

**No 3 Wise about anger? Chapter 15:1, 16:32, 22:24 to 25, 29:11 & 22, 30:33**

Proverbs isn’t a book you can treat chapter by chapter. Its wisdom is scattered through many chapters and the author slips from one topic to another then picks it up again later. Hence the many verses on the topic of anger – the ones quoted above are still only a selection. So, we have to look at as many as we can and establish the principles that the author is trying to communicate.

Few of us, if any, can claim we have never got angry.

1. What makes you angry?

Is anger ever justified?

Is there such a thing as ‘righteous anger’?

Is it sometimes good to let your anger out rather than bottle it up?

We need to get biblical answers to these questions. It is certainly true that anger has often done great damage to relationships. Once you’ve said it, it can’t be taken back and, perhaps, with more reflection you would have been more restrained. Some people believe that anger ‘clears the air’ so enables a relationship to be open and honest.

The first of our verses is 15:1 but this is connected to the previous verse 14:35.

***‘A king delights in a wise servant, but a shameful servant incurs his wrath’.***

A king is a person of authority so he must maintain order in his household. If a servant is shaming his master he must be disciplined. But when we get to 15:1 we read

***‘A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger’.***

1. A gentle answer is not weak. ‘***A soft tongue is powerful enough to break bones’*** (25:15)

Does this mean that, in any conflict situation, a gentle answer will calm the situation whereas a hard word will provoke more undesirable anger?

Do you find it frustrating when you can’t say exactly what you think?

Our next verse (16:32) helps with this.

***‘Better a patient man than a warrior, a man who controls his temper than one who takes a city’.***

The author is saying that humility in peace is better than pride in conquest. Patience and self-control are their own forms of power (14:29 and 15:18). It is better to have self-control than to control others. In the days of Proverbs, the boastful king after a conquest was common.

1. When we find ourselves getting angry, how do we acquire patience?

Do we enjoy winning an argument rather than achieving a gracious compromise?

Our next verses (22:24 & 25) have echoes of what we learned in the friendship session. Who we associate with will have an influence on our behaviour and values.

***‘Do not make friends with a hot-tempered man, do not associate with one easily angered.***

***Or you may learn his ways and get yourself ensnared’.***

This is clearly saying that associating with someone prone to anger will make us angry and, in terms of Proverbs main thrust, that is not wise or good.

1. Does this mean we should steer clear of people who love to state their opinions forcefully?

When does such behaviour become ‘anger’?

Is the Christian way always measured compromise?

Perhaps we have the answer in the next verses.

***‘A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps control of himself’*** (29:11)

***‘An angry man stirs up dissension, and a hot-tempered one commits many sins’*** (29:22)

Here the ‘Proverbs Criteria’ kicks in again. Is it ‘wise’ to be angry. These verses suggest that is it is not only foolish (opposite of wise) but it causes problems amongst God’s people. (‘dissension’)

1. What damage can anger do in the church community?

How should we guard against such behaviour?

What should we do with the angry person?

Our last verse makes that very point.

***‘For as churning the milk produces butter, and as twisting the nose produces blood, so stirring up anger produces strife’*** (30:33)

Don’t recommend you try twisting your nose to see if it makes you bleed !!!! There is a connection with the previous verse which talks about the fool who exalts himself or has planned evil. Such a person is told to ‘clap **their** hand over **their** mouth’. The churning of milk changes the constituency from fluid to solid. ‘Churning up a community will change it for the worse – it’s not the way to effect change. People in God’s community should not seek their own fame or power because they ‘produce strife’.

1. Does this mean we should never raise questions about what is happening in our community?

What does it say about how we should raise issues?

How do we lovingly deal with people that have ‘an agenda’ which goes against the direction of flow in the church?

**A few more verses from the Book of Proverbs**

***ANGER WRATH***

***21:14 14:35***

***27:2 21:14***

***29:8 22:14***

***24:18***

***We have all had issues with anger at some point in our lives.***

***Maybe this week we should pray that God will help us deal with any anger issues we have so that we may be at peace with God, our brothers and sisters in Christ, and with ourselves***