

Anger Assignment

The Problem: Anger

The Purpose: To develop a systematic approach that will assist the counselee in overcoming the sin of anger. The focus of this project will cover the spiritual, educational, and practical aspects.

The Project: In order to get the most out of this project, read it completely and carefully before beginning the first assignment. The assignments are scattered throughout the project, so it would be best to highlight the assignments as you come to them in your initial reading. After the initial reading, go back to IV and begin the assignment.

Instructional Outline on Anger –

I. Anger is a Choice

A. It is an emotion. Emotion is often equated with the viscera, i.e. the bowels or intestines; the contents of the abdomen. Examples of “bowels” or “*splagchnon*” (The words in italics are the Greek word *splagchnon*, which speaks of the bowels, intestines or viscera.)

1. **Luke 1:78**—Through the *tender* mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us,
2. **Acts 1:18**—Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his *bowels* gushed out.
3. **2 Corinthians 6:12**—Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own *bowels*.
4. **2 Corinthians 7:15**—And his inward *affection* is more abundant toward you, whilst he remembereth the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling ye received him.
5. **Philippians 1:8**—For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the *bowels* of Jesus Christ.
6. **Philippians 2:1**—If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any *bowels* and mercies,
7. **Colossians 3:12**—Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, *bowels* of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;
8. **Philemon 1:7**—For we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the *bowels* of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother.
9. **Philemon 1:12**—Whom I have sent again: thou therefore receive him, that is, mine own *bowels*.

10. **Emotion** (anger) is contrasted to a behavior.
11. **Anger** (the emotion) is not the behavior, but it reveals the behavior, thoughts, motives, and beliefs underneath the emotion. The emotion is not meant to be eradicated.
12. **Ephesians 4:26** gives latitude to be angry within bounds.
13. **Mark 3:5** illustrates Christ being angry, but the greater emotion was grief.
14. **Psalms 7:11** illustrates God's disfavor with the unrighteous. We conclude that the capacity to be angry is God given. To eradicate anger would be as foolish as attempting to eradicate smiling. It is meant to be controlled.
15. **Proverbs 29:11** implies that anger can be held back and by doing so, it will, in time be quieted.
16. **Proverbs 19:19** speaks of the consequences of a person who does not hold back his anger.
17. **Proverbs 22:24-25** gives a recommendation on how to avoid the temptation to be angry, i.e. avoid bad company.
18. **James 1:19-20** teaches us to employ our ears and curb our tongues as an antidote to wrath.

B. Anger distorts Concepts.

C. Anger distorts your view of God. When one gives vent to his anger, the emotion will cloud his mind like smoke in a hay loft. He will forget the commands of God and begin to make his own evaluation and response to the situation at hand. What God commands and desires will be, at least, secondary.

D. Anger distorts your view of others. An angry person will hold very little regard to those in his path. This action, tearing into others, will betray the condition of his heart. We only abuse, hurt, or disregard that which we do not value. Thus, an angry man is not practicing **Matthew 22:36-40; Phil. 2:3**.

E. Anger distorts your view of self

F. An angry person sees his way of doing things as the most profitable way under these particular circumstances. He has an over-inflated view of self, which is what **Romans 12:3** is warning against, i.e. "I am right and God is wrong."

II. Anger has a Cause - *(this is only a partial listing)*

A. Unresolved bitterness—is sometimes called anger turned inward. If there are sin issues that have not been dealt with biblically; in time they will fester and could possibly manifest itself as anger.

B. Moral impurity—unresolved sin issues like sexual immorality can bring God’s heavy hand of conviction upon a person and if he does not repent, but chooses to continue in his sin; the results of this conviction could manifest itself through anger. See **Psalm 32:3-5** as David relates God’s dealing with him regarding moral impurity.

C. Too high expectations—are sometimes manifested by perfectionism, which is an attainable goal. The Pharisee’s were the Biblical elite, who set standards that were higher than God’s. See **Mark 7:1-23** as Jesus dealt with the Pharisee’s and their traditions.

D. Temporal values—are seen in many ways. A parent may be easily angered toward a child who is not manifesting Christ-like qualities. Some parents expect their children to perform perfectly every step of the way, rather than focusing on the end product, i.e. preparing this kid to be God’s kind of man when he becomes an adult. Many times this is seen in a public setting where the kid “embarrasses” the parent by his behavior. The kid may be sinning, which needs to be dealt with, but the parent’s response to the child may also be sinful.

E. Pride, i.e. control—realizing that most (if not all) of these sinful behavior’s are rooted in pride; this one (control) is singled out because of its prevalence. Angry people get angry, many times when they sense that they are losing control. As someone once said, “there is a little sovereignty in all of us.” This is definitely a distortion of the three concepts mentioned above: concept of God, others, and self.

F. Self-centeredness—also related to pride and is always highlighted with sinful pride. Frustration, i.e. thwarted goals—We make our plans and rigidly hold onto them. And if our plans don’t come to fruition, we get mad. This attitude leaves no room for God to fulfill His will in our lives. It reveals a lack of understanding of God, i.e. His intervention, will, plans, sovereignty, and the like.

G. Hurt—Sin can come from within as well as from without. Generally folks are more accommodating regarding their own sins. However, when we are sinned against, anger is the response mechanism for many.

H. Fear—is manifested in many ways. One way is to put up a shield of anger in order to keep others at bay. **Proverbs 29:25** speaks to this issue, which the writer calls the fear of man.

III. Anger has a Cure

A. A Matter of the Heart - Recognize that anger is an emotion that reveals a deeper issue of the heart. Identify what the root cause(s) are. Typically pride will be at the core, but break pride out like in the listing above.

B. Put-off/Put-on - Put-off will employ confessing the particular sins.

Put-off will employ asking God for forgiveness for specific sins.

(1) There may be a need to go to others and seek their forgiveness.

Put-off will employ repenting or turning from these habits. Put-on will employ the character traits mentioned in letter “E” below as well as the homework assignments.

IV. Anger has a Counterpart

A. Compassion—Matthew 15:32—to be moved as to one's bowels, hence to be moved with compassion (for the bowels were thought to be the seat of love and pity)

B. Kindness—Ephesians 2:7—moral goodness; integrity.

C. Gentleness—2 Corinthians 10:1—mildness, fairness.

D. Patience—Romans 15:5—In the NT it is the characteristic of a man who is not swerved from his deliberate purpose and his loyalty to faith and piety by even the greatest trials and sufferings.

E. Forbearance—Romans 2:4—toleration.

F. Forgiveness—Ephesians 1:7—release from bondage or imprisonment; forgiveness or pardon, of sins (letting them go as if they had never been committed), remission of the penalty. We are not speaking here of forgiving sins in a judicial sense the way only God can forgive sins. However, we should have that attitude of forgiveness and be ready to forgive. This attitude is diametrically opposed to an attitude of anger, which will erupt at the slightest provocation.

G. Love—John 13:35—a commitment accompanied by action without an expectation of anything in return.

Homework Assignments

Anger

The Passages with Exegesis (Use the SMAC format, letter H pages 8-9 to complete this exercise. Write out or type your exegesis on a separate sheet of paper.)

Matthew 5:22
James 1:19-20
Proverbs 29:11
Proverbs 19:19

Mark 3:5
Numbers 20:1-13
Proverbs 15:18

Ephesians 4:26-32
Romans 12:3
Proverbs 22:24-25

List the people or things that you become angry toward. You may want to enlist the help of others to identify these people or things. For example:

Spouse

Friends

Work

Finances

Attitudes

Thinking about the past

When I sin again

Parents

Folks at church

After making the list, write out specific instances in which you became angry.

What were the circumstances?

What did you want?

What were your expectations?

Why did you respond in anger?

What is it that you want so bad, that you are willing to sin in order to get it?

1. Go to each person, privately, you have sinned against and confess your sin.
2. Ask forgiveness from God and from these people.
3. Ask two of these people to hold you accountable as you labor to overcome this sinful response.
4. Communicate with them on a weekly basis.

Write out a plan, that is specific, to complete your forgiveness, i.e. now that you have identified and put-off (anger), what will you identify and put-on in order to replace the sinful lifestyle. See letter “B” below.

Biblical Qualities to Replace Anger: (*see attachment #1*)

In order to put-on righteous behavior, as mentioned above, there needs to be some kind of accountability tracking involved. Furthermore, there needs to be a new discipline to replace the sinful discipline. This will take *desire, knowledge, and skill* which will only happen by work. If you have the desire to change, this assignment will give you the knowledge, and it will be up to you to learn the skill. If you follow through, the assignment will create a disciplined habituation toward righteousness.

Heart Journal: (*see attachment #2*)

The heart journal will build a new construct for thinking through a biblical grid. As each sinful act occurs, or if you are tempted to get angry, follow through with the heart journal and you will begin to train yourself in right biblical response. Complete one Heart Journal per week *unless* you do not become angry or are tempted to be angry in a week.

Summaries:

Continue to meet with your counselor for weekly sessions until you are habituated into a new lifestyle (Gal. 6:1-2). Write out a one-page summary of each of these sessions.

- * This will further cement the material that was presented in the sessions.
- * It allows the counselor to see how well you are comprehending and applying the material.
- * It will give the counselor a point of departure for the next session and also maintain continuity from session to session.
- * It will allow the counselor to see what needs to be reiterated.
- * It will give the counselee an opportunity to think of additional questions that he didn't think of during the session.

- * It will help to further create a discipline, which is typically a part of the problem with most sin habits.

Verse List on the wrong ways to handle anger:

(adapted from Wayne Mack's Homework Manual #1).

Write down what the following verses have to say about the wrong way to handle anger. You are handling anger in a sinful and unbiblical manner when you:

Examples:

Ephesians 4:26, 27: *(Refuse to admit that you are angry. Clam up and pretend nothing is wrong. Make this way of dealing with anger a practice. Pick a fight as soon as you can. Be as nasty as you can.)*

Proverbs 29:11, 20

Proverbs 26:21

Romans 12:17, 19

Philippians 4:8

Matthew 5:21, 22

Proverbs 15:1

1 Peter 3:9

Proverbs 17:14

Ephesians 4:31

Colossians 3:8

1 Corinthians 13:5

Verse List on the right ways to handle anger:

(adapted from Wayne Mack's Homework Manual #1).

Write down what the following verses have to say about the right way to handle anger. Constantly review what God says about the right way of handling anger and deliberately seek to obey Him:

Examples:

Romans 12:19-21: *Never take your own revenge; turn the matter of punishment over to God; seek to help your enemy in specific ways.*

Ephesians 4:26: *Acknowledge that you are angry and seek to solve the problem immediately. Don't allow unresolved problems to pile up.*

Ephesians 4:29

Proverbs 19:11

Proverbs 25:28

Psalms 37:1-11

Romans 8:28, 29

Ephesians 5:20

James 4:6

Ephesians 4:32

Proverbs 15:1

Proverbs 14:29

1 Peter 3:9

Matthew 5:1-12

1 Corinthians 10:13

1 Corinthians 6:19, 20

Matthew 5:43, 44

Proverbs 15:28

Proverbs 29:11

Galatians 6:16-23

1 Thessalonians 5:18

Genesis 50:20

Matthew 18:21-35

SMAC

Begin a memorization and meditation program of Scripture.

Select verses from the “*right ways to handle anger*” list to memorize. There should be no end to your memory program. However, it is important not to just memorize, but to have a plan for meditation and application.

Biblical faith can be broken down into three components:

Knowledge - The knowledge will come from the actual verse..;

Meditation - The meditation will be the verse as you begin to roll it over and over in your mind.

Action - The action will be a specific plan to incorporate the verse in your life.

S = What does this text **SAY** grammatically?

Write out in two or three sentences what the verse says.

M = What did this text **MEAN** historically?

Using a concordance or Bible dictionary, write out in two or three sentences what was going on at the time of the verse you are studying.

A = How does this text **APPLY** to me?

Answer the following questions:

1. What is the truth for me to believe about God?
2. What is the truth for me to believe about some other doctrine?
3. Is there a command for me to obey? If so, what is it?
4. What is the result of obedience or disobedience for me to remember?
5. Is there a promise for me to claim, i.e. place my trust in when I make decisions? If so, what is it?
6. Is there a sin for me to confess to God and to someone else? If so, what is it?
7. Is there a pattern or example for me to follow? If so, what is it?
8. Is there something I should do for the sake of Christ, others, or myself? If so, what are they?
9. Is there something I should praise or thank God for? If so, what is it?
10. Is there something I should pray about for myself or for others? If so, what is it?
11. Is there something I should make a decision about? If so, what is it?

12. Is there a principle for me to follow for personal guidance? If so, what is it?
13. Is there a principle of wisdom to shape my thinking? If so, what is it?

C = What will I do to **CHANGE** in response to this Bible text?

1. Write out where you last failed to do this and where you can next practice this.

2. Write out your specific plan. It should include a specific time and place if possible.

3. Pray, asking the Holy Spirit to motivate, strengthen, and bless you.
4. Tell someone else about the process the Lord is taking you through.
5. Read *Christ and Your Problems* by Jay E. Adams.
6. Highlight 10 principles that stand out in the text.
7. Use the **Principle Format Form** (*see attachment #3*) to complete this assignment for each principle.
8. Begin a parallel reading program (along with your Bible) of books that will assist you in your progressive sanctification. The first book would be *Trusting God* by Jerry Bridges. As you work through the books, complete a simple two to three page report on each book. The outline for this **Book Report** is located as (*attachment number #4*). The **Recommended Reading List** is (*attachment number #5*).

Biblical Qualities to Replace Anger

Colossians 3:12-14

At the end of each day, write out how the following qualities were demonstrated to others. Identify the areas that are not checked and focus on the development of those particular qualities. Make a copy of this page for use on a weekly basis.

Date:	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
Compassion							
Kindness							
Humility							
Gentleness							
Patience							
Forbearance (Bear one another)							
Forgiveness							
Love (sacrifice)							

Adapted from Biblical Concepts in Counseling

Attachment Number One

HEART JOURNAL

Anger

What happened to provoke me to anger?
(What were the circumstances that led to my becoming angry?)

What did I say to myself (in my heart) when I became angry?
(What did I want, desire, or long for, when I became angry?)

What does the Bible say about what I said to myself when I became angry?
(What does the Bible say about what I wanted when I became angry?)

What should I have said to myself when I became angry?
(What should I have wanted more than my selfish/idolatrous desire?)

What have I done about my thoughts, desires, and actions that were not pleasing to God?
(Acknowledge, confess and repent)

What will I do (practice) to implement my new thought into action (be specific and concrete.)

Attachment Number Two (Heart Journal – Anger)

Principal Format Form

Anger

For this assignment, write out ____ principles, statements, or questions per chapter/article using the following format:

1. State the principle or statement with page number.

Write out exactly what the principle is. This is a direct quote from the article or book you are reading. An example would be:

P. 35—“Has something or someone besides Jesus Christ taken title to your heart’s trust, preoccupation, loyalty, service, fear and delight?”

(This question is from David Powlison’s article in the Journal of Biblical Counseling, titled Idols of the Heart and “Vanity Fair”.)

2. What does the principle mean (generalization)?

Now write out what the principle means in a general sense. An example, from the question stated in number one above would be:

“The implication of the question regarding idols is that something or someone could take control of a **person’s** heart.”

3. What does it mean to me (personalization)?

Write out the generalized principle above into a more personalized statement or principle. For example:

“As I examine **my** heart, it is evident that there are idols in **my** heart.”

4. Make a plan that is specific for your situation.

Write out a “concrete” plan that you can implement specifically in your life that will glorify God in your sanctification. For example:

I will spend at least 15 minutes a day before the Lord, praying, reflecting, and keeping a journal. The purpose of the journal is to identify, list, and work through specific idols of the heart. I will make myself accountable to _____ during this process.

Book Report

Counselee needs to prepare a two to three page Book Report for each book. In the book report, please answer the questions that have been prepared below. Make sure to identify, by number, which question is being answered.

1. Title of Book

2. Your Name

3. What important principles did you see concerning the Christian life? (Summarize at least five of them using the following format.)

4. Page 33—*“The more you discover the power of indwelling sin, the less you will suffer its effects.”*
This was awesome! The whole book was an exclamation point in my heart. It revealed to me not only the power of the enemy, but the resources available to me to overcome this enemy. One of the resources is the knowledge of discovery, i.e. discovering the power of indwelling sin.

5. Page 77— Was there anything you disagreed with or had questions about? If so, what?

6a. What were the most significant challenges or lessons you learned for your own life from the reading assignments?

6b. And, how did, or are you, going to apply them to your life?

7. Was there someone you encouraged with what you have learned? If so, please explain...

Recommended Reading List

As part of your on-going discipleship it will be necessary to begin reading Christian books to supplement your Bible reading and memorization. For each book, complete a two to three page report (See attachment Number Four for a format), to be turned in at your counseling sessions.

Trusting God by Jerry Bridges

The Enemy Within, Kris Lundgaard

Power of Integrity, John MacArthur

The Godly Man's Picture, Thomas Watson

When People are Big and God is Small, Ed T. Welch

The Measure of a Man, Gene Getz

Ultimate Priority, John MacArthur

Spiritual Disciplines of Christian Life, Donald Whitney

Disciplines of a Godly Man, Kent Hughes

Distinguishing Traits of Christian Character, Gardiner Spring

Vanishing Conscience, John MacArthur

The Christian's Daily Walk, Henry Scudder

The Pursuit of Holiness, Jerry Bridges

The Pursuit of God, A. W. Tozer

From Forgiven to Forgiving, Jay E. Adams

Freedom and Power of Forgiveness, John MacArthur

Transforming Grace, Jerry Bridges

The Disciplines of Grace, Jerry Bridges

The Joy of Fearing God, Jerry Bridges

Future Grace, John Piper