

When I Am Angry?

Walking through the living room, Micah trips over a pair of shoes his younger brother left in the middle of the room. Not only does his toe hurt like crazy, he also drops his bowl of ice cream and is left with a splattered mess to clean up. Instantly, angry words fly out of his mouth.

Ellie overhears two girls talking about her in the church hallway—two girls she *thought* were her friends. As she lays awake in bed that night playing their words over and over in her mind, her stomach starts to feel tight and her throat tightens. She isn't loud about it, but she feels angry inside. She wipes a few tears away as she makes a promise to herself that she won't ever talk to these girls again.

Can you relate to Micah or Ellie? No doubt, you have many stories of your own about times you felt angry. We might be tempted to think that negative emotions like anger, anxiety, fear, and sadness happen *to us*, and that we have no ability to control our negative emotions. If that is true, then we are left with feelings we can't really change and for which we aren't really responsible. This worldly view of emotions leaves us without any hope.

Does God have anything to say in His Word about our emotions? Yes, He does! Because He created us, God can tell us how our emotions were designed to work, and how to fix them when they are broken. This means that we actually have a lot of hope! In this study, we will ask different questions about anger and then go to God's Word to find the answer. *What does God say when I am angry?* Let's find out!

Day 1: What is anger?



Pray that God will help you understand His Word.

You might pray something like this: "Lord, please help me understand Your Word so I can know You better and become more like You. In the name of Jesus, Amen."



Read God's Word: *What does God say?*

To find the answer to our question today, "**What is anger?**" we must begin by capturing a few truths about how God made us.

As you read the passage below, circle the words **image** and **likeness** every time you see them.

Genesis 1:24-27 And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good. And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

Open your Bible to **Genesis 2:7**. Finish writing out the verse in the space provided:

Genesis 2:7 And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; _____

God created humans in His image. This doesn't mean that we look like God or are exactly the same as Him. But it does mean that humans are different from everything else that God created. For example, God wants to have a relationship with us, and He made us able to know and love

Him. He also gave us the ability to know and love other people. This is possible only because, like God, we are able to think, desire, choose, and feel.

We all know that there is more to a person than you or I can see with our eyes. This is because God created you with an *outer person* that others can see and an *inner person* that others can't see. The Bible also calls this *inner person* your **heart**. What is this heart? It's not the organ that the doctor listens to through a stethoscope. According to the Bible, your heart includes your **mind** (your "thinker"), your **desires** (your "wanter"), and your **will** (your "chooser"). In other words, your heart is the real you.

Look up each of the verses from the book of Psalms in the list below. Draw a line from the verse to which part of the heart the psalmist describes:

Psalms 37:4	My heart chooses to keep God's law (will)
Psalms 15:2	My heart meditates/thinks (mind)
Psalms 19:14	My heart speaks truth (mind)
Psalms 40:8	My heart chooses to praise God (will)
Psalms 57:7	My heart delights in the Lord (desires)
Psalms 119:34	My heart delights to do God's will (desires)



Think Bible: *What does God want me to learn?*

There is so much going on inside of you! In addition to thinking, desiring, and choosing, God also created you with the ability to *feel*. For example, the Bible says our hearts can be glad (Psalm 16:9), anxious (Isaiah 35:4), joyful (Psalm 4:7), sad (Jeremiah 8:18), and angry (Ecclesiastes 7:9).

Your emotions are like a language of your soul. They tell you and others about what is going on inside of you—they reveal what is happening in your heart. Your emotions are a response to what you *think* and what you *desire*. For example, when David **thought** about all that God had done for him, his heart was full of **joy** (Psalm 16:9). When Nehemiah **thought** about the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple where God's people had once worshiped Him, his heart was full of **sadness** (Nehemiah 2:2). David's joy and Nehemiah's sadness revealed what their hearts were thinking and desiring. (Remember this important connection—we'll talk more about it in the days ahead.)

Now that we better understand emotions, we are ready to answer our question today: **What is anger?** Anger is *an emotion of strong displeasure*. Anger can feel like a fire that explodes and burns inside us when we experience something that we think is wrong or unjust. Like joy or sadness, God designed us with the ability to feel angry. And because God gave us this emotion, we must remember that it is a good gift when used in the right way and at the right time.



Live Bible: *What should I do because of what God says?*

Let's review the truths we learned today about how God designed us:

- God made you in His image.
- God designed you with an outer person that others can see and an inner person that others can't see.
- Your inner person guides how you think, what you want, and what you choose to do.
- God also designed you with emotions. Both our positive and negative emotions are a good gift from a good God.
- Emotions like anger do not happen *to us*, they come *out of us*—from our hearts.

Take time to thank God for designing you in such a wonderful way—with emotions of all kinds. Ask Him to help you in this study to understand what He says about anger, and to make you more like Jesus as you study His Word.

Remember, our emotions tell a story about our hearts. But it is also important to know that there are times when our emotions can also be the result of something going on in our physical body (like when you are so tired from not getting enough sleep that you are more irritable or cry easily). When we are tired or sick or hurting, we can often find it harder to control our emotions. These are times when we especially need help. We can call out to God to help us do what is right even when we don't feel like it. And we can ask for help from a trusted adult who can support us in our weakness. If you are having a hard time controlling your emotions, please ask an adult for help. You can even do this study with them!

Day 2: Does God ever get angry?



Pray that God will help you understand His Word.



Read God's Word: *What does God say?*

We learned yesterday that God made us with the ability to feel anger. That might seem like a weird thing to say—especially because we often think of anger as a negative emotion. Today we are going to learn a little more about what God says about anger by asking the question, *does God ever get angry?*

Look up the following verses in your Bible. Fill in the missing words:

1 Kings 11:9 And the Lord was _____ with _____, because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel.

2 Kings 17:18a Therefore [because Israel continued to worship false gods] the Lord was _____ with Israel, and removed them out of his sight.

Psalms 7:11 God judgeth the righteous, and God is _____ with the _____ every day.

These verses teach us that God does definitely feel anger. God responds in anger to Solomon, the people of Israel, and the wicked. His anger reveals what He *thinks* and what He *wants*. So far, each of the verses you have looked up comes from the Old Testament. Let's see if the same is true for Jesus. Open your Bible to **Mark 11** and read **verses 15-17**. Use the space below to describe what Jesus said and did:

These verses don't use the word "anger" but they do describe Jesus' emotion of strong displeasure, don't they? **John 2:14-17** describes another time when Jesus cleansed the temple. John tells us that when Jesus' disciples saw the anger of Jesus that day, they remembered a verse from the Old Testament: "*the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up*" (Psalm 69:9). To be eaten up with zeal means that Jesus was full of passion to do something about the wrong he was seeing in the temple. His zeal came from somewhere: *His heart of love and devotion for God*. Jesus made a judgement in His heart about what He saw: *This is unjust! People should not be using the temple as a marketplace. God's temple must be a place that reflects God properly!* His loyal love for His Father motivated Him to action: *I must correct the wrong!*



Think Bible: *What does God want me to learn?*

Yesterday we learned that emotions tell you and others about what is going on inside of you—they reveal what is happening in your heart. Your emotions are a response to what you *think* and what you *desire*. The same is true for God the Father and for Jesus, God the Son. Look back on page 3 to the passages we studied today. Look for the connection between *thinking* and *feeling*.

- God evaluated the heart of Solomon, and judged Solomon’s turning away from Him as wrong. God responded to that injustice with anger.
- Jesus evaluated the situation in the temple, and judged that it was wrong. Jesus responded to that injustice with anger.

If we do some careful thinking, we can also see the connection between *desires* and *feelings*.

- God wanted (and deserves) exclusive, whole-hearted worship from Solomon. God’s anger was a response to not getting what He wanted and deserved.
- Jesus wanted the temple to be a place where people could come to know God. Jesus’ anger was a response to God not getting what He wanted and deserved.

We know that God cannot sin. We can be confident that Jesus was never sinfully angry. His anger was always righteous and always good.

But we cannot claim the same to be true about our anger. Our sinful nature impacts what we *think*—we often make wrong judgments. We get angry about the wrong things. Our sinful nature impacts what we *desire*—we often want the wrong things. And as a result, our sinful nature impacts what we *feel*. We easily get angry about the wrong things, we get angry to the wrong degree, and we express our anger in the wrong ways.

Anger is a good emotion, given to us by a good God. But we need this warning: our anger is impacted by our sinful hearts. Thankfully, this warning comes with hope: we have a wonderful Savior who wants to transform our hearts.



Live Bible: *What should I do because of what God says?*

Isn’t it good to learn that God is angry, but never in a sinful way? God never loses His temper. His anger is never out of control. In fact, there are some very good reasons for us to thank God for His righteous anger. Most importantly, God’s anger at sin motivated Him to do something about our sin and all the harm it has brought to His creation. Because God is angry at sin, He sent His Son, Jesus to be our Savior. On the cross, God poured out His righteous wrath on His beloved Son (Romans 5:9). God acted in righteous anger against sin—so that all who trust in Him could be saved!

Use the space below to write out a prayer to God thanking Him for His righteous anger:

Day 3: *How does sinful anger work?*



Pray that God will help you understand His Word.

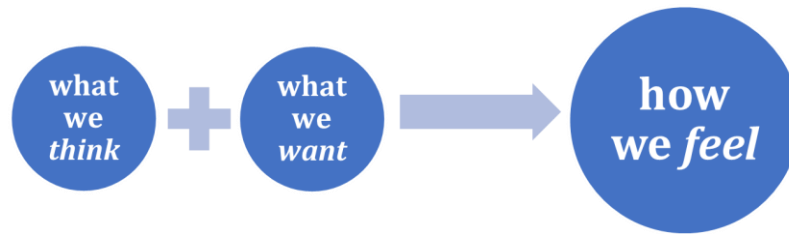


Read God’s Word: *What does God say?*

We learned yesterday that anger is not always sinful. God’s anger is a good thing. Because God is angry at what is truly wrong and unjust, we can be confident that He will act to make all those

wrong and unjust things right. Righteous anger and sinful anger work in similar ways. By understanding how sinful anger works, we can learn how to correct our anger so that it better reflects the thoughts and desires of Jesus.

Open your Bible to **Genesis 4**. As you read the story of Cain's anger, look for the connection we have been learning between what we think, what we want, and how we feel:



In the story of Cain and Able, we see a clear example of how anger doesn't happen *to* you; it happens *in* you. Read **Genesis 4:1-16** and answer the questions below:

What happened? (Describe the problem in your own words.)	
What was Cain thinking ? (Read verses 4-5 and 7.)	
What was Cain wanting ? (Read verses 4-5 and 7.)	
How did Cain's anger effect his physical body ? (Read verses 5-6.)	
What did Cain choose to do as a result of his anger? (Read verses 8-9.)	



Think Bible: *What does God want me to learn?*

God was very kind to Cain. God did not leave Cain alone in his anger. God asked questions to help Cain think about why he was angry. Read **verses 6-7** and **9-10** again.

- What questions did God ask Cain?

- What counsel did God give to Cain?

God asked questions to help Cain think about what was going on in his heart. Cain's anger was revealing something about Cain's heart. But instead of reflecting on his heart, Cain answers God's questions in a proud, disrespectful way.

With God's help, Cain can turn from his sinful anger, his wrong thinking, and wrong desires. He can make the choice to say "no" to sin and "yes" to God. But it is a choice Cain refuses to make. Instead of hearing God's counsel, Cain rejected it. And he faced serious consequences for his refusal to listen to God.

By God's good design, the emotion of anger produces a response in our body. Anger is like the burst of energy that comes from striking a match and throwing it into a pile of wood. *God made your body to serve your heart.* When your heart judges that something is wrong (what you think) and it values the thing that is threatened (what you want), your body produces energy to deal with the problem. *Your body serves your heart.* That can be a very good thing when your anger is righteous, and you use the energy of anger to solve a real problem in a right way. That is what Jesus did when He cleansed the temple. But that can be a very dangerous thing when your anger is sinful, and you use the energy of anger to solve a problem in the wrong way.

- How did Cain use the energy of his anger to try and make his "injustice" right? (Read verses 8-9.) _____



Live Bible: *What should I do because of what God says?*

Genesis 4 helps us understand how sinful anger works. It works the same way in our lives today. 1) We face a problem. 2) We think about the problem, and make a judgment about it. 3) We make that judgement based on what we want. 4) Anger produces energy in us that comes out in our physical body and in our choices.

Cain didn't take time to think about his heart. But we can benefit from looking closely at where Cain's anger came from.

- Cain made a judgment: He didn't think the way God treated him was fair. Was Cain's thinking about God right or wrong? _____
- Cain had a desire: He wanted to be accepted by God on his own terms. Was Cain's desire right or wrong? _____

Just like the chart on page 5, wrong thinking and wrong wanting produced the sinful emotion of anger. *Cain's anger revealed his heart.*

Now, think about the last time *you* felt angry:

- What happened?
- What were you thinking? Reflect on your heart: *Was my thinking right or wrong, according to God's Word?*
- What were you wanting? Reflect on your heart: *What is my anger telling me about what is most important to me?*
- Our feelings can also impact the way our body feels, like how Ellie's anger caused her stomach to hurt. How did your body feel when you were angry?
- What did you choose to do because of your anger? (For example, when Micah was angry, he yelled at his brother).

Ask God to help you **stop** and **think** the next time you feel angry: *what is my anger telling me?* By God's grace, you can follow God's counsel.

Day 4: What does God say about sinful anger?



Pray that God will help you understand His Word.



Read God's Word: *What does God say?*

If you were to search for the word “anger” in the Bible, you would find that this word, and other forms of it, appear lots and lots of times in the Bible. Why so many verses about anger? Sadly, because we are good at being angry. But not in the righteous way. While we know that anger is not *always* sinful, our anger usually is. But we have an amazing gift: God's Word! God's Word is the powerful tool He uses to correct our wrong emotions, by correcting our wrong thinking and our wrong desires.

Today we will look at just a few of the places where God talks about anger. Will you listen to His counsel?

Use your Bible to look up the following verses. Write out each verse in the space provided.

- ***What does God say about the person who is quick to anger?***

Ecclesiastes 7:9 _____

- ***What does it take to control anger?***

Proverbs 14:29 _____

Proverbs 16:32 _____

- ***What does God tell us to do about sinful anger?***

Ephesians 4:26 _____

Ephesians 4:31-32 _____

Colossians 3:8 _____

James 1:19 _____

- ***Where does sinful anger come from?***

Proverbs 4:23 _____

Luke 6:45 _____



Think Bible: *What does God want me to learn?*

We can learn a lot from even this small sampling of God's counsel to us about sinful anger:

- God calls a life characterized by sinful anger foolish.
- Controlling anger requires great wisdom and great strength.

- It is possible to be angry and not sin.
- Don't allow anger to stick around. Take care of it right away!
- God wants us to put off sinful anger and put on kindness and forgiveness in its place.
- Anger comes out of our hearts.

Read through the list above one more time. **Circle** the counsel from God you most need to hear.

There is one more lesson we need to learn about anger today. Anger includes not only how we feel, but how we express how we feel. We might be angry about the right thing, but express our anger in the wrong way. What does anger look like? It can be seen by what we say, and what we do; in our tone of voice, or by our silence. And like Cain, anger can often be seen on our face.

Write down at least 6 ways that people express anger sinfully:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Do you express your anger in sinful ways? Do you blame others for making you angry? Our last two verses (Proverbs 4:23 and Luke 6:45) remind us of what we learned on day 1: anger does not happen *to* us, it comes *out of* us. This means no one can "make you angry." We can't blame someone else for our anger, we are responsible.

Our sinful anger exposes our need for God. Do you need God's forgiveness for your anger? Do you need God's forgiveness for the ways you have sinfully expressed your anger? Jesus paid for your sinful anger on the cross. Use the space below to write out your prayer to the Lord:

Day 5: *What is the solution to sinful anger? (Put Off)*



Pray that God will help you understand His Word.



Read God's Word: *What does God say?*

Our sinful anger hurts us and it hurts other people. These are great reasons to work on getting rid of sinful anger. But there is an even more important reason: our sinful anger does not give God the glory He deserves, because it is not like Jesus Christ. For the next three days we will look at God's solution to our sinful anger. You shouldn't be surprised to learn that God's solution focuses on our hearts—since this is where our sinful anger comes from.

Open your Bible to **Ephesians 4**. Fill in the missing words:

Ephesians 4:22-24 That ye _____ concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts. And _____ in the spirit of your mind; And that ye _____ the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

Today we will focus on the first step of biblical change: *Put off*.

Earlier in Ephesians 4, Paul says that those who are in Christ should no longer live like those who are not in Christ (4:17). Those who do not know Jesus cannot understand God's good ways (4:18). They live to please themselves, not God (4:19). But that is not the way Jesus teaches believers to live (4:20). Because of all Christ has done for us, believers have a responsibility to

live in a way that is different from their old life outside of Christ. This is the point of Ephesians 4:22. When Christ saves us, He puts our old man to death and brings us into new life in Him. So it makes sense that we should cooperate with Jesus in putting off the things that are not like our new life in Him. Paul gives us some examples of the kinds of things we need to put off in our lives. Look at the following verses in your Bible and write down the things we are commanded to “put off”:

- Ephesians 4:25 “putting away _____”
- Ephesians 4:28 “Let him that stole _____”
- Ephesians 4:31 “Let all _____, and _____, and _____, and clamour [shouting], and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice.



Think Bible: *What does God want me to learn?*

Jesus did not teach us to be filled with sinful anger and bitterness. He saves us so that we can be free of those sins. If you recognize that you are living in sinful anger, how do you put it off?

- 1) Putting off anger begins with **confessing your sin to God**. Tell God the truth about the anger in your heart. And tell God the truth about the ways you have sinfully expressed your anger (shouting, saying unkind words, hitting, etc.). **Ask Him to forgive you**. Believers have been given this wonderful promise about God: “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).
- 2) Putting off anger continues with **confessing your sin to anyone else who has been hurt by your sinful anger**. **Ask them to forgive you**. You could say something like, “God showed in His Word that I was wrong to be angry with you when I didn’t get my way. I was wrong to be selfish and I was wrong to yell at you. Would you please forgive me?”
- 3) Putting off anger includes **turning away from your sinful anger and the ways you express it**. The next steps (Put In and Put On) will help with putting off. But at this point, you can make a commitment to the Lord that you are ready, with His help, to fight against your sinful anger. In what practical ways can you make it hard to sin and easy to do right? This includes fighting against the wrong thoughts and wrong desires that fed your sinful anger, as well as rejecting the ways you sinfully express it. For Micah that looks like not shouting angry words at his brother. For Ellie this looks like not allowing the words she heard to replay over and over again in her mind. And it also looks like putting away her icy silence toward her friends.

God promises that those who confess and forsake their sin, will get mercy from Him (Proverbs 28:13). God always blesses these steps of humility. Like taking off nasty, muddy clothes, getting rid of our sin God’s way brings freedom and joy.



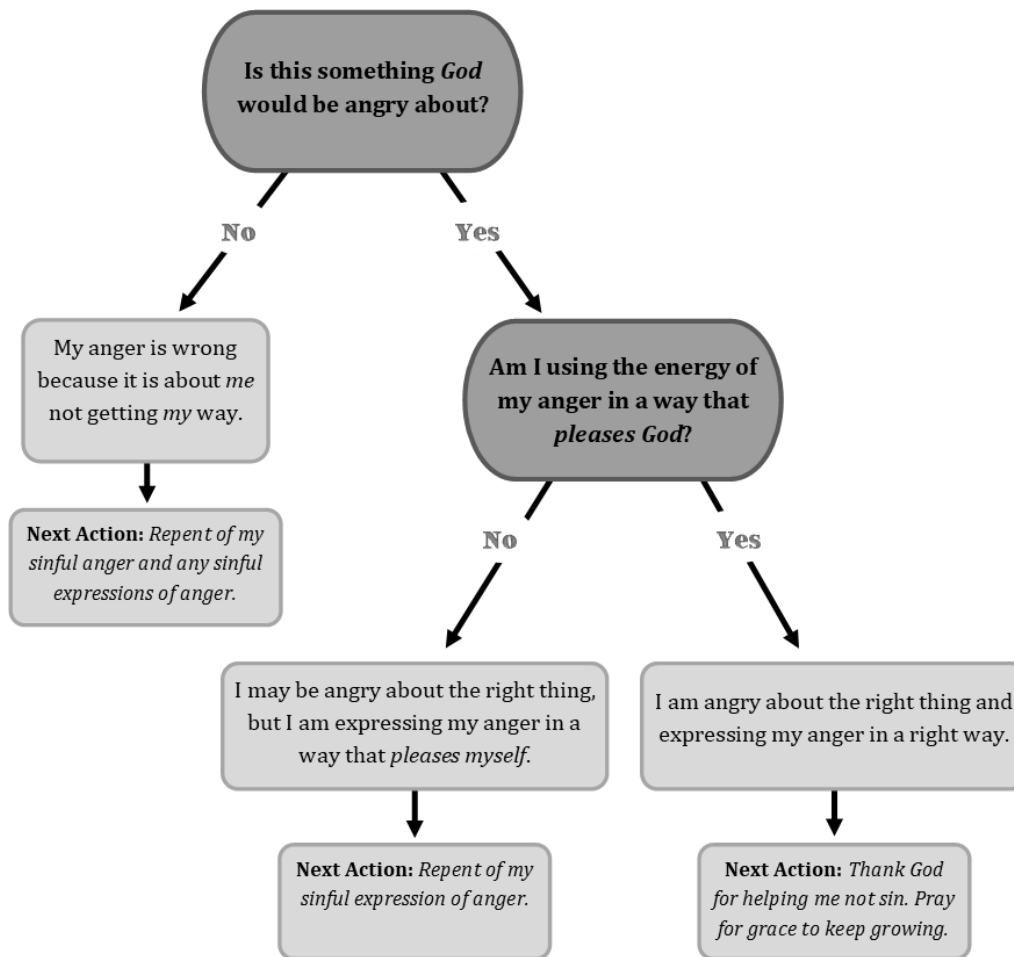
Live Bible: *What should I do because of what God says?*

Ephesians 4:26 tells us to “be...angry, and sin not.” This reminds us that we can be angry about right things and in the right way. How do you know if your anger is sinful or not? Ask yourself the questions in the chart below to help you think about your anger. Circle “yes” or “no” for each question. Start by writing down what you are angry about and what your anger looks like.

Is My Anger Right or Wrong?

I am angry because: _____

Ways I am expressing my anger: _____



Maybe you have discovered that you are angry about the wrong thing. Or angry about the right thing but expressing it in the wrong way. Will you follow God's steps for putting off your sinful anger? Don't try to do these steps alone. Ask God to help you—He loves to give His children the strength they need to obey His good commands. And you can ask a trusted adult to help you too.

Day 6: What is the solution to sinful anger? (Put In)



Pray that God will help you understand His Word.



Read God's Word: *What does God say?*

Yesterday we started working through the plan for change given to us in Ephesians 4. We learned that Jesus wants us to cooperate with Him in getting rid of the things in our lives that are not like Him. "Putting off" our sinful anger is an important starting point, but there are other actions we must take to cooperate with the Lord in growing and changing. Use your Bible to look up the following verses. Fill in the blanks.

Ephesians 4:23 "And be _____ in the spirit of your _____."

Romans 12:1-2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the _____ of your _____, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Psalms 119:9-11 Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy _____. With my whole _____ have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments. Thy _____ have I hid in mine _____, that I might not sin against thee.



Think Bible: *What does God want me to learn?*

When Jesus saves us, He makes us new in *every* way—that means your heart is also made new (2 Corinthians 5:17). As Ephesians 4:23 says, He renews (makes new) your inner person. Look back at page 2 of this study. List the parts of your heart that God makes new:

Your _____ Your _____ Your _____

While Jesus have given us a new heart, we still have lots of growing to do so that what **we think**, what **we want**, and what **we choose** rightly reflects what **Jesus thinks**, what **Jesus wants**, and what **Jesus chooses**. Do you remember where anger comes from? What we think and what we want in our heart! So, if we want to really put off sinful anger, we need to cooperate with Jesus in changing our hearts. How does Jesus change our heart? As we read in Psalm 119 and Romans 12:2, He uses His Word to correct what we think and to correct what we want. God changes our hearts by the power of His Spirit as we make the choice to “put in” His truth. God changes us as we prayerfully read, study, memorize, meditate on, and apply God’s Word to our lives.

Know the warning signs of anger. Negative emotions are like a fire alarm going off. The alarm alerts you to danger. When you feel anger rising up inside you, stop and listen: what is your anger telling you? Use the chart on page 10 to evaluate your heart next to God’s Word:

- **What are you thinking?** Is it right or wrong?
- **What are you wanting?** Is it right or wrong?

Where you are wrong, *tell your heart the truth*. But in order to do this, you have to know what God says about anger. You need to “put in” His truth.

Your feelings can change by thinking and wanting what is right. You have to put the right kind of gas in the car. Fueled by God’s thoughts, and Christlike desires, your feelings will reveal your renewed heart.



Live Bible: *What should I do because of what God says?*

Here are some ways you can “put in” God’s truth about anger:

- Memorize Ephesians 4:31-32. Write it out on a notecard and say it out loud 10 times every day until you can say it without looking. Every time you feel anger rising inside you, tell your heart these verses. Write out at least three specific ways you can apply Ephesians 4:31-32 to a person (brother, sister, parent, friend) with whom you are often angry.
- Read through one of the gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John). Read one chapter each day. Use a journal to record the ways Jesus lived out Ephesians 4:32. Write down the people to whom Jesus showed kindness and forgiveness.
- Read John 19. Ask God to help you better appreciate the reality of Ephesians 4:32, that “God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.” Pray that He will help you be willing to offer the same kind of mercy and forgiveness to others.

Put a star beside the idea you want to try. Pray that God will help you “put in” His truth, and as you do, that He will change how you think and what you want to become more like Jesus. Use the space below to write out your prayer to the Lord:

Day 7: What is the solution to sinful anger? (Put On)



Pray that God will help you understand His Word.



Read God's Word: *What does God say?*

In Ephesians we have seen two of the important steps we need to begin taking in order to deal with the problem of anger in our lives. We must put off sin. And we must put in God's truth. Ephesians 4 lists one more step in the plan for change. Use your Bible to fill in the blank below:

Ephesians 4:24 And that ye _____ the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

How does this verse describe the "new man"? _____

Because of all Christ has done for us, believers have a responsibility to live in a way that rightly displays our new life in Christ. Look at the following verses and write down the character qualities that should be shining in the life of someone who is in Christ:

- Ephesians 4:2 _____
- Ephesians 4:15 _____
- Ephesians 5:2 _____



Think Bible: *What does God want me to learn?*

With God's help you must "put on" what is like Jesus Christ. "Putting on" is the positive side of "putting off." This is the biblical principle of replacement. Let's say you had a bad wheel on your bicycle. Ruined and bent out of shape, the wheel no longer worked. So, you made the decision "put off" the wheel—you took it off and threw it away for good. But unless you put on a new wheel in its place, your bike still will not work. You have to "put on" a replacement wheel for your bike to work as it should.

The same is true for sinful anger. Putting off is not enough. What action steps do you need to take to put on obedience to God's Word? In what ways do you need to begin speaking and responding like Jesus in the situations where you are tempted to be sinfully angry? Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Pray daily for the person with whom you are usually angry.
- Make a list of 3 godly responses you can give to that person when you are provoked to anger. Practice saying them out loud so you are ready to use them when you feel your anger rising.
- Make a list of verses about God's mercy and review them each day so that you can call them to mind when your anger is rising.
- Review your study on the life of Jesus. How did He show kindness to others? Think about ways you can show kindness to the person with whom you are usually angry. Write your ideas down. Look for the opportunity to put your list into practice.
- Invite a trusted, godly adult to walk beside you as you seek to grow in Christlike love and forgiveness. Ask for help in planning a way of escape for the times when you are tempted to be sinfully angry.

Remember, not all anger is wrong. There are things you *should* be angry about—because God is angry about them. Anger and sadness over sin and its effects are good and right, as they reflect the emotions of God Himself. But His emotions are perfect. Ours are not. We have to be careful; even if we are angry about the right thing, our anger can become wrong when we express it to the wrong degree or in sinful ways.

Ellie was right to be angry about the gossip and slander she experienced. Her friends were not pleasing God. How should she use the energy of anger to solve the problem? First, she should take her problem to God. She can tell God how she feels, pouring out the pain of her anger in prayer. Then she can take the energy she feels from being wronged, to go make the relationship with her friends right. Ellie probably needs help from a godly adult to do this well.

In a broken world, we won't always see wrongs made right. Judges don't always make just decisions. People often seem to get away with doing wrong. In situations like this, what do we do with our feelings of righteous anger? We follow the example of Jesus. When He suffered unjustly, Jesus "committed himself to him that judgeth righteously" (1 Peter 2:23). Like Jesus, we can trust that God, the perfect Judge, will one day right every wrong. When you feel righteous anger rising in your heart because of a wrong that you have no ability to make right, talk to God about it. And then "put in" His truth—tell your heart the truth about His character and His promises.



Live Bible: *What should I do because of what God says?*

Now it's your turn. Use the space below to write out at least three specific ways you plan to "put on" obedience to God. You can use some of the ideas above, or write out your own.

- 1) _____

- 2) _____

- 3) _____

Remember, our struggle with sinful anger exposes our need for God. This is a good thing! Sin always hurts. God wants us to come to Him so that He can forgive our sin, and continue to change us so that we are more like Jesus. When the alarm of anger goes off, let it be a reminder of how much you need God. Run to Him. He will help you!

God changes us from the inside out as we **put off** sin, **put in** His truth, and **put on** Christlikeness. These aren't steps we do just one time. They are the new way God calls us to live as His children. We put off, put in, put on over and over again. And over time, by the power of His Spirit, God makes us more like Jesus. People might think of you as an angry person right now. But if you are in Christ, and applying His solutions to your anger, then others will begin to notice a change. It doesn't mean you don't struggle with anger any more. But Christ's mercy and forgiveness will start to grow in your life. And do you know what happens when other people see the fruit of Christlikeness in you? God is glorified!

Put off, put in, put on. By God's grace, you can take the path from sinful anger to Christlike kindness and forgiveness.