

## How to Deal with Toxic Anger. (Matt 5:21-26)

**Intro – Movie Clip** -We saw a clip from Anger Management, showing a humorous situation of the effects of being late. Jack Nicholson asks Adam Sandler a good question in the beginning.. “are you trying to get us both killed?”.

It highlights that when under pressure, stressed or irritated we don't see things clearly and take unnecessary risks, often making the wrong decisions potentially leading to severe consequences for ourselves and others around us. We need to stay “centered” and Jesus shows us the way we can do that.

### Toxic Anger

Unchecked, unchallenged, undealt with anger is toxic leading to sin and ultimately death.

Jesus says if you are angry with someone, it is as if you have already committed murder.

**Murder & anger** are on the same level – in danger of **judgement**.

Calling someone an “Empty Head” (attack on the **head**)- in danger of council (**high court**)

Labelling someone a “Fool” - (attack on the **heart**) – in danger of **hell fire**.

Jesus says – murder by action, anger or word begins in the heart!

This is graphically seen in the story of Cain & his brother Abel (the first murder in history!)

Gen 4:4-7 – Cain's anger & resentment towards his brother was not dealt with and became toxic

**resulting** in Abel's murder and him living an **aimless life outside the presence of God!** (Gen 4:16).

Anger is like a fire alarm – it highlights a deeper (root) problem causing the fire. The answer is not to destroy the fire alarm but to deal with the fire (deeper emotional issue)! Anger generally starts from **feeling a sense of injustice**.

### What is the solution to dealing with injustice & anger in our lives?

- Knowing and accepting what Jesus did for us at Calvary.
- Began at Gethsemane – **extreme stress / pain** (sweat drops of blood) at what He knew was coming upon Him. Yet He chooses God's will – **to hand everything over to God!**
- Instead of **reacting** to His opponents He **responds** with forgiveness.
- The **greatest injustice of all time** was Jesus (who knew no sin) becoming sin for us!
- Only when we understand **the magnitude of forgiveness we have received** will we be able to forgive those who wrong us. (Luke 7:47-48)
- Through His sacrifice we can receive a new heart and be made right with God (2Cor 5:16-21)

### How practically can we live free of toxic anger?

1. Step back, pause & see God & the bigger picture!
2. Examine your heart. Take responsibility for your emotions.
3. Release your anxiety / pain / sense of injustice to God!(Phil 4:6-7)
4. Forgive quickly & as a priority! (Matt 5: 23-26 ; 6: 12, 14-15)
5. Pray for the other person .
6. Seek to restore the relationship. It is more important than being right!
7. Keep walking in step with the Holy Spirit – let His peace pervade your life.

Remember prevention is better than cure! Think on God's Word, walk in step with the Holy Spirit and have a friend or two who you can share your heart with.

## **Life Group Application Questions**

How to deal with Toxic Anger (Matt 5:21-26)

Discuss the following areas related to living free of toxic anger:

### **1 Recognize the source of toxic anger [Gal 5:21-24]**

Discuss the last time you were really angry and try to identify the reason why?

- a) What factors contributed to the incident? (Preparation / Time management/etc)
- b) What was the state of your emotions like **before** the moment?
- c) What was the state of your environment?

### **2. Mastering unhelpful emotions**

Discuss the story of Cain & Abel (Gen 4:4-7).

God told Cain to master his anger. What should he have done?

What are the consequences of choosing to hold on to hurt & resentment?

**3. Eph 4:26-27** says : 'Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, nor give place to the devil.

Discuss what this means.

4. How does **Christ's example** inspire us when we have to deal with offence / anger?

### **5. Practical Steps to deal with anger**

Discuss the steps given and describe how you have dealt with situations in the past to defuse anger.