

SERIES: I'M NOT ANGRY
PART 8: THE RELATIONSHIP CURE

We conclude our series today, I'M NOT ANGRY. Someone said to me during this series that they were very angry that I was doing this series. It stirred up all of the anger issues they had worked so hard to suppress. I thought to myself, this is exactly why I did this. Recently another person told me that she identified herself and the mute personality. I identified four types of personalities and how they deal with anger. She said to me honestly and straight faced, "Pastor Scott, I had my stroke because I kept all my anger in, and one day by body rebelled, and it has left me with some fairly serious side effects."

These stories, loved ones, motivate me deeply. If you call CVCHURCH your home church and you identify me as your pastor, I love you deeply, and I take seriously my God-given call to care for your soul. This is why I teach the Bible like I do. I teach to the best of my ability what the Bible teaches and says and to communicate it in a very simple and practical way so that you can learn how to apply what you're hearing. I call it PURPOSE DRIVEN PREACHING. If you will take the principles I outline every week for you and get into a small group so you have a group of like-minded people to walk out the truth with you, change is inevitable. Transformation is possible.

I read a story recently where someone reported that there are two small towns in Illinois. One called Normal, Illinois, and the other Oblong, Illinois. There was a marriage recently and the headlines read, “Normal Man marries Oblong woman.

After 30 years of marriage, a husband and wife came for counseling. When asked what the problem was, the wife went into a tirade listing every problem they had ever had in the years they had been married. On and on she went. Neglect, lack of intimacy, emptiness, loneliness, feeling unloved and unlovable. An entire laundry list of unmet needs she had endured.

Finally, after allowing this for a sufficient length of time, the therapist got up, walked around the desk and, after asking the wife to stand, he embraced her and kissed her passionately as her husband watched—with a raised eyebrow.

The woman shut up and quietly sat down in a daze. The therapist turned to the husband and said, “This is what your wife needs at least 3 times a week. Can and will you do this?” “Well, I can drop her off here on Mondays, and Wednesdays but on Friday I fish.”

I want to talk with you today about how to express your anger appropriately in your relationships. Conflict is inevitable, loved ones, but combat is not. **Here at CVCHURCH, 2018 is the YEAR OF BREAKTHROUGH.** Every disagreement you have in your relationships, your marriage, family, and friends will either lead to a breakdown or a breakthrough into

a new level of intimacy. The Bible is very clear that the key to your relational breakthroughs is how you manage your anger. The Bible says that mismanaged anger can kill your relationships—especially your most intimate ones like marriage, family and ministry relationships.

In Genesis chapter 4:5-7, look at how Cain mismanaged his anger, and he committed the first murder in the Bible. **“God did not accept Cain’s gift. This made Cain very angry, and he looked dejected. ⁶‘Why are you so angry?’ the Lord asked Cain. ‘Why do you look so dejected? ⁷You will be accepted if you do what is right. But if you refuse to do what is right, then watch out! Sin is crouching at the door, eager to control you. But you must subdue it and be its master.”** We’re not told what was wrong with Cain’s offering, but what we see is Cain’s bad heart when Cain didn’t take God’s advice, and he let his resentment towards Able drive him to commit murder. 1 John 3:12 says, **“We must not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and killed his brother. And why did he kill him? Because Cain had been doing what was evil, and his brother had been doing what was righteous.”** Cain’s anger turned to jealousy and then evil. Proverbs 11:29 in the LB says, **“The fool who provokes his or her family to anger and resentment will finally have nothing left.”**

The key to stopping the foolishness, conflict and chaos that happens in our homes and in our relationships, is to learn how to express our anger appropriately. When you have an argument, there are three phases we all experience in every

argument. I have it in your notes there: **ANATOMY OF AN ARGUMENT: Phase 1: Recognition: We have a problem.** This is where the people in the relationship are agitated. **Phase 2: Response: I'm upset about it.** In this phase people can get loud and angry, and others can get their feelings hurt and they pout and withdraw. This can happen way too often in marriages. **Phase 3: Resolution: What can we do about it?** This is the stage where you can actually create more intimacy in the relationship with whom you're having difficulty, or it can create a chasm and can hurt and even end the relationship.

Many people don't get past stage 2. Too many marriages don't get past stage 2. They get stuck in the reaction stage. They don't know how to deal with their anger. Most people tend towards becoming more aggressive or more passive. In most marriages, there is a skunk and a turtle. You always know when the skunk is angry because they stink up the place. Then the turtle is angry and they withdraw into a shell. Typically, in a marriage one can be more silent and the other can trend toward being violent. One blows up the other clams up. It is imperative that you learn how to express your anger appropriately. If you don't, your relationships erode over the years, and that is where you see marriages after 10, 20, 30, 40, 50 and even 60 years divorce. Here at CVCHURCH we want to prevent that kind of thing from ever happening. Anger is an appropriate emotion; the Bible says you must learn to manage and control your anger. Let's learn four truths and actions on how we can have better relationships.

I. Admit my anger

Please read out loud with me Ephesians 4:25-26a, **“So stop telling lies. Let us tell our neighbors the truth, for we are all parts of the same body. ²⁶And don’t sin by letting anger control you.”** Lying is a root to anger. If you are presently angry over something that has happened or someone, be honest with yourself and ask yourself why are you angry, and be honest. Most likely you feel hurt or threatened and that you feel you’re under siege personally, and your sense of self is under attack, or your basic needs are being threatened, or your essential convictions are being challenged and blocked. It is imperative that you’re honest with yourself and first ask yourself, “Am I truly being honest? Is one of these three areas or all of them truly being challenged? If so how and by whom?” This is where my teachings on how fear, insecurity, loneliness, and feeling inferior come in. Sometimes we’re not really being threatened, but we feel we are. The first step is to feel your anger and then admit, “I am feeling angry.” Then ask, “Why?” If you are going to blame the other person and refuse to look at your part of the problem and take responsibility for your part you will end up sinning in your anger by nursing a grudge and becoming bitter and resentful. The key is once you’re angry and you admit and you know why you are angry, pray and decide what kind of righteous action you are going to take that will rectify the problem. In other words, attack the problem not the person. In Matthew 21:12-13, the Bible says Jesus got angry when He saw people’s commercialism in selling animals for sacrifice at

astronomical prices and that they deceived the foreigners who didn't know the exchange rates. Their greed was stopping people from worshipping God. So, Jesus marshaled His anger, and He drove out the people who were buying and selling animals for sacrifice, and He knocked over the table of the greedy evil money changers. Then Jesus was honest about what drove His anger. Vs. 13 says, **“The Scriptures declare, ‘My temple will be called a house of prayer, but you have turned it into a den of thieves.’”**

In Mark 10:13-14, Jesus' disciples scolded the parents for bringing their children so Jesus could touch and bless them. The Bible says when Jesus saw this He was angry with His disciples. He said to them in vv. 14-15, **“Let the children come to Me. Don't stop them! For the Kingdom of God belongs to those who are like these children. ¹⁵I tell you the truth, anyone who doesn't receive the Kingdom of God like a child will never enter it.”** Jesus as God expressed His anger always in appropriate ways and it was always about extending and advancing God's Kingdom. He expressed anger at how God's house of prayer was being violated for greed and selfish gain. Jesus expressed His anger at how His disciples were blocking children from being touched and blessed by Him. He rebuked them, and then vs. 16 says, **“He took the children in His arms and placed His hands on their heads and blessed them.”** He channeled His anger by using the energy of His anger to accept, love and physically bless those children. He admitted His anger, felt His anger and then He took the energy that is created by the anger to do the right thing.

Most of what we call righteous anger on our part is really our own selfishness, immaturity and demanding our own way. Our need to justify ourselves usually does not achieve God's purposes and plans for our lives and for His Kingdom. Admit your anger; in doing so you begin the process of feeling your anger, but as Paul puts it, **“Don't sin by letting anger control you.”**

II. Understand my anger

This is key, and this is where you tell the truth to yourself about why you're angry, or irritated, or agitated or ticked off or annoyed. Proverbs 19:11 says, **“Sensible people control their temper; they earn respect by overlooking wrongs.”** Wise people. Patient people. People who have learned to control themselves, or those who successfully control their temper and the angry behavior they are prone to display when they feel that they're not getting what they want. Proverbs 14:29 says, **“People with understanding control their anger; a hot temper shows great foolishness.”** The better I understand why I am feeling angry the more patient I will be. It is important that you ask yourself, “Why am I angry? Why am I ticked off? What is upsetting me so much?” I have said this many times, but anger is a warning light that I am dealing with something deeper than what appears. We get frustrated by surface issues, but we get angry by life issues. Have you noticed that most arguments don't start with the real problem? They start with surface agitations and disagreements. You only get to the real problem if you hang in there, keep listening to yourself and to the other person

until you both get in touch with why you are feeling angry. Here are few of the root causes of anger. When you feel unaccepted. When you feel rejected for who you are. When you are compared to someone else, or when you are nagged, goaded or when you feel you are being made fun of. Another root cause of anger can be when you feel unappreciated. When you feel taken for granted and you're not valued for who you are and what you do at home, work and for your church family.

90% of the time our anger at its root is either hurt or fear. When you say, "I'm angry," what would probably be more honest with yourself and the others involved would be to say, "I'm hurt," or "I'm disappointed," or "I'm afraid." When you focus on the hurt and fear that is in play you will get to the real issue more quickly of what is driving the anger. When you say, "I'm disappointed," instead of, "You make me disappointed," the other person is more open to listening to what you have to say instead of taking a defensive posture because you said, "You make me angry. I am disappointed in you." "You" is a defensive stance. You will be more successful in dealing with your anger and the roots of it when you simply admit to yourself that you are angry, and you begin to commit to understanding why you get angry when you do and over what.

III. Deal immediately with my anger

In other words, I need to be in touch with what I am feeling on an ongoing basis so I don't procrastinate when it comes to

my anger. Why? Because it will turn into bitterness, resentment and hate. James 1:19-20, **“You must be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to get angry. ²⁰Human anger does not produce the righteousness God desires.”** Patience is always linked to being quick to listen and slow to speak. Godly wisdom links the ability to be committed to listening, and, then, being very slow to speak will lead and help in being slow to anger. Quick to speak leads to being defensive and usually leads to trying to vindicate myself. Ephesians 4:26b-27 says, **“Don’t let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷for anger gives a foothold to the devil.”** We’re to take this verse and the James verse literally. Make a commitment to not go to bed angry, irritated, agitated, annoyed, or in a state of unforgiveness towards anyone. Why? Because it will interrupt your sleep, and it allows the devil to have influence in your life. Doctors and psychologists will tell you that anger is energy that needs to be expressed appropriately. When you swallow your anger, your stomach and body keep score. If you don’t talk it out you will take it out on yourself and others. Kathe and I work on obeying the scripture to go to bed with all things resolved to the best of our abilities. The leading reason, at least physiologically, for dealing with anger issues immediately is that anger produces biochemical changes in your body. This is a well-known fact. You will get flushed in your face, your neck gets tight and your muscles get tense. Your adrenals go into overdrive. Have you ever heard anyone say, “That just burns me up?” Guess what. They’re right. “He’s a pain in my back. For some of us that might be the cause of your back problem—unresolved anger. There is only one letter

difference between danger and anger. The Bible tells us that anger is a very dangerous emotion if not dealt with properly and quickly. You are to deal with it immediately so it doesn't build up and hurt you. Unresolved conflict just keeps on festering. It will come back to haunt you. The best time to deal with it is as quickly as possible. Ecclesiastes 7:9 says, **“Control your temper, for anger labels you a fool.”** One of the reasons it is important to admit my anger, understand my anger and deal with it immediately is that if you don't you become known to those you relate to as a fool and people will want to stay away from you. You become unsafe to your spouse, children, friends, and people in your CVCHURCH family. Our guests and people we're desiring to see trust their lives to Jesus can be turned away. Loved family, there is a lot at stake with each one of us being honest about the levels of anger that we each have and submitting to God's Word and the truths we're looking at today. Psalm 37:8 says, **“Stop being angry! Turn from your rage. Do not lose your temper, it only leads to harm.”** Proverbs 15:1 says, **“A gentle answer deflects anger, but harsh words make tempers flare.”**

IV. Control my anger

How do we do that? Proverbs 29:11 says, **“Fools vent their anger, but the wise quietly hold it back.”** First you commit yourself to God's wisdom. You say, “Father, I want to be the kind of person Your Word tells me to be. I admit that only a fool vents their anger, but the wise can choose to hold back what they would want to say or do. I put Your word first.”

Proverbs 15:18 says, **“A hot-tempered person starts fights; a cool-tempered person stops them.”** A hot-tempered person, which the Bible calls a fool, is someone that stirs up fights wherever they go. They sow conflict, chaos and confusion. Commit yourself to creating an environment in your marriage, with your children, people in your small group and friends by choosing to be a cool-tempered, gentle, peace-loving person. Ephesians 4:29 in the ESV says, **“Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.”** The word corrupt is the Gk word (Sapros) which applies to “bad” fruit or putrid, rotten fish. When we call each other names, and we speak negatively and rudely to each other and belittle one another, the results to the relationship are like rotten fruit and putrid rotten fish. It makes you sick. This is what anger does to our relationships. Paul says part of controlling your anger is to only choose to speak words that encourage, build up and lift each other up, even when you find you must discuss difficult subjects with each other.

I want to close this morning (this afternoon) with 7 keys so that you can learn to fight fair with your spouse, child, friend, or someone you’re serving with. This is key for us to have the Breakthroughs God has for us this year in 2018: **THE YEAR OF BREAKTHROUGH.**

1. Refuse to compare. Treat the person as an individual.

Stay away from making statements like, “Why can’t you be like...,” or worse, “You’re just like...” That’s a low blow. It’s unfair to compare. The Bible says it’s unfair and wrong to compare yourself with others or compare others with others.

2. Refuse to condemn, but affirm.

Stay away from using absolutes. “You always...” “You never...” You should or ought. “It’s all your fault!” “You should be ashamed.” Condemning the other person doesn’t work. Jesus said, “I didn’t come to condemn the world but to save it. You don’t change people by labeling or condemning them. We’re changed by seeing and hearing what we can become not being told we have failed. Don’t tell it like it is; tell it like it could be. That’s speaking for faith.

3. Refuse to command and make requests instead.

Never leave an argument by forcing someone to do something. “I demand you do what I say.” That never works.

4. Refuse to challenge and express what you would like to see, hear and feel in your relationship.

Threatening is not helpful. It is vengeful. “You just try that and see what happens. I dare you.” Often times in marriage the three common areas that spouses threaten each other on are **Money, Sex and Divorce.**

5. Refuse to condescend.

Stay away from mocking, ridiculing, making fun of and humiliating the other person. When you take a rigid stand that someone must be right and the other person must be wrong, it will stalemate your relationship immediately. Instead, remain flexible, open minded and seek to understand and not just to be understood.

6. Refuse to contradict.

Stay away from interrupting the other person in the middle of a sentence. Someone whom I love deeply has helped me by letting me know when I have interrupted them, and I stop to hear them finish their thought. You do not have to counter everything someone says that you disagree with.

7. Refuse to confuse.

There are those who are brilliant at confusing the other person. They know how to bring up unrelated issues that are meant to sidetrack the conversation. Stay away from divisionary tactics. The best way to do this is to admit when you begin to realize that you have been wrong.

Loved ones, I encourage all of us to take these truths to heart and go home and go over the notes with your family, your small group, and let's encourage each other and allow each other to hold us accountable to put these truths into action so that we can all experience profound breakthroughs in our relationships with how we learn to defuse anger and actually live in peace with each other.

COMMUNION

“As they were eating, Jesus took some bread and blessed it. Then He broke it in pieces and gave it to the disciples, saying, ‘Take this and eat it, for this is My body.’ And He took a cup of wine and gave thanks to God for it. He gave it to them and said, ‘Each of you drink from it, for this is My blood, which confirms the covenant between God and His people. It is poured out as a sacrifice to forgive the sins of many.’”

Matthew 26:26-28