



July 11, 2025

Cease from Anger, and Forsake Wrath

Warm hellos once again friends, brethren, fellow laborers, spiritual family, and scattered children of God from here on the Gulf Coast of lower Alabama. My wife and I pray and hope this finds you doing well, and that again your week has been blessed.

Over the decades, my wife and I have moved multiple times and served various congregations around the world. I was reflecting back on when we moved here to lower Alabama in 2017.

It was a flurry of activity as we began to get settled into our new home here in Spanish Fort. We'd already met some of the neighbors, and each day we got a few more things in order. Our pile of cardboard boxes for the Recycling truck that came midweek was pretty large. I finally have a phone in my office, after days of challenges on the technical end.

I was reminded of how used we had become to having certain "things" in our daily lives that just a few short years ago were a luxury, not a norm for most.

One of the challenges I faced with this move, was not being able to "find" certain things, even though my wife and I were very careful to label each box. I'd stubbed my toes I don't know how many times due to manipulating around boxes stacked everywhere! With all the stress involved, I know that at times I was not pleasant.

I've often thought about what can I learn personally from the lesson of things being "uprooted, moved and unsettled"?

In today's world, on almost a daily basis, we face challenges that unsettle us don't we?

Have you seen a person who allows things to escalate and then becomes angrier and angrier, and finally escalates into a raging anger? The person unleashes a tirade that may include expletives, accusations, verbal attacks, and maybe even threats and/or physical violence! How many criminals in jail have landed there because they gave in to irrational anger and impulsively gave in to illegal and violent actions?

Bad habits often develop early in our life because of certain personality bents, example of parents, and others. If we have a tendency to lose our temper and give in to hurtful expressions of anger, we need to humbly and honestly admit such and seek to change those behaviors.

Left un-addressed we could be involved in a hurtful and damaging incident that could even result in criminal charges and/or incarceration. In today's world we see how many incidents of road rage and parking lot rage, etc. take place. It is becoming more and more common. We hear in the news almost on a daily basis of people being killed, often related directly to unresolved anger at its core.

The Word of God gives warnings about destructive and especially impulsive anger and wrath. "*Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; Do not fret-it only causes harm.*" (Psalm 37:8) "*An angry man stirs up strife, and a furious man abounds in transgression.*" (Proverbs 29:22)

Fretting over something, brooding over something, and working up to a really "angry person" is like cocking a gun. It only takes a little more to pull the trigger and hurt others.

Notice another instruction from Proverbs. "*Wrath is cruel and anger a torrent, but who is able to stand before jealousy?*" (Proverbs 27:4) Violent anger can be like a backed up stream. When the dam breaks it unleashes a torrent of destruction.

Impatience and irritability can be created by external sources, and often internal, which can be health related, or with those living around us. To simply say "This is

just the way I am” and “it’s okay”, or “I’ve always been like this” are not acceptable in the eyes of God.

We also see another mindset that often provokes anger - jealousy. How many violent acts have been unleashed by a jealous husband or wife?

So, these things being said, how can a person de-escalate anger?

Here’s one of my favorite verses on this subject. "*A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.*" (Proverbs 15:1) ". . . *he who is slow to anger allays contention.*" (Proverbs 15:18)

When we respond to an angry person with anger, we will usually get an even more angry response in return. In these situations, someone needs to calm things down and encourage constructive dialogue.

One technique is to ask the angry person why they are upset and then let them vent. One could even agree with the person that what made them angry was hurtful or unfair, but retaliation is never productive.

One could state that they care about the person and don't want to say things that will cause more bad feelings.

If we are the person who is angry, we need to own up to the instructions offered by the apostle Paul. "*Be angry, and do not sin: do not let the sun go down on your wrath.*" (Ephesians 4:26) This scripture tells us we need to simmer down and get a grip on our emotions and rationally think through what has made us angry and then defuse the anger quickly!

Sometimes anger develops because we feel we have been wronged. If someone has wronged us, we may need to apply God’s Word in a spirit of humility, and go the person and try to resolve the situation. We need to have desire to forgive others. "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also

forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." (Matthew 6:14-15)

For all those God has called, responded, and are believers, we need to bring anger under control and reject retaliation. Any sort of revenge is a serious issue.

Paul exhorts us to "*Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.*" (Ephesians 4:31)

One of the areas where anger shows up the most is within the confines of marriage.

Here's a quote from marriage expert Dr. Willard Harley from an article on his marriagebuilders.com web site entitled: "How to Create Your Own Plan to Resolve Conflicts and Restore Love to Your Marriage." - "Intuition also prevails in most couples' efforts to resolve conflicts. Instead of resolving their marital conflicts by creating and implementing a well-conceived plan, they revert to their primitive instincts -- demands, disrespect and anger -- to try to resolve their conflicts. These instincts not only fail to provide them with long-term solutions, but they also destroy the feeling of love. Because couples don't know any better, they keep using demands, disrespect, and anger to try to resolve their marital conflicts until their love for each other turns into hatred."

"The most common Love Busters -- anger, disrespect and demands -- are the way we instinctively go about trying to resolve marital conflicts. But these approaches to problem solving are not only ineffective, they also destroy the feeling of love. In the second half of Love Busters, I show how conflicts should be resolved, by finding a solution that takes the interests and feelings of both spouses into account simultaneously. Once you learn to abandon anger, disrespect and demands, and search for solutions that take the feelings of both of you into account, you will find conflicts much easier to resolve. But even while they are unresolved, you will remain in love with each other until you find a solution. . . Sadly, many couples use Love Busters as a way to try to come to an agreement,

making the agreement much more difficult and causing a loss of love every time they try to resolve a conflict."

Friends, you and I need to work on building relationships based on honesty, respect, love and humility. If we have a problem with anger that is not being controlled and reigned in, we need to admit it, confront it, and change.

May God bless us as we grow in the fruit or end product of His Holy Spirit dwelling within us. He promises us help to do so, and in becoming a "new creation or creature" the results will be both Godly and beneficial to us all.

Arms up friends! Our sincere prayers and thoughts are with you daily. Thanks in advance for your heartfelt prayers for us.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'T. S. Hoefker', with a stylized, cursive script.

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