

Good and Angry – First Class

Zoom – Sunday 22 March 2020

INTRODUCTION

Tonight, we begin a study of David Powlison's very helpful book *Good & Angry*.

So why are we beginning a multi-week study on "Redeeming Anger, Complaining, and Bitterness."

1. What if I don't have a problem with anger?
2. Is this class simply going to be a waste of my time?
3. "Do I have a serious problem with anger?"

BODY

The Seriousness of Anger

Galatians 5:19-21. This is the list of sin which Paul gives before giving us his much more famous list of the fruit of the Spirit:

Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

1. Are you surprised at how many of these sins are related to anger?
2. Do you see how seriously the LORD takes these sins? Paul writes: "I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God."

Definition

Defining what we mean by anger might be helpful. David Powlison defines anger like this:

At its core anger is very simple. It expresses "I'm against that." It is an active stance you take to oppose something that you assess as both important and wrong.¹

A Few of the Ways that Anger is Expressed:

1. Domestic Gunslingers
2. The Volcano
3. The Iceberg
4. Bitterness
5. Good & Angry

¹ David Powlison, *Good & Angry*, p. 39

Mark 3:1–6

Again he entered the synagogue, and a man was there with a withered hand. And they watched Jesus, to see whether he would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse him. And he said to the man with the withered hand, “Come here.” And he said to them, “Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to kill?” But they were silent. And **he looked around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart**, and said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” He stretched it out, and his hand was restored. The Pharisees went out and immediately held counsel with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him.

Three thoughts:

1. Jesus was angry;
2. Christ’s anger was perfectly righteous; and
3. Jesus was angry, in part, because they were silent. Indifference can be an anger problem.

CONCLUSION – The Challenge of Change

Dr. Powlison concludes the first chapter of his book with a helpful encouragement about the difficulty of making deep and lasting change in our lives:

Finally, we know one more thing about each other. Every one of us has a hard time changing. It’s hard to think straight about anger. It grabs you and it’s got you. The ancient Romans had a saying, *Ira furor brevis est*, “Anger is a brief madness.” Anger makes us crazy, blind, confused, and confusing. The beams of sanity are rare. Have you even noticed and marveled later at your irrationality? *What came over me? How could I have thought that, said that, done that?* Sometimes the habit runs on for a lifetime – a hamster wheel you don’t ever get off.

How can you figure out what’s wrong and needs fixing? How do you know what you should have done instead, and what you should do now? How do you separate the destructive parts of anger, from the constructive parts? How can you learn to get upset about the right things and to express your concern in the right way? Where can you find help that really helps?

We need help. We need forgiveness. We need both vision and strength to change. We need a Savior – on scene, active, committed, practical, personal – to get mixed up with our troubles.

Anger? We’re in this one together. And so is Jesus.²

² David Powlison, *Good & Angry*, pp. 21-22.