

Sermon Series: INSIDE / OUT: The Book of James (1:19-22)

IN *Opportunities to connect and pray as a group*

1. Notice that in James 1, the author writes:
(v. 2) Consider it pure joy whenever you face **trials** of many kinds...
(v.13) When **tempted**, no one should say...
(v.19) Take note of this: everyone should be...slow to become **angry**...

Why do you think James includes these issues in the very first chapter of his letter?

2. What are some connections between trials, temptations and anger?
When have you seen this in your own life?

UP *Time that is devoted to the Word of God*

1. Clarify the definition of 'anger.' How do Christ-followers often perceive anger?
2. Make two columns: Man's/sinful anger | Righteous life (James 1:20)
Use the following verses to list the words/phrases that match each title:
Prov 14:29; 15:1; 22:24; 29:22; James 1:21, 26; Eph 4:26, 27; 31-32.
3. What is the primary difference between the anger that James describes (man/sinful anger in James 1:20) and Jesus' anger?
(ex. Mark 11:15-18; Lk 19:45)
Review the motive(s) of each and the end results?
4. Why did James use the word 'humbly' in 1:21? How does this influence the 'five steps' a person needs to take to avoid sinful anger?

OUT *Seek to be the Community of God's people in your community*

1. What situation are you now facing where you need to ask:
 - Lord, is my anger completely devoid of self-interest?
 - Lord, help me understand what is behind my anger;
 - Lord, help me understand the other point of view;
 - Lord, where do I need to take ownership of the conflict?
 - Lord, are you pleased with what I'm doing with my anger?
(refer to five steps)
2. The main thing I am hearing from God is _____
3. This week I will take this action: _____

UP – IN – OUT reflect a balanced life including a focus on our personal relationship with the Father (UP), staying connected to the Body (IN), and reaching our world (OUT).

THE WORD (NIV)

James 1:19-22, 26

¹⁹My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, ²⁰because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires. ²¹Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you. ²²Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says... ²⁶Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless.

Matthew 5:23,43

²³Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you... ⁴³"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor^[a] and hate your enemy.'

Mark 11:15-18

¹⁵On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple courts and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves, ¹⁶and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts. ¹⁷And as he taught them, he said, "Is it not written: 'My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations'? But you have made it 'a den of robbers.'" ¹⁸The chief priests and the teachers of the law heard this and began looking for a way to kill him, for they feared him, because the whole crowd was amazed at his teaching.

Luke 19:45

⁴⁵When Jesus entered the temple courts, he began to drive out those who were selling.

Proverbs 14:29 15:1 22:24; 29:22

Whoever is patient has great understanding, but one who is quick-tempered displays folly... **15:1** A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger... **22:24** Do not make friends with a hot-tempered person, do not associate with one easily angered... **29:22** An angry person stirs up conflict, and a hot-tempered person commits many sins.

Ephesians 4:26,27, 31-32

"In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, ²⁷and do not give the devil a foothold... **31-32** ³¹Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. ³²Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Sermon Study Summary

James instructed us on how to respond to trials and to temptations and now to the TRUTH OF GOD'S WORD. (1:19-22) At a time of great anger at someone who betrayed or wounded you, your blood pressure skyrocketed; you were upset, wanted to avoid them or make them pay—they were your #1 enemy. Then you read Jesus' words to 'love your enemies...' (Mt 5:43). Did you hear the Word and do what it said? Or did you ignore it thinking "This is impossible"? More of us do this than we want to admit. True followers of Christ don't just hear the Word, they respond to its truth with a) humility b) obedience and c) compassion.

True Christ followers respond with HUMILITY. (v.21) They are "quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry." (v.19) Sadly we don't really hear much of God's Word when we are angry. Anger is a human emotion, not wrong in itself; how we express it and our motive are the problem. (Eph 4:26) Sinful anger erupts out of self-interest—we nurse it, hold on to it, infect and tempt others to be angry. Jesus wasn't angry when His disciples deserted Him or others beat Him—He forgave them. He showed righteous anger when God's holiness was defiled or when people were exploited. Florence Nightingale's and William Wilberforce's righteous anger was not self-serving. They expressed it by correcting the wrongs they saw.

Human/sinful anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires. (Jas 1:20) When we have a burning anger seething inside, when we carry a grudge or are resentful and bitter, we do not reflect Christ's neither Spirit nor the New Kingdom He brought. Sinful anger affects our health, poisons our attitudes so our irritability and cynicism cause others to turn away from the Jesus we say we love. We become isolated since others don't want to be like us. (Pr 22:24; 29:22)

HOW DO WE AVOID SINFUL ANGER? (Jas 1:19-22)

1. Be quick to listen to God's Word and His whispers. Take time with God and His Word; share your pain with Him. Ask the Lord to help you UNDERSTAND what is behind YOUR anger. (Pr 14:29) Is it totally devoid of self-interest or driven by another agenda--pride, revenge, disappointment, fear or loss? Is God who knows me pleased with what I'm doing with my anger? Take time to try to UNDERSTAND the OTHER PERSON'S point of view. Anger may be based on false, incomplete or distorted information. The more understanding we have, the more understanding we are.

2. Be slow to speak. Get your mind in gear before putting your mouth in motion. Make sure your attitude, information and heart are right before sharing your anger with others. Critical tongues have caused broken hearts, homes, marriages, friendships and churches. When anger is out of control, extremely hurtful words are said in a fit of rage. First, express your anger to God. See yourself and your anger from His eternal perspective. Give thought and prayer to an issue before you speak. How well we control our tongues is a barometer of our spiritual maturity. (Jas 1:26)

3. Repent. To deal with your anger do not avoid, suppress or manage it but repent of it. (v 21) Humbly reflect on and receive God's truth about the issue, your feelings and anger. As you reflect on God's truth, you see a gap between what you feel and want to do and what God wants. Change your mind, trust God and do it His way; this is true repentance. (Eph 4:31)

4. Go and be reconciled. (Mt 5:23) Don't put it off and let anger fester. Pray about it; then prayerfully seek reconciliation with humility and utmost sensitivity. Go, intending to restore the relationship and to be freed from your anger. Be calm, explain, don't attack or prove who is wrong, take responsibility for your actions. Be ready to listen. Extend grace as the Lord extended His grace to you. If they don't want to reconcile, it doesn't matter.

5. Surrender your pride to God. (Jas 4:1,6) The Greek word for 'desires' is the same as hedonism--a strong desire to satisfy ourselves. This began with the fall when Adam's and Eve's desire changed and everyone's desire since then. So we look to those around us to meet our needs and wants; if they don't, we get angry. Life isn't about us, it's about God. He loves us perfectly so our self worth and identity are in Him. As we submit to Him, He gives us peace and victory over anger so we are free to love and serve others rather than compete or prove ourselves. When we grasp the extent of the abuse Jesus suffered on the cross for us out of His love, how can we not extend that same grace and forgiveness to those who hurt or disappointed us? There is no miracle like the miracle of grace and forgiveness.

We have a choice: coddle our hurt until it becomes hate and rage that destroys us inside OR we can break the cycle of 'ungrace' by trusting God, submitting to Him and forgiving as we are forgiven. Then we are free and the Kingdom of God will come to earth.