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When Anger Is Not Sinful

by Joyce Rupp

But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister, you will be liable to judgment?
?Matthew 5:22

Much has been written in recent years about anger. We now know that anger is an ordinary emotion which is essential for healthy human growth. Anger can provide necessary self-protection. It can help us to rise up in protest against injustice. When anger is withheld or pressed down inside a person, it can push back out again in violent or deviant behavior. So when is anger sinful? Or ?liable to judgment??



The answer lies in the command of Jesus to

not hold grudges. It is not sinful to feel anger, but it is wrong to use this emotion to harm another, to harbor anger, to savor the taste of hatred, to feed on the resentment and bitterness which anger can bring. When we let our anger smolder and continue to nurture its raging flames by our thoughts and behavior,

then anger can become a tool of violence rather than a help for our growth. Refusing to speak to another, spreading lies and gossip, willingly desiring pain and harm to others ? these can all be ways which turn anger from a natural human emotion into an ugly, evil sore in our spirit.

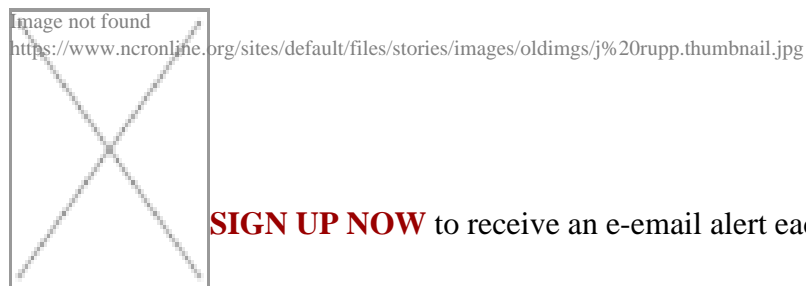
*Spirit of Wisdom, grant me a discerning mind
so I will know when my anger is for good
and when my anger is bringing harm.
Keep encouraging me to be reconciled
with those whom my anger has hurt or held apart.*

From *Inviting God In: Scriptural Reflections and Prayers Throughout the Year* by Joyce Rupp

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**Prayer action suggestion:**

Keep an anger journal. Record your feelings of anger. What kind of anger is it? Can you direct it toward good? Let go of grudges?



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