



abclinks

connecting personal and small group studies with this week's sermon

This Week's Edition for the sermon on **February 25, 2007**

this week's corebelief

Patience

"I take a long time to overheat, and I endure patiently the unavoidable pressures of life."

A patient man has great understanding, but a quick-tempered man displays folly. Proverbs 14.29

Adapted from **The 30 Core Competencies** *The Christian Life Profile*, Randy Frazee, Zondervan

See www.pantego.org/resources/30core.html

usingabclinks

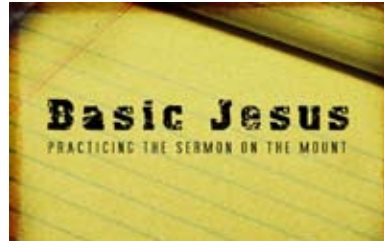
Personal Bible Studies (inside pages)

- Three personal studies per week that explore Scripture passages related to this week's sermon and include a prayer of the day

Small Group Discussion (back page)

- Small group questions that connect with the sermon and your personal Bible study
- If you are not in a small group, contact one of our small group staff members to get more information on ABC Small Groups or go to www.adabible.org>small groups.

See www.adabible.org for **abclinks** archives.



Part Three of a Seven Part Sermon Series

"Anger & Reconciliation"

As I write, I'm sitting on an airplane, returning home from a conference in San Diego. As good as the conference was, this trip has had some challenges. I learned again that modern air travel is not glamorous. As a matter of fact, it can be down right aggravating. Our flight from Grand Rapids to California was routed through Chicago where a timely snow storm caused a nasty domino-effect of delays and San Diego was socked in with fog! These factors caused a six hour flight to become a seventeen hour ordeal. My trip home hasn't been much better. Ten minutes before boarding, our pilot announced he had found a problem with the engine. The plane was grounded and the flight cancelled. I found another flight to Chicago but this change will require a car rental to get home tonight. I'll hit the sack around 4 am... again.

I'm sharing this with you not so you'll feel sorry for me (though you're welcome to) but instead, to share some observations from this trip that I've made about anger. This has been a perfect trip for anger to consume anyone involved. However, I'm happy to report that it hasn't gotten the best of me... yet. I have, though, had plenty of opportunity to observe it in others. Irate people have been everywhere this week. As I walked through a terminal, I heard a man, in a raised voiced, say on the phone, "This has been a day from HELL!" An airline employee, helping us re-book our flights, profanely berated a fellow employee because of a mistake she made. A lady on a shuttle bus stood at the front, yelling at the passengers in the back, "Are there seats in the back or not? Someone answer me!" No one did and she left. It seemed that if I wanted to find an angry person, I didn't have to look far.

As I mused on the effects of anger on the people around me, I thought it might be good to do a little self analysis of the anger in my life. The temptation was for me to smugly say, "I'm sure glad that I'm not like *those* people." However, God wanted me to dig a little deeper on this subject. Sure enough, I have issues with anger too, but when I really examined my heart, it's not circumstances that get to me, it's people. Not strangers but people I know, some being friends. Names and faces come to mind of people I've had conflict with and I realized that recently I haven't kept short accounts with people. If someone disappointed me, I chose to stew rather than graciously work it out. If someone was upset with me, I chose to avoid them rather than seek a discussion toward resolution.

When Jesus gave the Sermon on the Mount, there were people in His audience who had a sense of self-righteousness because they had never committed the "big sins" like murder. Jesus turned that idea on its head. When Jesus addressed the subject of anger, He equated it with murder. He went after the murder of heart, the anger which resides within and surfaces its ugly head in our relationships.



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timeandplace

The Sermon on the Mount takes place on a hillside outside the city of Capernaum near the Sea of Galilee in the early months of Jesus' ministry. The crowds that gathered to hear Him speak were intrigued by both His message and the authority with which He delivered it. It was fresh information that they had not heard from their spiritual leaders. Jesus was speaking about the Kingdom of Heaven as it was His Kingdom.

castofcharacters

Jesus: He captivated the crowds with the authority with which He spoke.

The Religious Teachers: The further Jesus got into His sermon, the more the Pharisees and the Sadducees must have become irate. Jesus' words challenged their interpretation of the Law. When Jesus said, "You've heard it said..." He wasn't challenging the Old Testament Law, He was challenging their current interpretation, teaching and application of the Law. The Pharisees, Sadducees and Rabbis of that day were responsible for the teaching. Jesus challenges them by saying, "*but I say...*"

storyline

"I did not come to abolish the Law..."

To a casual observer, it could appear that Jesus was anti-Ten Commandments. Taken out of context, Jesus sounded as if He thought the Old Testament Law was no longer important, practical or applicable. However, the opposite was true. Jesus was an advocate of the Law and His teaching was meant to bring clarification to it. When He said, "but I say..." He was not attempting to replace the Law or to add something to it, He was giving a fuller understanding of the original Law's purpose and application.

Read Matthew 5.17- 20

In relationship to the Old Testament Law, why did Jesus come? What warnings does He give to those who don't pay attention to the Law? What promise does He give to those who adhere to it and teach it well?

What is Jesus insinuating in verse 20 regarding the Pharisees? Who are we ultimately responsible to follow?

THINK ABOUT THIS FOR A MINUTE:

Those who teach us about God and His Word have the responsibility to teach it accurately. They are responsible to understand God's ultimate intent and purpose for His written Word and to give those who listen, applications that lead to obedience and relationship with God. Those who listen are responsible to discern truth from error. We are ultimately responsible to obey God even if our teachers are in error.

"You've heard it said... 'Don't commit murder...' but I say..."

Jesus specifically spends time clarifying the Sixth Commandment; "Do not commit murder." Since most people have never physically killed another person, it would be very easy to read past this one, checking it off your list of things to work on. But Jesus goes after the murder that is in all our hearts. He calls it anger.

Today's Prayer

Ask God for wisdom and understanding to obey His Word. Ask God to show you clear ways to follow Him today. Thank Him for giving you direction through His Word and through His Spirit.

Read Matthew 5.21-22

How did you internally respond to Jesus comparing anger to murder? Does this seem fair or appropriate to you?

Some Greek manuscripts add the phrase, "without cause" after "if you are angry." Are there times when anger is an appropriate response? Explain. Of all the times you get angry in life, how often is anger really an appropriate response that God honors? (1%, 5%, 10%, 50%, or 75% of the time?)

The NIV translates a phrase in verse 22, "If you say to your brother, Raca..." Raca is an Aramaic term of contempt that the NLT translates "If you call someone an idiot." What connection is Jesus making with contempt, name calling, anger and murder?

THINK ABOUT THIS FOR A MINUTE:

Jesus' intention was to expose the heart of the self-righteous. Most people don't have a murder problem, but most do have anger issues. A counselor that I know and respect said that a vast majority of people who come to him for counsel have an inability to forgive. He cites anger to be at the root of their refusal to forgive. From anger grows bitterness, which turns to resentment, hatred, and apathy or a hard-hearted indifference. Most of us feel justified in our anger toward others, but Jesus would emphatically debate that notion.

Take a minute to prayerfully examine your relationships. Honestly and candidly answer these questions:

Who are you angry with and why? How long have you been angry? Has your anger grown to bitterness, resentment, hatred or apathy?

"First go and be reconciled to that person."

Jesus uses two illustrations to convey His point about the effects of anger in our relationships. The first relates to when someone has something against you and the second relates to when you have a conflict with an enemy.

Read Matthew 5.23-26

How do broken relationships affect our relationship with God? Can we truly love God with all our heart when we have unresolved conflict or anger in our heart?

Who do you need to seek resolution with today? What's your plan?

Today's Prayer

Today, spend some time confessing to God any issues you have with anger, bitterness, resentment and hatred toward another person. Now go and make it right with that person. When the issue is resolved, worship God with a heart of gratitude because you are right with God and with others!

memoryverse

"Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift." Matthew 5.23-24 NIV

Week One

Matthew 6.32b-33

Week Two

Matthew 5.3



small group discussion

warmup

What is one of your biggest pet peeves? Tell why it bugs you so much. (Keep it light and fun!)

divein

“I did not come to abolish the Law...” Read Matthew 5.17- 20

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Discuss **THINK ABOUT THIS FOR A MINUTE** on page 2.

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Who do you need to seek resolution with today? What's your plan? How can this small group help you take steps to reconcile a broken relationship?

take
action

Proverbs! For further study and discussion.

The poetic writers of the book of Proverbs have much to say about anger. Here are 10 verses to read that add insight to this subject.

Proverbs 10.12

Proverbs 14.16-17

Proverbs 14.29

Proverbs 15.1

Proverbs 15.18

Proverbs 19.11

Proverbs 22.24-25

Proverbs 25.28

Proverbs 29.22

Proverbs 30.33

Bonus verses!

Galatians 5.22-25

Ephesians 4.26

James 1.19-20

Colossians 3.8