Defusing Sinful Anger
Part 1: Defining Anger Biblically

Anger is an intense, complex opposition to a perceived wrong.

An intense, complex

Active, whole person response: physical, emotional, volitional, cognitive, desires, word & actions

Anger is something we “do” not something we merely feel [Dave Powlison]

Opposition

Moral judgment of disapproval or displeasure

Something that I care about is wrong

Moved to action: offenders must be justly punished

Anger issues a “mental death penalty.” We play the role of judge, jury, and executioner. “Frustration” and “irritation” are milder forms of anger which seeks a lesser punishment. (Matthew 5:21–22, James 4:1–2 1 John 3:15)

To a perceived wrong

Perceived wrongs, evil, unfairness committed against oneself

Perceived wrongs evil, unfairness committed against others

A perfectly holy, all-knowing God perceives wrongs with 100% accuracy

Sinful humans with limited knowledge often perceive wrongs incorrectly.
**Holy Anger**

**God’s Anger**

God’s slowness to anger in mentioned nine times in the Old Testament (Ex 34:6; Num. 14.18; Neh. 9.17; Ps. 85.15, 103.8; 145.8; Joel 2.13; Jon. 4.2; Nah 1.3).

In James 1:19, we too are called to be slow to anger.

Yet, God’s perfect, pure, settled wrathful opposition to evil is mentioned in virtually every OT book:

- Numbers 25:1
- Psalm 2:4–6; 7:6, 11
- John 3:36
- Romans 1:18–19; 2:5

**Christ’s Anger**

Psalm 2:12

- Mark 3:1–6
- Mark 10:13–16
- John 2:13–17
Human Anger
Characteristics of Righteous Anger:

1. Righteous anger reacts against things that are actually sin, not mere inconveniences or unmet expectations or preferences.

2. Righteous anger is focused on God and his glory.

3. Righteous anger doesn’t continue after genuine repentance occurs.

4. Righteous anger remains self-controlled, avoiding unrestrained rage or self-pity:

Examples: Moses (Ex. 32:19–20), King Saul (1 Sam. 11:6), Jonathan (1 Sam. 20:34), the psalmist (119:53, 104, 128), Paul (2 Cor. 11:29)

Admonitions towards righteous anger: Prov. 12:16, 14:29, 15:1,18, 16:32, 19:11, 29:8, 11, Ecc. 7:9

Characteristics of Unrighteous Anger:

1. Wrong Perceptions

We are deceived about circumstances that seem evil

Jacob with Laban’s pursuit of household idols (Gen. 31)

Potiphar’s anger at Joseph (Gen. 39)

We perceive wrong where there is none because of entitled pride.

David’s Anger at God over Uzzah’s death (2 Sam. 6)

Jonah’s anger at God (Jonah 4)

Synagogue official’s anger at healing on the sabbath (Luke 13.14)

Chief priests and scribes’ anger at the praise given to Christ (Matt 21:15)

Disciples’ anger over James and John’s request (Matt 20. 24)

We impugn motives (1 Cor. 4:3-5, James 4:11-12)

We judge others with merciless harshness. (Matt. 7:1-2)
2. Wrong Expressions

Esau’s murderous anger at Jacob (Gen. 27)

Jacob at angry words to Rachel (Gen 30)

Prov. 14:17 A quick-tempered man acts foolishly, and a man of evil devices is heated.

Prov. 19:19 A man of great anger will bear the penalty, for if you rescue him, you will only have to do it again.

Prov. 29:22-25 Do not associate with a man given to anger; or go with a hot-tempered man, or you will learn his ways and find a snare for yourself.

Prov. 25:28 Like a city that is broken into and without walls is a man who has no control over his spirit.

Prov. 29:22 An angry man stirs up strife, and a hot-tempered man abounds in transgression.

Gal 5.20

Eph. 4.26, 31, 6.4

Col 3.8

1 Tim 2.8;

Titus 3:3;

James 1:19-20

3. Sometimes both at the same time!

Cain’s anger at God (Gen. 4:5)

Saul’s jealous anger over David (1 Sam 18 et al)

Saul’s spear throwing at his son Jonathan (1 Sam 20)

Herod’s murder of infants (Matt 2)

Nazareth synagogue worshippers (Luke 4:14-30)