

By Controlling Anger

**Matthew
5:21-26**



**Appropriating The Happiness
That Is In You**

Series Overview

The beatitudes is a list of attitudes prescribed by Jesus during the Sermon on the Mount that are designed to build on one another to lead a Christian to true joy in Christ.

The attitudes are:

Being poor in spirit, mourning over sin, meekness, hungering and thirsting for righteousness, merciful, pure in heart, peacemaking, and willingness to be persecuted for righteousness' sake.

Only Christians that “climb” this superstructure are in a place spiritually to “appropriate the happiness that is in you,” a process that Jesus describes directly after The Beatitudes.

This process of “appropriating the happiness that is in you” similarly builds on itself with the following steps:

By Being Salt, By Being Light, By Being Law Abiding, By Controlling Anger, By Keeping Sex In Marriage, By Shunning Narcissism, By Choosing Wisely, and By Judging Carefully.

Part Four: By Controlling Anger

“You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’

But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, ‘Raca,’ is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell.

“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.

“Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are still with him on the way, or he may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison.

I tell you the truth, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny.

In contemporary Christianity there is a movement to unhitch from the Old Testament and Ten Commandments—that they are “outmoded and irrelevant,”—and that they should be replaced with the Sermon on the Mount. Unfortunately for this viewpoint, the Sermon on the Mount represents a higher standard of morality than the Ten Commandments, first evidenced by the verses presented above.

Beginning in verse 21, Jesus begins to dismantle the Pharisee’s incorrect interpretation of the Law by unpacking the Father’s original meaning for the Ten Commandments. They are not a mere cold and calculated set of ordinances, but instead reflect the character of God.

In Exodus 20:13, the commandment “you shall not murder” was referring to pre-meditated killing that stemmed from selfish anger.

Jesus presents this fact to end the self-righteousness that stemmed from never “killing anyone.” Jesus is presenting His listeners with the fact that behind every murder is selfish anger, something that everyone is guilty of. Jesus proceeds to illustrate the danger of this anger:

Anger Destroys. (Vs 21-22)

“You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’ But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, ‘Raca,’ is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell.”

Anger can “turn” on the angry person, destroying them.

In Greek, there are 2 words for anger:

Thumos – n.

An outburst of passion, wrath.

Ogre – v.

To express “settled or fixed” anger.

Jesus is referring to “ogre” anger here. It is anger that is brooding and fostered in the heart.

While murder is judged in civil courts, this anger is judged in Heavenly courts because it is the root cause of murder.

This anger not only destroys the angry person, but is also expressed in abusive ways, as outlined in verse 22:

“But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, ‘Raca,’ is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell.”

The word Raca is untranslatable but represents all forms of verbal abuse. Anger does not have to be expressed verbally in order to be destructive. It can non-verbally expressed as well.

Anger Desecrates Worship. (Vs 23-24)

“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.”

Selfish, brooding, constantly nourished anger strains your relationship with the Lord by “grieving the Holy Spirit.”

Not all anger impairs our relationship with the Lord. Righteous anger against lies, false teaching, injustices, etc. is not a sin. We are called by God to “be angry, but sin not.”

We can be righteously angry, but are never to hate or wish ill-will against another person, nor are we to take matters into our own hands.

Jesus calls us to settle matters and grudges, ask for forgiveness, and forgive in kind, even if we are not in fellowship with someone anymore.

We are not to store up anger in our hearts. Psalm 66:18 warns:

If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened.

Anger Devastates Relationships. (Vs 25-26)

“Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are still with him on the way, or he may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison. I tell you the truth, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny.”

In ancient times, the plaintiff in a court case would arrest the defendant themselves, often holding them by the robe at the throat so that they would strangle themselves if they struggled on the way to court.

Jesus makes it clear that the time for reconciliation is now, and not to allow for bitterness and anger to destroy our relationships.

We must deal with our anger and stop it from smoldering. Our relationship with the Lord will suffer until we reconcile, digging up the roots of bitterness and un-grieving the Holy Spirit in the process.