

Rick Warren: How to Manage Your Anger During a Crisis

It's likely you and the people you're leading are more short-tempered than usual this year. This shouldn't surprise you. There are many reasons to be angry right now—from being quarantined for long periods of time to massive job losses to clear examples of injustice all around.

But anger doesn't need to win. More than ever, now is the time to look at how our faith can keep us calm even during times of crisis.

Anger isn't always wrong. The Bible tells us God gets appropriately angry. The only reason you're able to experience anger is because you're created in God's image.

But mismanaged anger is a problem, and it's a sin.

Thankfully, God can help us manage our anger in the midst of chaos as we follow this six-part biblical pattern.

1. Realize the cost of uncontrolled anger. You can always identify a price tag on your anger. Proverbs 29:22a (NCV) says, "An angry person causes trouble." You've likely seen this play out in your life and in the lives of others.

Take note of the specific ways anger will cost you and those you love. The book of Proverbs lists a variety of troubles caused by anger. Proverbs 14:29 says anger leads to mistakes. Proverbs 14:17 says it leads to foolish actions. Proverbs 11:29 says anger leads to broken relationships.

Anger isn't worth the price you'll pay.

2. Resolve to manage your anger. You need to decide: Will you let your anger continue to hurt yourself and others? Quit saying you can't control your anger, and be honest with

yourself. With God's help, your anger is controllable. Proverbs 29:11 (NIV) says, "Fools give full vent to their rage, but the wise bring calm in the end."

You need to prepare in advance for how to respond correctly to situations that make you angry. If you wait until the next time you get angry to deal with it, you will fail.

3. Reflect before reacting. Think before you speak. Don't simply respond impulsively. James wrote his book to people who were experiencing crises, difficulties and trials. That's why he writes, "Therefore, my beloved brothers, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger, for the anger of man does not work the righteousness of God." (James 1:19-20, MEV).

When people feel listened to, it reduces their frustration and eases their hurt. Anger control is really mouth control. You tame your temper by taming your tongue.

4. Release your anger appropriately. Anger isn't necessarily the problem. It only becomes a problem when it's released inappropriately. Ephesians 4:26a makes this clear: "Be angry but do not sin."

Many of us express anger in ways that move us further away from the goal. If we want our hurts healed, frustrations resolved and fears relieved, sinful anger will only get in the way.

So, what is the best way to deal with anger? Don't repress it. That leads to depression. Don't express it in inappropriate ways such as sarcasm. Instead, confess it. Let people know you're hurt. It's much easier to deal with fear or frustration than anger.

5. Repattern your mind. Your thoughts determine your emotions. Your emotions determine your actions. If you want to break the habit of anger, you'll need to change how you think.

Since you were young, you likely *learned* how and when to get angry through your interactions with others. You watched and learned as it was modeled for you. The good news is you can *unlearn* this behavior, too. Romans 12:2 (CEV) says, “Don’t be like the people of this world, but let God change the way you think. Then you will know how to do everything that is good and pleasing to him.”

6. Ask God to fill you with his love. God’s love is the real secret to transforming us from angry people into peaceful people. 1 Corinthians 13:5b (NIV) tells us love “is not easily angered.” When we’re filled with God’s love, anger won’t rule us.

Our relationship with Christ greatly influences our ability to master anger in our lives. God’s love can change us even in the midst of global calamity.

My challenge to you during 2020 is to let God work on managing your anger. It’s been a tough year already. God uses tough times like these to form your character. As anger explodes around you, see it as an opportunity to let God’s peace shine through you. {eoa}

Rick Warren *is the founding pastor of Saddleback Church, one of America’s largest and most influential churches. He is the author of the New York Times’ bestseller The Purpose Driven Life. His book The Purpose Driven Church was named one of the 100 Christian books that changed the 20th century. Pastor Rick started The PEACE Plan to show the local church how God works through ordinary people to address the five global giants of spiritual emptiness, self-serving leadership, poverty, disease and illiteracy. You can listen to Daily Hope, Pastor Rick’s daily 25-minute audio teaching, or sign up for his free daily devotionals at . He is also the founder of , a global online community created to encourage pastors.*

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