

Huh?

Part Four: Anger that Leads to Death

March 26, 2023

Today, I want to help you examine your heart, avoid anger, and pursue reconciliation with others quickly.

The end goal of Matthew 5:21-26 is to correct the false interpretations of the Old Testament that were popular at the time. Jesus begins to correct the misinterpretations of the OT by saying, "You have heard that it was said" (e.g. Matthew 5:21, 27, 31, 33, 38, 43), and then corrects not the OT, but the misunderstandings of the OT that were popular at the time.

We know that murder is prohibited by the sixth commandment. Ex. 20:13

- Murder is killing someone for the wrong reason.

Unchecked anger that stews inside of you can boil over and when it does, it will destroy you and others.

1st Anger that leads to sin will be judged. Vs. 21-22

The Pharisees were only concerned about the act of murder, ignoring the desire to murder. Jesus takes this false teaching and corrects it. Galatians 5:19

The dangerous and destructive result of human anger is stressed throughout Scripture. Here are two key examples: James 1:20, Proverbs 29:22.

Anger that lingers typically includes a desire to damage or destroy the other person, either in some personal way or literally in the form of murder. James 4:1-2a

- Fully matured and developed anger always leads to death and judgement.

Because matured anger leads to judgement...

2nd Reconciliation is important. Vs. 23-24

Why would the author talk about reconciliation of two people in the context of worshipping God?

Because our service to God is never an excuse to let anything come between you and someone else.

- You might think your vertical life [God] and your horizontal life [others] are mutually exclusive. They're not!

What you say and how you act in front of others is a testimony to the kind of God you serve.

We are to reconcile with others before we worship and..

3rd Settle matters quickly. Vs. 25-26

The justice system here is an illustration or figure of speech for a spiritual reality. We are to handle sin before it imprisons us. Anger is a common emotion that we all experience. Anger is a passionate and active response of the entire person to a real or perceived wrong.

- Becoming angry is inevitable; Living angry is a choice. Ephesians 4:26-27

Don't give the Devil a foothold. If you're rehearsing the hurts, you're giving the Devil a foothold in your life. Forgive one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.

- The devil can use anger to enter places.
- Our goal as Christians isn't just to be right; our goal is always to be loving. Ephesians 4:32, Proverbs 19:11

There is a dynamic that happens in every interaction. Someone *acts*. Then you *re-act*.

What is the 'gap'?

The 'gap' is that moment between someone acting and you re-acting.

- Choose to fill the gap with love. Proverbs 17:9

Reflect:

Have you ever experienced unchecked anger that boiled over and led to destructive behavior? What did you learn from that experience?

How do you typically respond to frustrating situations in your life? Do you tend to lash out quickly, or do you take a more measured approach? Why do you think that is?

In what ways have you seen the destructive consequences of human anger in your own life? How can you guard against falling into that same trap?

What does it mean to you that anger and murder are both considered sin and subject to judgment in God's eyes? How does that change the way you think about your own anger and how you respond to it?

Take some time to reflect on Ephesians 4:26, which says "In your anger do not sin: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry." How can you apply this verse to your own life and relationships, and what difference do you think it could make if you were to put it into practice?

Finally, ask God to reveal any areas of unchecked anger in your heart and to help you bring those areas under His control. Pray that He would renew your thoughts and attitudes, and help you to live a life that is truly righteous and holy.