

## Good and Angry – Third Class

Zoom – Sunday 5 April 2020

This evening we will be looking at chapter 5: All of You Does Anger. This is very important to grasp, because we commonly talk about anger as though it is something distinct from us. Recognizing that anger is something that we do with our body, mind, and emotions will help us change at a much deeper level than if we simply pursue anger management.

### I. Your Body Operates in the Agitated Mode.

Consider some of the physiological activities that we relate to anger: Your nervous system fires up. Perhaps your face turns red. Your brow might tighten. You may even begin to breathe with audible irregular snorts. We can see this physical involvement in the language which we use to describe anger, such as: “Steamed up;” “hot-blooded;” “breathing fire;” “doing a slow burn;” etc. ...

To sanctify our anger, we need to realize that we do anger with our whole being – including with our bodies.

### II. Your Emotions Operate in the Hot Displeasure Mode.

“Anger is a feeling of distress, trouble, and hatred. When someone says, ‘I’m angry,’ we usually think first of an emotion of intense displeasure. Your emotional equilibrium is upset, not calm or happy. When you don’t like what’s going on, anger adds the emotional charge that says, ‘I really don’t like that!’”<sup>1</sup>

The physical responses we discussed above are related to our emotions but they are also distinct. “No actual human being would say, ‘When you mocked me, my body started to react with those physiological processes that people term the emotion of anger, but we both know that it’s just my body reacting.’ No way. You are reacting, with feeling.”<sup>2</sup>

### III. Your Mind Operates in the Judicial Mode.

“Anger actively involves your thought life. ... When you’re mad, an intense mental conversation takes place inside. You watch the video replay in the inner theater of your graphic imagination.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> David Powlison, *Good & Angry*, p. 49.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50.

Since anger can be righteous or wicked, and all anger involves judgment, the goal cannot be to avoid making moral judgments. So, what then is the goal? What hinders us from achieving that goal more consistently than we do?

#### IV. Your Actions Operate in the Military Mode.

“Anger doesn’t only operate in your body, feelings, and mind. It breaks out into behavior. And that behavior – whether words or deeds – is about conflict and combat. Anger goes into action as a military operation.”<sup>4</sup>

“Anger is a way of declaring war against a world that seems to have gone wrong.”<sup>5</sup>

#### V. Your Motives Operate in the Godlike Mode.

In many ways, this is the most important section of the chapter. So, LORD willing, we are going to spend the most time on it.

In this section we are going to look at underlying motives. A little bit of reflection should make clear that when we get extremely angry about someone being a few minutes late or about someone leaving the toilet seat up – that the issue isn’t actually the few minutes or the toilet seat. “Underlying desires and beliefs are at work – always. Motives run far deeper than our conscious thoughts. ... To tease out the motives underlying anger, ask ‘What are my expectations?’ That simple question helps you stop and think. And the answer often comes in layers, not all at once. Self-knowledge is both a simple gift and a hard-won achievement. You might be aware of your expectations at one level, but gradually come to understand more profound levels.”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> David Powlison, *Good & Angry*, p. 51.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 52.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53.