

Be Angry, Do Not Sin

“Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil” ([Eph. 4:26-27](#)).

- [Ephesians 4:25-32](#)

Today we will examine one of the most important passages in Scripture on Christians and anger. The life of Jesus has shown us that being angry, in itself, is not evil. [Ephesians 4:25–32](#) takes this idea a step further. Paul tells us not only that we are permitted to be angry, he also says there are times when we *must* be angry.

That the Lord would command us to be angry at times is understandable when we consider biblical ethics. In the same letter Paul summarizes what we need to know about Christian virtues by telling us to be “imitators of God” (5:1). Our Father in heaven can only be perfectly holy if He gets angry when His righteous standards are violated ([Deut. 32:4](#); [Isa. 6:3](#)). If we are to imitate Him, we too must get mad at those things that make God angry. We must grow incensed when we see the weak and helpless exploited, because the Lord’s wrath is kindled against the oppressor ([Ex. 22:21–24](#)). Hypocrisy in our lives and in the church must disturb us because of Jesus’ anger at those who honor Him with their lips only ([Matt. 15:8](#); [23](#)).

Yet we are imperfect, and while we must sometimes get angry, we must also take care that we do not sin in our anger ([Eph. 4:26](#)). Every time we are mad, we should check ourselves to see if we are upset at the things God hates. Otherwise we may be angry without just cause and give opportunity to the Devil (v. 27). Anger is the emotion most prone to sinful abuse, and this is why Paul also tells us to put anger away in this same passage (v. 31). This is not a contradiction of verse 26, Paul is only recognizing that our anger, even if it is godly at first, is too often perverted into feelings of malice instead of a longing to see offenders repent. When this happens, we are in danger of giving root to the bitterness that destroys ([Heb. 12:15](#)).

Finally, though evil should anger us, we are not always to pour wrath on others. Jesus castigated the Pharisees because of their hard hearts (Matt. 23), but He was

kind and gentle to the adulterous woman because she was humble and contrite ([John 7:53–8:11](#)). We cannot condone sin, but we must also imitate our Savior and seek to restore the repentant in lieu of showing the full brunt of our wrath.
Application for God

We can too easily fall back under the sway of sin, which makes our hearts “deceitful beyond all things” ([Jer. 17:9](#)). We can trick ourselves into thinking our anger is godly when it is not pleasing to the Lord. Being honest with other Christians is essential in differentiating between godly and ungodly anger. If you are mad today, confess this anger to a godly friend who can help discern whether it is justified. Then, seek the good of the person with whom you are angry.

Passages for Further Study

[Deut. 30:1–10](#)

[Jer. 22:13–17](#)

Luke 15

[2 Cor. 2:5–11](#)