

Tyson Ziegler

SESSION 2 | Mercy—A Radical New Response to Anger

I. WHY DO I GET SO ANGRY?

It's an active displeasure toward something important enough to care about.

Anger is a whole person response.

Jas. 4:1-2

II. HOW CAN I BE GOOD AND ANGRY?

It's possible to look at a scenario, where we responded in sinful anger and learn to respond in the way Christ commands us.

The key change occurs when we respond to perceived or actual wrongs with a gospel-motivation.

Jas. 1:19-20 – God's righteousness

Is. 53:3-4 – Christ's sufferings

"A spiteful, quarrelsome (angry) Christian is a scandal. It is doubtful that such a one has sat at the foot of the cross!" – J. C. Ryle¹

¹ <http://graceky.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Milton-Vincent-Notes.pdf>

III. WHO SHOULD MY ANGER LOOK LIKE?

Your anger and mine can be remade into the image of God's! – Pg. 72²

As Spirit-filled image bearers, we now have the power to look at wrongs done to us through a redemptive lens.

2 Pet. 1

The Gospel frees us from the war of self-worship

Rom. 6

The God who revealed Himself in Scripture is not a theological abstraction. He is an active, morally discerning person. He sees, evaluates, speaks, and takes action. – Pg. 76

Be holy as I am holy - 1 Pet. 1:15-16; Lev.11:44

Your anger is Godlike to the degree you treasure justice and fairness and are alert to betrayal and falsehood. Your anger is devil-like to the degree you play god and are petty, merciless, whiny, argumentative, willful, and unfair. – Pg. 66

Ex. 34 - ⁶The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, “The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, ⁷keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin

Ps. 103:8-13 - ⁸The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. ⁹He will not always chide, nor will he keep his anger forever. ¹⁰He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. ¹¹For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; ¹² as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us. ¹³As a father shows compassion to his children, so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear him.

IV. HOW IS MERCY THE RIGHT RESPONSE?

Anger motivated by the gospel is expressed through the *Constructive Displeasure of Mercy*.

“Good anger operates as one aspect of mercy. It brings good into bad situations. It stands up for the helpless and victimized. It calls out wrongdoers, but holds out promises of forgiveness, inviting wrongdoers to a new life.” Pg. 72

² All page numbers listed below refer to David Powlison, *Good and Angry*.

Constructive –responding to a situation in a way that builds up and does not tear down. Of all the attributes of God’s nature, mercy suggests the most radical/antithetical response to our bad anger.

Displeasure– the feeling of annoyance or disapproval we experience when something happens to us through offense or injury.

Mercy – the willing disposition to *not* treat someone the way their actions deserve.

Rom. 12:17

“By definition, mercy is consistently *constructive*. Mercy intervenes to address and solve whatever problem is in view. It is a rich, complex way of responding to life” – p.72

“The typical bad angers are all versions of returning evil for evil. But, where intelligent mercy flows, then mercy’s displeasure brings a powerful good. Strong mercy is the DNA of the entire Bible. Clear-minded mercy is the DNA of redemption.” Pg. 72

“If this world did not throb with sufferings and sins, we ourselves would not need to learn how to also feel mercy’s energetic displeasure with the status quo.” Pg. 72

“Mercy. Because Jesus hates suffering and loves sufferers, sufferers find help and joy. Mercy. Because Jesus hates sin and loves sinners, sinners find forgiveness and joy.” Pg. 73

V. PATIENCE IS MERCY’S RADICAL RESPONSE

“Patience is the willingness to respond slowly to wrongs and work with them over time...Patience hurts..you bear with difficult people and events, not out of indifference, resignation, or cowardice...Patience is not passivity. It is how to be purposeful and constructive in the face of great difficulties. You are even willing to live constructively for a long time with seemingly insoluble evils. By definition, patience means that what’s wrong doesn’t change right away.” Pg. 78

Biblical examples of mercy and patience

Jn. 11:35

Mt. 9:9-13

Mk. 3:1-5

Rom. 5:6-10

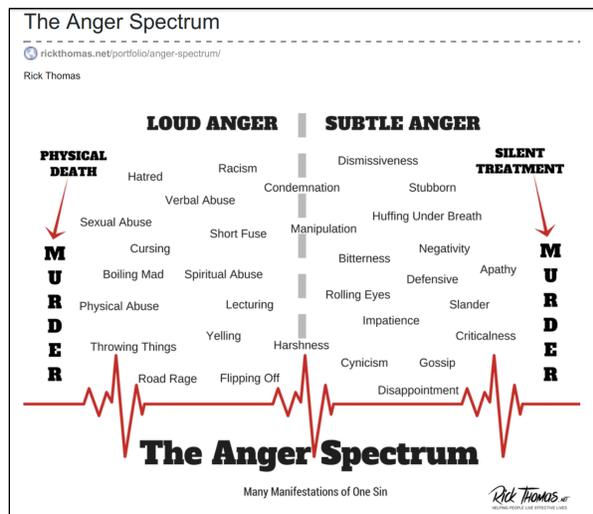
GOOD & ANGRY: OVERCOMING IRRITATION, OUTBURSTS, & EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN

Case study:

Taylor and Maddie have just come home from a day of shopping. Maddie saw a couch that would have been perfect for their newly redesigned living space. Taylor felt the price was too much and would be unwise to purchase something this costly at this time—something he’s told Maddie several times already. Besides, she wasn’t on board with his last purchase he had suggested—season tickets to the Reds. What was supposed to be a date turned into a battleground of different desires being communicated yet unmet.

Their conflict lingered until they arrived home. Maddie was still very upset that Taylor didn’t listen to her. After all, it’s Mother’s Day weekend. Taylor, aware that this conversation wasn’t going to end until he gave in to Maddie’s desire (again), stewed quietly in his favorite chair. Maddie began to give him all the reasons why he’s such a disappointing husband. Taylor turned the TV on at an opportune moment to let Maddie know he was finished discussing this with her. That was it. Maddie blew up and yelled at Taylor reminding him how rude and insensitive he’s been all day! How dare he turn his attention elsewhere while she was trying to speak to him. That was all Taylor could take; to avoid any more of her attitude, he left to go work in his garage.

1. Given your understanding of the Anger Spectrum from last week, what specific manifestations of anger does Taylor need to confess? How about Maddie?



2. What were each of them really wanting in this situation?
3. How would responding with Gospel-motivated mercy have influenced this situation? What would patience have looked like?

TAKE HOME QUESTIONS

Last week, we identified what anger is and why as a sinful response to wrongs we are commanded to respond differently. This week, we began identifying how God desires us to respond considering the hope of the gospel we have experienced. Using the questions below, identify anger in your life and consider the difference patience and mercy would make when you are tempted to sin.

- What are my ungodly patterns of anger?

- Think of an expression of anger in your life from this past week. What was the purpose behind your anger? What motivated you to respond the way you did?

- What different purpose could have driven a patient response?

- Why do you think patience is the first characteristic of love that Paul mentions in 1 Corinthians 13?

- Can you identify one example from your life of seeing the constructive displeasure of mercy on display?

- Identify one area of your life God is directing you to grow in patience (relationship with spouse, children, coworker, etc.) and seek to live out the constructive displeasure of mercy this week.

Optional exercise. Consider the chart below. Each day you are given the opportunity to respond sinfully or with the fruit of mercy when you are wronged. This list is more robust than what we will be considering in this class, but reflects the fruit of the gospel from Colossians 3. Attempt to track how you do each day in responding to wrongs with the gospel-motivated mercy.

**GOOD & ANGRY: OVERCOMING IRRITATION, OUTBURSTS,
& EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN**

Biblical Qualities to Replace Anger

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved,...patience. - Col. 3:12

At the end of each day, check the following qualities if they were demonstrated to others. Identify the areas that are not checked and focus on the development of those particular qualities.

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

“Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.”
Colossians 3:12-13 ESV