

July 12/13, 2025

"Taking Anger Seriously"

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**Beyond the  
Weekend**

## **SPEND DAILY TIME WITH GOD AS YOU READ, THINK, PRAY + ACT.**

### **2025 Focus: 50 Key Truths**

Each Friday, explore a key truth about our Christian faith and how we can live in light of this truth.

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## **Day 1** [Matthew 5:21-26](#) | The New Community

**You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, "You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment." But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment.** Matthew 5:21-22

Jesus's popularity is growing as many view him as the long-awaited King and Savior. Jesus, however, comes with a new teaching that reveals a new way of life for his followers. In Jesus's Sermon on the Mount, Jesus describes how to practice this new way of life. This way requires loving one's neighbor, putting off anger and a vengeful spirit and avoiding righteous acts for the sake of public gain or popularity. Jesus's teaching is a fresh hearing of Moses and the Old Testament law that expanded people's understanding of the heart of God.

Just as Jesus's followers in the first century were called to a new way of life, so we are today. Jesus desires his followers to be different, both in how they think and live. Jesus is not saying his followers will no longer experience the emotion of anger. He is saying the Jesus community should live and look different from the outside world. Rather than being a people marked by anger, bitterness or revenge, the Jesus community is to be marked by love, forgiveness and reconciliation.

**TODAY:** Pray for the spiritual strength to take Jesus's words seriously and as he taught. Perhaps pray something like: "Please help me to take Jesus's teaching seriously. I believe you know the best way of life for me and others around me. Please give me the strength to apply these principles daily and live a transformed life. Amen."

## **Day 2** [Matthew 5:21-22](#) | No Name Calling

**But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, "Raca," is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, "You fool!" will be in danger of the fire of hell.** Matthew 5:22

Jesus's teaching focuses on the heart. While teaching about anger, Jesus reveals that anger is murder in seed form. After referring to the law given through Moses ("Do not murder"), Jesus clarifies that seething or simmering hatred of another is also what this command was originally against. "Raca" is a derogatory term that refers to someone as "empty-headed" or an "idiot." Jesus says his followers are to be people who speak and live in life-giving ways rather than ways that foster or harbor hate.

The struggle with seething or simmering anger is just as common in our culture as it was in the first century. These hateful ways are revealed in cancel culture (that ultimately says a person no longer matters) or in various forms of non-verbal contempt. Jesus's warning here is that any form of contempt or hatred of another has the same root as murder. As a result, his followers are to turn passionately from all forms of such contempt.

**TODAY:** Prayerfully consider the relationships in which you struggle most with anger and contempt. Identify someone you have struggled with in the past (a family member, coworker, neighbor, etc.). Identify any forms of

contempt or hatred you have toward this individual and then confess these things to God. God knows your heart and welcomes you to be honest with him about any shortcomings.

## Day 3 [Matthew 5:23-26](#) | Reconcile Rapidly

**Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.** Matthew 5:23-24

Jesus's teaching leaves his hearers in shock and awe. He speaks to a group in Galilee, roughly one hundred miles from the temple in Jerusalem, about the importance of reconciliation. Jesus says that even if these individuals have just completed the one-hundred-mile journey to Jerusalem (by foot!) and then realized someone has something against them, they should leave their gift at the altar and head back to make it right. This is how highly Jesus values personal relationships and reconciliation.

The same is true for us today. As followers of Jesus, we must recognize the value and priority of personal relationships. How we treat others really matters. If we have wronged someone, we need to make it right. We can easily lack the urgency and priority that Jesus desires for us in our relationships. Though reconciliation and health in relationships are always a two-way street (Romans 12:18), we must always be willing to do our part to foster health and wellness in our relationships with others.

**TODAY:** Think back to what you confessed yesterday and who you struggle with. Ask God to help you see if there is anyone in your life who "has something against you" and then take a step to make things right. This may require a phone call, text, letter, personal apology, confession or even restitution. Though the Jesus way can be costly, it is always the better way.

## Day 4 [James 1:19-20](#) | Defusing Anger

**My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.** James 1:19-20

James, the brother of Jesus, writes a letter to the early church that echoes much of Jesus's Sermon on the Mount. James's letter is largely an unpacking of Jesus's teaching. In these verses, James focuses on the heart of Jesus's teaching on anger. The Jesus way is being "slow to anger." Jesus's and James's teachings reveal that God is after our hearts. God wants us to be people who put off anger and grow into people of love.

Knowing how to identify the root emotion underneath anger is often an important step to breaking free from anger. Two questions can be helpful: 1) What was I wanting when I became angry? 2) Why did I want that so badly? For instance, after reflection, we might realize that the last time we got angry, we were wanting to be heard, recognized or to have a sense of control. Identifying the reasons we wanted these things so badly often reveals an idol of the heart. We want recognition or control so badly because we actually believe that such things will give us life.

**TODAY:** Think back to a recent situation when you were angry, even if it seems trivial. What did you want in that situation? Name it and write it down. Then, consider the second question: Why did I want that so badly? Or: Why did that matter so much to me? Confess your shortcomings to God and ask him for the spiritual strength to put off anger and have a heart that is fully alive to him.



## Day 5 [Romans 3:21-26](#) | Question 27: What is Justification?

**Question:** What is justification?

**Answer:** Justification is God declaring us righteous in his sight because of our faith in Jesus Christ.

**And all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.** Romans 3:24

Paul writes to both Jewish and gentile believers in Rome, who are struggling with the question of how righteousness is perceived by God. The Jews grew up believing righteousness came by following God's law. The gentiles wondered if they needed to convert to Judaism first. Paul declares that justification—God's legal declaration of righteousness—comes the same way for everyone: through faith in Christ alone. This was revolutionary thinking. God declares people right with him solely through Christ's redemptive work on the cross. Righteousness is not based on their ethnic background, religious performance, or moral achievements. The term "justified" carried legal weight in Roman culture, like a judge's final verdict of "not guilty." Paul shows his readers that Christ's sacrifice provides the redemption that makes this divine verdict possible.

This same truth transforms how we approach God today. We do not need to strive to earn God's acceptance through religious performance or good behavior. Like those early believers, we can walk with confidence before God, knowing we are justified freely by his grace. We live *from* a position of acceptance rather than working *for* acceptance. Our relationship with God rests securely on Christ's atoning sacrifice, not on what we can achieve. This frees us to serve and obey God from gratitude rather than fear, knowing our standing with him is secure through Christ's redemption alone.

**TODAY:** Thank God for justifying you through faith in Christ rather than through your works. Rest in the truth that you are declared righteous in God's sight because of Jesus's sacrifice. Let this assurance give you confidence to approach God in prayer and live from acceptance rather than striving for acceptance. Learn more about justification in our [We Believe document](#).