

Rick Warren: How to Think Before You Speak in Anger

“Stupid people express their anger openly, but sensible people are patient and hold it back” (Prov. 29:11, GNT).

Anger confounds many people in our world today. We simply don't know how to handle our anger like we have in the past. One of the Bible's simplest yet most profound answers for our anger comes in Proverbs 29:11 (GNT): “Stupid people express their anger openly, but sensible people are patient and hold it back.”

Think before you speak. Delay is a tremendous remedy for anger. You don't need to delay indefinitely. If you've got an issue you need to deal with, you need to do so. Anger delayed indefinitely becomes bitterness. That's worse than anger. Anger isn't always a sin. Bitterness is.

If you respond impulsively, you tend to respond in anger. If you wait to talk about whatever conflict you're dealing with, you'll be more rational and reasonable when you do. The longer you hold your temper, the better your response will be. Give yourself time to think.

When conflict arises and you give yourself time to think, what should you think about? Consider these five questions:

T: Is it truthful? Is what I'm about to say the truth?

H: Is it helpful? Or will it simply harm the other person?

I: Is it inspirational? Does it build up or does it tear down?

N: Is it necessary? If it's not necessary, why do I need to say it?

K: Is it kind?

THINK before you speak. Reflect before you react. It'll slow down your anger every time.

Talk It Over

- Think back through a recent argument. Would more time before you responded have helped the situation?
- Which question in the THINK acronym is most likely to be helpful to you when you're angry?
- What's the biggest challenge to giving yourself more time before responding when you're angry? {eo}

Rick Warren is the founding pastor of Saddleback Church. His book, *The Purpose Driven Church*, was named one of the 100 Christian books that changed the 20th century. He is also founder of *LifeWay*, a global internet community for pastors.

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