

7 Deadly Sins: Wrath  
Genesis 4:1-7; Matthew 5:21-24  
WRCoB 8.11.19

We live in an angry world!

Everyone's angry it seems.

There's anger in our politics  
In our homes  
In our work places  
Even in our churches.

People are angry at each other.

The conservatives are angry at the progressives.  
The Dems are angry at the Republicans

The left . . . the right  
The black . . . the white  
The citizen . . . the foreigner  
The privileged . . . the underclass  
The vegans . . . the carnivores

Everyone has an anger problem.

Oh we might call our anger righteous indignation  
But the other side calls it that too!

The problem is . . . the anger in our country is getting worse.

It's causing people to do things  
That a century ago wasn't thought possible.

From road rage to domestic violence to mass shootings  
People have acted out their fears, hatreds, and anger  
In ways never seen before.

It is out of control.

And it is very, very scary.

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It was anger that triggered the first crime of humanity.

1.

**Genesis 4:9b NRSV Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him.**

Because of Cain's anger, Abel lay dead on the ground.

God's question to Cain is our question today:

2.

**Genesis 4:6-7 (NLT)**

**6 “Why are you so angry?” the Lord asked Cain. “Why do you look so dejected? 7 You will be accepted if you do what is right. But if you refuse to do what is right, then watch out! Sin is crouching at the door, eager to control you. But you must subdue it and be its master.”**

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The 5<sup>th</sup> of the 7 deadly sins is wrath.

The Bible speaks about this kind of anger.

3.

**Proverbs 15:18 ESV Those who are hot-tempered stir up strife, but those who are slow to anger calms contention.**

4.

**James 1:19-20 NRSV You must understand this, my beloved: let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger; <sup>20</sup> for your anger does not produce God's righteousness.**

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According to Jonathan Parnell

One of the authors of *Killjoy: The 7 Deadly Sins*

*Anger makes the list of the seven deadly sins because for centuries people have witnessed its destructive power and influence.*

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Anger is an emotion we all have experienced.

From our childhood, temper tantrums  
To the quiet resentment of old age  
We have carried anger in our hearts.

Our earliest wrongs came out of our anger.

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Some people are known by their angry demeanor.

We call them *hot-heads, irritable, moody,*  
*Temperamental, short-fused, a bear to be around.*

But anger is a naturally occurring emotion  
That all have experience at one time or another.

Some of the reasons we get angry  
Fall into one of these categories:

5.

We feel

- threatened or attacked
- frustrated or powerless
- like we're being invalidated or treated unfairly
- like people are not respecting our feelings or possessions (Mind, for better mental health)

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Anger, if handled properly  
And expressed at the proper time and place  
Is not a bad thing.

Even good can come out of anger.

Anger can raise our awareness of injustice.

When Jesus turned over

The tables of the money changers' in the Temple  
Was he angry?

Of course he was.

Anger can motivate action to correct an unjust situation.

Do the mass shootings in El Paso and Dayton anger you?

It should.

Anger prompts us to confront a wrong.

Anger can instigate us to write letters to Congress

Vote a certain way

Join particular interest groups.

And speak out against injustices.

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However, anger, not handled appropriately is like cancer

Spreading and transforming

Into an uncontrollable mass of destruction.

Anger can have terrible consequences

On the person who's angry

And the person the anger is directed towards.

In its extreme form as in a “fit of rage”

It can main and kill the very things we love

Intense anger blinds a person.

Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount

6.

**Matthew 5:21 NRSV You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, ‘You shall not murder’; and ‘whoever murders will be liable to judgment.’**

7.

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

It’s not anger in and of itself that is a sin.

It is what you do with anger.

When your anger rises

Stop and ask the question God asked Cain:

Why are you angry?

What is it that has pushed your buttons?

Timothy Keller says

*More often than not you’ll immediately be embarrassed because many times the thing you’re defending is your ego, your pride, your self-esteem.*

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Paul writes to the church in Ephesus

**8. Ephesians 4:31-32 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.**

The end of anger is the beginning of peace.

This peace involves a transformation of the heart.

A heart tuned to God's spirit of forgiveness  
Lives in God's grace and mercy.

A heart tuned to God's spirit of redemption  
Lives no longer captive to sin.

A heart that is near to the heart of God  
Is a heart filled with patience . . .

**9. Psalm 145:8 The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.**

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If your issues revolve around poor anger management  
Making you miserable and the people around you  
Please seek professional help.

Addressing feelings of fear and anger  
Will go a long way  
Towards emotional and spiritual health.

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However, the anger I am particularly concerned about  
Is the anger at large in our society today.

I am particularly concerned

About the hostility, fear, anger, and hatred

We see playing out in so many areas of life.

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In an editorial in the Richmond Times Dispatch

Entitled *The Epidemic of hatred* this past Thursday

The editor spoke of the hatred and anger

Specifically seen in the epidemic of mass shootings.

Last weekend, we saw two more mass shootings.

One in El Paso, Texas and the other in Dayton, Ohio

Leaving a total of 31 dead and 50 injured.

The editor's concern is the origin of this hate and anger.

*I quote, with alarming frequency, too many of our youth are becoming infected with a pathogen of hatred. The contagion is being spread through social media and via chat rooms and message boards. Even Facebook and comment links on online news and opinion sites can be breeding grounds for venom and anger.*

The United States has a problem with anger.

And unfortunately there are those

Who promote their personal and political interests

By feeding and fueling fear, anger, and hatred.

Another article from this past Thursday's paper spoke

Of the correlation between political rhetoric and crime.

I quote from this article, *historical data suggests a link between heated rhetoric from top political leaders and ensuing reports of hate crimes.*

What can we do?

The editorial suggest we, *counter hate with kindness. Refrain from venomous commentary. Reach out to the marginalized, the troubled and the anomic loner.*

Jack Layton, leader of the New Democratic Party in Canada Writes, *my friends, love is better than anger. Hope is better than fear. Optimism is better than despair. So let us be loving, hopeful and optimistic. And we'll change the world.*

We who follow Jesus Christ  
Can also influence the society around us  
In positive and loving ways.

So I would add to the list.

Hug someone you're angry with.  
Speak a kind word to someone you disagree with.

Tell them, despite the differences, that you love them.

Do what Jesus did.

It's the only way to deal  
With all this anger and hostility in the world.