

Learning to Manage Anger and Walk in Peace

We have all experienced anger at some point in our lives, and it can be a real problem. Though it starts as a harmless feeling, it can quickly grow into something dangerous that's hard to control. But with God's help, we can learn how to deal with our feelings and walk in His peace.

Early on in my relationship with God, I spent a lot of time being led by my feelings. If somebody made me mad, then I was mad; if I felt like telling somebody off, I told the person off; and if I felt like talking about someone, I did just that. But the more I grew in Christ and came to understand His Word, the more I realized how dangerous it is to let my feelings dictate my actions. The truth is, our feelings are extremely fickle, and they can't be trusted.

I remember one morning about 25 years ago I was getting ready to go preach at a ladies meeting at my church in St. Louis, and Dave and I had gotten into an argument. I was really mad—and I felt guilty because I was mad. Then God showed me something that was very life-changing to me. Somehow I ended up in Ephesians 4:26-27, and I saw the verses in a different way than I ever had before. This Scripture says: "When angry, do not sin; do not ever let your wrath (your exasperation, your fury or indignation) last until the sun goes down. Leave no [such] room or foothold for the devil [give no opportunity to him]." (AMP)

The verse doesn't say, "Don't get angry" or "If you ever get angry." It says, "*When* [you are] angry." We're all going to be angry at times, but it's not feeling angry that is a problem. The problem comes when we act on those feelings. At times, I've really wished some of my feelings would go away, but usually they don't. I've learned that God is not necessarily

going to change them, but He is going to change me so I can be stronger than they are. We need to be in touch with our feelings and take responsibility for them, but we can't allow them to control us.

Some people have been upset for so long that they don't even realize they're angry anymore. For many years, I was angry about being abused by my father when I was a child, yet I wasn't really even conscious of the fact that I was mad about it. I was angry and harsh and hard, and I was trying to be a Christian that way. I loved God, but I hadn't gotten serious enough with Him to say, "I want to do things Your way, and I need Your help."

Proverbs 16:32 (AMP) says, "He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, he who rules his [own] spirit than he who takes a city." A person who rules their spirit demonstrates self-control. Self-control is a fruit of the spirit that's given to us to help us control ourselves. This means when we feel a certain way, we can choose not to act on it if we know it's against the Word of God.

Now it's important to understand that if you let your feelings—especially anger—get into a rage, then you may be at the point of not being able to control yourself (Eph. 4:27). That's why it's so vital for us to learn how to recognize the warning signs—and put a stop to them—when those feelings first begin.

That morning when I read that passage in Ephesians 4, I realized that God was saying there is a way to be angry and not sin: We have to make a decision about what we're going to do with the anger before it manages us. And God has given us some tips in His Word about how to do just that.

The Bible instructs us to take every thought captive unto the obedience of Christ before it becomes a stronghold in our mind (2 Cor. 10:5b). It also says when we submit ourselves to God

and resist the devil, he will flee from us (James 4:7). So when you feel yourself getting upset, the sooner you say “No!” to that feeling, the better. Instead of letting the anger control you, you can say, “God, help me. I know being upset is not going to get me anywhere. This person hurt my feelings and that was wrong, but I’m not going to act on this. With Your help, I’m going to control myself, and I’m going to trust You to take care of the situation.”

Today I want to encourage you to forgive those who have hurt you. Let go of any angry feelings you’re holding on to, and place those situations in God’s hands. We can trust Him to be our Vindicator. God is bigger than our feelings, and He has given us self-control so we can walk in peace and experience His perfect love when we need it the most.

Joyce Meyer is a New York Times best-selling author and founder of Joyce Meyer Ministries, Inc. She has authored more than 100 books, including *Battlefield of the Mind* and *You Can Begin Again* (Hachette). She hosts the *Enjoying Everyday Life* radio and TV programs, which air on hundreds of stations worldwide. For more information, visit .