

LIVING
IT OUT



**DAILY
BIBLE
STUDY**



CEDARCREEKCHURCH

Tick Tock, Dude! – Mixed Emotions

September 19, 2022

The weekend message began with a question: What is your pet peeve?

Well, I married mine!

How was I to know that my devotion to on-time arrival was not at the top, or even in the top 10, of my husband's priorities? I had been a Jesus-follower for about 3 years when Mike and I got married. God had already done a lot of work to help me resolve some of my issues. However, at some time, I must have prayed for patience ... because God has used my husband to teach me a lot about that!

As a couple, we have had some "heated fellowship" about this lack of timeliness. After 25 years of marriage, I have, with God's help, decided to accept the things I cannot change. This decision has seriously reduced my level of anger and resentment. I have to admit, I am not always so sanguine about this, but—thanks to the Holy Spirit, books on my phone, and the confidence of knowing that we will get there eventually—I don't *usually* blow a gasket!

As we learned, emotions deserve a seat at the table, but they don't get to boss everyone around. Look at what Paul says in Romans:

Romans 12:2

Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

I think about how God has used this scripture to help me recognize my role as a *people pleaser*. I think about how anger has influenced my reactions to the thwarting of my will! Is this a control issue? Umm, yep—I think so! My anger is a signal, *not a solution*.

I have learned that I need to acknowledge my anger, because something I value has been violated. But what is that value? My need to be on time? Is my angst all about me?

If we take the time to drill down into what is really going on, we'll find the cause. It's our responsibility to *take that time*—to own our anger and decide if that

emotion is valid. To search whether the basis of our anger might actually be the result of our own issues, instead of someone else's.

I have spent more time than I'd like to admit in resentment and bitterness. God has helped me realize that this is a lack of gratitude for his immense blessings in my life. Maybe one of the blessings of old age is having a greater sense of perspective.

Regardless of what has made you angry, it comes down to this: How important is it?

Grab onto this question now and work at bringing it to mind in that time between your initial angry reaction and the 90 seconds it takes for your sensible brain to kick back in. This perspective will save you much heartache in your relationships and prevent countless apologies to those who bear the brunt of your ire.

James 1:19

Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry.

I write this verse in almost every wedding card I send. (Advice to myself!) God's wisdom is the best! He is inviting you to think differently about your anger. Since he is always the smartest guy in the room, you should probably pay attention!

Questions:

Where is God inviting you to think differently about your anger? How can you put yourself in an environment where you are reminded of the grace God has extended to you?

Next Steps:

Join a [Group](#), where people will come to know you and walk with you as you encounter shared issues.

Join our text-in campaign "60 Days to Better Mental Health" by texting "better" to 419-419-0707. It runs through November 5.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, there are times when anger is justified, but I realize that most of the times I get angry are not those times. Most of the time those bouts of anger

are about me, because I'm not getting what I want. Lord, help me remove myself from this delusion and live in your truth. I am who you say I am. I don't need to justify myself through my false anger over my offended feelings. You are the judge who judges justly. Let me rest in that truth. Please bring people into my life with whom I can be myself, who will know me and love me in spite of my crazy, often distorted emotions. Give them the courage to tell me the truth, and give me the courage to listen and act on that truth. Amen.

Today's post was written by Lauri White, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut.

Slow to Anger – Mixed Emotions

September 20, 2022

I am consumed with anger more often than I like to admit. Sometimes, I stop, breathe, count to four, and ... *nope*, I still feel like the Hulk and want to smash everything in sight.

Maybe that argument I was in last week is spilling over and something that was said or done is still eating at me. Was it truly addressed? Why is it still bugging me?

It is because I didn't take it to God. I didn't ask the Father for help to sort through the issues. Chances are high that it was my pride holding me back.

In the first week of our series, we were told to name the problem so we can get curious about it. I think the same rings true with anger. If we can name the anger—what caused it—it's a step toward working through it.

I have found that if I stop, think, and pray for guidance to figure out why I'm angry, I can turn all the energy I am wasting on being mad toward getting curious. I'm able to look for the true source of my anger and reign in my overloaded amygdala that wants to rule my emotions and actions.

When I go to God with my problems, I slow down. When I talk to him, it helps me replay what happened—sort of like a journal.

James 1:19-20

¹⁹ Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. ²⁰ Human anger does not produce the righteousness God desires.

How can we live this out to work through our arguments and difficult situations?

First, take a deep breath and acknowledge your anger.

Were you quick to listen? Did the person really say what you heard in that argument?

Were you slow to speak? Or were you quick to say something that you probably shouldn't have?

Were you slow to get angry? Or did you let your emotions get the best of you? This is where I struggle the most, but as I learn to search for the source of my anger, it's becoming easier to determine if it's even worth the time to be dwelling on it.

Matthew 15:11

"It's not what goes into your mouth that defiles you; you are defiled by the words that come out of your mouth."

Anger is an emotion that God knows about because he gave it to us. Once we've rationalized why we're angry in the first place, we don't have to stay angry. If you've been around CedarCreek for a while, you've probably heard: *It's ok to not be ok, but you don't have to stay that way.* Now, think about this in terms of anger:

It's ok to be angry, but I don't have to stay that way.

The next time you're stewing over something, take a deep breath, acknowledge your anger, pray for guidance, and consider saying that out loud—it may be the "count to four" you need to prevent the Hulk from coming out.

Questions:

How do you slow yourself down when you feel your anger getting out of control? Do you talk it out with a friend, family member, or even a counselor?

Next Steps

Breathe, count to four, pray for an answer to what made you angry. Seek help from a professional if need be—there is no shame in asking for help.

Prayer:

God, when I get angry, help me get back to the peaceful person you and I know I am. Help me guide others in finding ways to deal with their anger or misplaced emotions that lead to anger. Allow me to see whether or not the anger I feel at times is for the right reasons so that I can be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

Today's post was written by Casey Stengel, a regular contributor for the LivingItOut.

Virtuous Anger – Mixed Emotions

September 21, 2022

Do you think it's possible for anger to be a healthy emotion? Believe it or not, it can be. Last weekend, we continued our series, *Mixed Emotions*, by unpacking **ANGER**. We learned our *anger is a signal, not a solution*.

The healthy anger that I'm referring to is *virtuous anger*. The dictionary defines [virtuous](#) as "having or showing moral standards." So, virtuous anger would be when someone with high morals or standards expresses their anger at the right time and in the right way.

John 2:15-17

¹⁵ *Jesus made a whip from some ropes and chased them all out of the Temple. He drove out the sheep and cattle, scattered the money changers' coins over the floor, and turned over their tables.* ¹⁶ *Then, going over to the people who sold doves, he told them, "Get these things out of here. Stop turning my Father's house into a marketplace!"*

¹⁷ *Then his disciples remembered this prophecy from the Scriptures: "Passion for God's house will consume me."*

Many Jews had no way of bringing their own animals to the temple, so vendors provided a way to purchase proper sin atonements. Sacrificing sheep and cattle were part of worshiping God, so why did Jesus get angry? We need to ask ourselves a simple question: What was the problem?

The problem was not the merchants or money changers themselves but the fact that they were selling their wares inside the temple, in an area called the "Court of the Gentiles." Because the Gentiles were restricted from other parts of the temple, this was the only place where they could pray. So by setting the market there, the Jews were no longer allowing a space for the Gentiles to worship. Jesus' action showed that everyone mattered to God, not just the Jews. This story inspired our church's mission to introduce all people to Jesus and the opportunity to know God.

As a redhead, people automatically assume that I have a flash temper and get easily angry, unlike Jesus' intentional behavior at the Temple when he took the time to make a whip. He did not express his anger quickly; his actions were well

thought out. His display was a virtuous anger for those who were being restricted from worship, not simply a show of violence.

Psalms 69:9

Passion for your house has consumed me, and the insults of those who insult you have fallen on me.

Anger is not always a bad thing but rather a signal that a value is being threatened. And if that threatened value needs to be protected and defended, the holy discontent and anger that wells up inside of us can be useful when it's channeled into purposeful action.

Questions:

Do you ever get angry? Would you say that your anger is virtuous? Are you a wise person when it comes to anger? If not, how could you change your thought process to recognize the important signal of your anger?

Next Steps:

The next time you feel angry, try journaling about it. Recognize that your anger is a signal that you need to acknowledge and pay attention to. Work through why you're angry and how to express your anger in a virtuous way.

The Groups' directory is open, and the fall semester begins this week. Click on <https://cedarcreek.tv/groups> to find a Group that's right for you.

Prayer:

Dear Father in heaven, thank you for the emotion of anger. Grant me the wisdom to understand how to deal with my anger. Help me to take a deep breath and not overreact when I am angry. Thank you for the grace you extend to me every day. Thank you for sending Jesus to atone for my sins. It's in his glorious name that I pray, amen.

Today's post was written by Jennifer Macke, a regular contributor for the LivingItOut.

You Can't Always Get What You Want – Mixed Emotions

September 22, 2022

This summer, I worked as a preschool teacher. As you can imagine, I gained a lot of experience dealing with unregulated emotions. I quickly learned that young children have underdeveloped prefrontal cortexes and act on their emotions immediately. This is vice-based anger: they act out when they do not get what they want. If they don't want to share, they throw the toy. If they don't want to nap, they scream, cry, and protest. If they don't get the snack that they want, when they want it, they unleash their anger and stomp away.

Unfortunately, as adults, we still often do this when we fail to get what we want. Even when we know it is healthier and more productive to acknowledge and reflect upon our anger, so many of us (myself included) still have emotional reactions, leading us to lash out internally or externally. When life does not go exactly as planned, sometimes, we even take our anger out on God. Therefore, it is so important to understand and handle our anger in a Christ-like way.

James 4:1-2

¹ What is causing the quarrels and fights among you? Don't they come from the evil desires at war within you? ² You want what you don't have, so you scheme and kill to get it. You are jealous of what others have, but you can't get it, so you fight and wage war to take it away from them.

In this passage, James explains that so much of our anger comes from lacking the things that we want, no matter how trivial. He details the great lengths that people go to because of vice-based anger, which usually results in negative consequences for ourselves and for others.

The frustration and helplessness that often come with anger can make us feel like it is insurmountable on our own. Thankfully, we have a good God who knows our every need and wants what is best for us, even when we cannot see it. Let us take our anger to God and pray for him to help us let it go—use these opportunities to practice patience and self-control.

Last weekend, we received a mini science lesson on how the prefrontal cortex (the thinking part of our brain) and the amygdala (the feeling part) work

together to regulate our emotions. When the amygdala is activated through intense emotion, be it delight, fear, or anger, it quickly releases chemicals which dial down the potential for the prefrontal cortex to provide a thoughtful response. Left unchecked, this can lead to those raw and potentially irrational emotional responses.

Thankfully, we were given a trick to help prevent us from acting on our emotions, especially anger—simply take deep breaths. Taking deep breaths for 90 seconds gives the prefrontal cortex time to process the chemical reaction, allowing us to respond thoughtfully and logically to our emotions. Then, you will be in a state to address your anger in a level-headed way.

Questions:

What are some things that make you angry? Are they based on a virtue or a vice?

Has there been a time recently where you immediately acted on your anger without stepping back to think through it? What were the consequences of acting solely upon emotion?

Next Steps:

Identify ways that you can better control anger in your life. This week, keep track of the number of times that you get angry. Determine if it stemmed from vice or virtue.

Join a [Group](#) this upcoming semester. Seek out a group of people that you can trust and will hold you accountable in your everyday life.

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, thank you for giving us the opportunity to better understand our emotions. You gave us emotions to allow us to feel and experience all aspects of our lives. Please help us to not let our emotions control us, and instead guide us to act upon them in a biblical and level-headed way. Please provide us with a godly community that can help us work through our anger and guide us to bring our anger before You. Help us to lay our anger at the foot of the cross and to let go of any resentment or hurt that unresolved anger has caused in our lives. In Jesus' name, amen.

Today's post was written by Isabelle Billnitzer, a regular contributor for the LivingItOut.

Bitterness Destroys; Grace Heals – Mixed Emotions

September 23, 2022

I used to work as an occupational therapist in a rehabilitation hospital—a setting where you see people at their worst. Most people were nice enough, but there were some who oozed bitterness and anger. You knew right when you walked into their rooms, and I dreaded those patients. They allowed their past hurts to shape their current realities and treated everyone around them with the same disdain and contempt, even though we had nothing to do with their past hurts.

Last weekend, we learned that anger is not bad. It's an emotion that is telling us that something we value is being threatened. Anger is a continuum, with virtue on one side and vice on the other side. How we deal with our anger is where we demonstrate our wisdom or our sinfulness. It is easy to hold on to that hurt and feel like we have the right to be angry. We can rationalize anger as “righteous” even when it is sinful. Some of us have a short fuse and anger just bubbles up to the surface. However, when we hold onto bitterness or let anger rule our lives, those around us suffer. If we're honest, we do too.

Hebrews 12:15

Look after each other so that none of you fails to receive the grace of God. Watch out that no poisonous root of bitterness grows up to trouble you, corrupting many.

I have experienced that poisonous root of bitterness more often than I would like to admit. I have also experienced the opposite—patients who had terrible lives, yet exuded grace and humility. They had suffered, but being with them was a joy, and I left their rooms feeling blessed. So what is the difference? How can people respond in such dramatically different ways? I think James sums it up well:

James 4:6-7

⁶And he gives grace generously. As the Scriptures say, “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” ⁷ So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

When we allow anger (virtue or vice) to remain unresolved, we allow the devil a foothold ([Ephesians 4:26-27](#)) in our lives. This foothold leads to resentment and bitterness. Forgiveness and bitterness are on opposite ends of a spectrum. If we want freedom from bitterness, we must find a way to forgive. When it feels impossible, humbly coming before God and asking for strength is the only way. When we do this, the devil loses his hold on us. We find freedom and demonstrate to those around us the hope and grace found in Christ alone.

Questions:

When people are around you, what do they experience? Are you joyful or do people feel your bitterness?

Next Steps:

If you are dealing with unresolved anger or bitterness ask God to help you deal with those issues. The new Groups semester began this past weekend. [Find a Group](#) of like-minded individuals to work through your struggles.

Prayer:

Father, I come before you and humbly admit that my anger gets the best of me too often. I often hold on to my hurts to punish those who hurt me, yet I only end up hurting those I love and feeling miserable. I find ways to excuse my angry reactions and justify myself. I know this is not how you meant me to live. Forgive me for allowing the devil a foothold in my life. Give me the strength to resist him and cling to your love. Amen.