephesians about getting angry. We first noticed that Paul assumes that we **WILL** get angry which is a pretty safe assumption on Paul's part.

The first thing Paul tells us is to not sin in our anger. The biggest danger about being angry is how easy it is to let this emotion begin to control our actions and then lead us to do something sinful.

Paul's 2nd point is equally important as he tells us to not **STAY** angry. We said that anger builds on itself and the longer we hold onto it, can lead to bitterness, hate, resentment, etc. until that anger that didn't seem like a big deal yesterday, last week, or even last year eventually grows into something we can no longer control that will certainly lead us to sin and possibly even murder.

We looked briefly at when Jesus got angry in the Temple or with the Pharisees and noticed that not only did Jesus not **STAY** angry and He didn't sin in His anger, He had a righteous reason for getting angry in the first place. Jesus never got angry over every little thing.

We then agreed that the best way to not **STAY** angry is to avoid getting angry in the first place. James tells us in **James 1:19** to be quick to listen, slow to speak, and **slow to become angry**. He also assumes that we **WILL** get angry.

We said that a good way to not become angry is to "slow down" take a moment to think about what it is that is causing you to feel angry and decide if it is something that is really worth being angry about. If not, let it go and move on. If it is worth it then do something to address it (without sinning), then let it go and move on.

King Solomon gives us other ways to help us not get angry in **Proverbs 22:24-25**. He tells us to not hang around angry people. We were reminded that we tend to become more like the people that we spend the most time with. If we spend a lot of time with people who are angry or complaining all the time we can easily get caught up in all their negativity and begin to behave the same way.

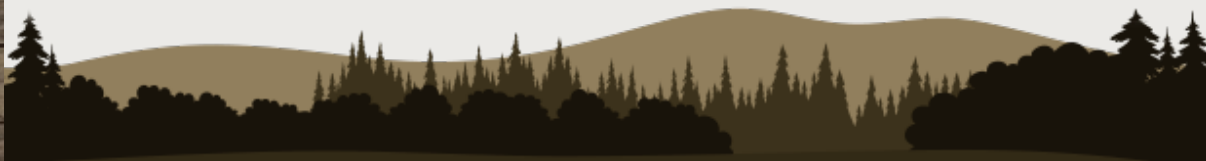
Basically, we found that it's okay to get angry sometimes, if it is something worth being angry about, but to not **STAY** angry. We also learned that we should be careful to not sin in our anger and to not anger quickly. We should also avoid spending a lot of time with people who are just angry all the time.

So, if we find ourselves becoming angry about something, the best thing to do is to stop for a moment and think about it. Maybe go for a walk, exercise, breathe, or **PRAY**. But, definitely, never immediately respond to someone else's anger with more anger.

As a bonus, we talked about that if there is some injustice in the world, or even just in your own life, that you are righteously angry about, maybe take your negative anger and turn it into a positive passion to help make a change (such as MLK, Ghandi, the creator of MADD, or the host of America's Most Wanted).

Take home challenge: Live your life differently than what the world would expect you to live and have a positive impact on the people around you and on the world. Be the salt of the earth & the light of the world.

We also suggested reading the remainder of the Sermon on the Mount in **Matthew 5, 6, & 7** to see what else Jesus had to say about how God wants us to live.



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