

Anger Playing with Fire

What does Proverbs tell us about the danger of anger?

1. Proverbs never associates anger with the wise, only scoffers and fools.

Proverbs 14:29. Whoever is slow to anger has great understanding, but he who has a hasty temper exalts folly.

Proverbs 29:8. Scoffers set a city aflame, but the wise turn away wrath.

Proverbs 29:11. A fool gives full vent to his spirit, but a wise man quietly holds it back

2. Proverbs treats anger like a contagious disease. Maybe a better way of saying it is to say. In Proverbs, "The angry word is never the last word".

Proverbs 15:1. A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.

Proverbs 30:33. For pressing milk produces curds, pressing the nose produces blood, and pressing anger produces strife.

Proverbs 15:18. A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, but he who is slow to anger quiets contention.

Proverbs 20:3. It is an honor for a man to keep aloof from strife, but every fool will be quarreling.

Proverbs 29:22. A man of wrath stirs up strife, and one given to anger causes much transgression.

Proverbs 22:24. Make no friendship with a man given to anger, nor go with a wrathful man, lest you learn his ways and entangle yourself in a snare.

3. Proverbs warns that destruction is unavoidable for one who gives way to anger.

Proverbs 25:28. A man without self-control is like a city broken into and left without walls.

Proverbs 19:19. A man of great wrath will pay the penalty, for if you deliver him, you will only have to do it again.

Proverbs 18:19. A brother offended is more unyielding than a strong city, and quarreling is like the bars of a castle.

What should we do?

Well the philosopher Seneca summarizes a great deal of the wisdom of proverbs when he said, "The greatest remedy for anger is delay."

Remove the permission.

Proverbs 29:11. A fool gives full vent to his spirit, but a wise man quietly holds it back.

We all experience the sting of emotion and feel the initial impulse of anger when we perceive we have been slighted. But we must remove the permission to act in the situation and respond to the person until we have

Examine when you are offended.

Proverbs 19:11. Good sense makes one slow to anger, and it is his glory to overlook an offense.

Someone who quickly responds to offenses cannot overlook them and forfeits the honor of overlooking it.

Rule the rebellion with wisdom.

Proverbs 16:32. Whoever is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city.

Look to Christ - Over and over again we are reminded that God has been slow to anger with us.

The Prophets remind us.

*Joel 2:13. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, **slow to anger**, and abounding in steadfast love;*

*Jonah 4:2. That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, **slow to anger** and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster.*

The Psalmist celebrates it

*Psalms 145:8-9. The LORD is gracious and merciful, **slow to anger** and abounding in steadfast love. The LORD is good to all, and his mercy is over all that he has made.*

Jesus demonstrated it. Though we see him angry on a few occasions, it is always in regards to God's dishonor as a result of sin and never for a personal offense.

If God in his infinite wisdom has been slow to anger, we with our limitation and foolishness should put it off altogether. We should not wield it like a weapon but handle it with care like a dangerous threat to our lives.

After all, it is the kindness and patience of God to pass over our sins and not deal with us in His anger that has led to our Salvation.

“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.” (Romans 3:23-26 ESV)