

In Lesson Six we looked at the two types of anger shown in the Bible: righteous anger; sometimes called "righteous indignation" and sinful anger. We looked at the lives of Jesus, David, Cain, Moses, and Jonah to learn about both types of anger. Then we considered several Scripture verses that give us instruction on how to handle our own anger. Let's begin by looking at...

1. How does anger **affect** us?
 - A. We understand that the way we **handle our anger** affects our relationships with loved ones and friends. When we don't handle our anger biblically we will destroy good communication. It's hard to be content when you've let your anger control you and you find yourself regretting what you have just said. Anger can tear apart relationships so we need to understand what the Bible teaches about anger.
2. **Anger** that is **NOT** sinful is called "righteous anger" or righteous indignation"
 - A. Not all anger is sinful. God created us with the ability to be angry for **a purpose**. Anger motivates us to take action when we see something that is wrong and to try to solve the problem.
3. **Anger that is righteous** is being angry at those things that ALSO anger and offend God.
 - A. For example, Galatians 5: 19-21 gives us a list of things that offend God:

"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strike, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings: of the which I tell you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God".

Another list is found in Romans 1:28-32:

"And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, whisperers, Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them."

Also...

- a. Many practices that anger us today such as abortion, child abuse, pornography, and homosexual behavior could be found in this list as well as others. *It's important that...*
- b. If you respond to something that also angers God (righteous indignation) **be careful** that your response is not sinful. Be sure you **honor God** in your response.

Now we will examine some biblical examples of anger that is NOT sinful – righteous anger/indignation

4. **David** – he had **righteous** anger for the poor man and his little ewe lamb
 - A. Do you **recall** this story from Lesson Five? We read this story to get the context for David's sorrow over the death of his child with Bathsheba. In this lesson we studied it to learn if David's anger was righteous anger or sinful anger. *Let's review the background to the story...*

- a. David had sinned with Bathsheba and she conceived. To **cover** his sin David tried to persuade Bathsheba's husband Uriah to leave the army and come home and lay with her so it would appear to be his child. But Uriah didn't think it was right to have special privileges. When this approach failed David arranged a way for Uriah to be killed in the line of duty.
- B. The prophet Nathan **disguised** David's sin in the story of the rich man and the poor man.
 - a. Now the **rich man** had his own flock and a herd so he had plenty. But rather than taking one from his own flock he took the **poor man's** one ewe lamb who was his beloved family pet.
- C. David was very angry at the rich man in this story. He thought that...
 - b. He was incredibly selfish and **cruel**. The rich man had no pity or mercy for the poor man.
 - c. It was **wrong** for the rich man to take the poor man's one ewe lamb especially when the rich man had plenty of his own.

"And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As the LORD liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die: And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity" (2Samuel 12:5-6).

- d. **Note:** As we know, the end of this story is that Nathan confronted David telling him that he was just like the rich man of the story because he took Uriah's one wife when he had many wives.
- D. The rich man's behavior toward the poor man would also anger **God**. Our God is full of mercy and he has pity on us. Being "unmerciful" **offends** the LORD and is found in the list of Romans 1:28-32. So it is clear that David had righteous indignation. His anger was not sinful.

Now we will look at...

5. **Jesus** - He had **righteous** anger toward the money-changers in the Temple. "And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers and the seats of them that sold doves. And he said unto them, It is written, MY HOUSE SHALL BE CALLED THE HOUSE OF PRAYER; but ye have made it a DEN OF THIEVES" (Matthew 21:12-13).
 - A. There are two questions that first come to mind:
 - a. Where in the temple did the business of buying and selling go on?
 - b. And why were the money changers and men selling animals even doing business at the temple?
 - B. The business of the money-changers and those selling the animals for sacrifice, took place in the Court of the Gentiles, which is the outermost courtyard of the Temple. It is the only area of the temple where gentiles were allowed. In this area Jews and Gentiles mingled. The Court of the Gentiles is where gentiles came who wanted to learn about the God of Israel.

However...

- C. There were signs posted in both Greek and Latin, warning foreigners and those uncircumcised not to go beyond that point. Crossing into one of the other Courtyards was punishable by death.

D. Jewish law required every man to give an offering of a "half a shekel" for the service of the sanctuary.

"This they shall give, every one that passeth among them that are numbered, half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary: (a shekel is twenty gerahs) an half shekel shall be the offering of the LORD. Every one that passeth among them that are numbered, from twenty years old and above, shall give an offering unto the LORD. The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel, when they give an offering unto the LORD, to make an atonement for your souls. And thou shalt take the atonement money of the children of Israel, and shalt appoint it for the service of the tabernacle of the congregation; that it may be a memorial unto the children of Israel before the LORD, to make an atonement for your souls" (Exodus 30:13-16).

So what was the reason for the money-changers? ...

- a. Because Judea was under the rule of the Romans the money being used was the Roman coin. Because of this, the money the Jews used in their daily lives was the Roman coin. (Jews coming from other countries would have another foreign coin to exchange).
- b. However, when they went to the tabernacle to offer their sacrifice they would need to exchange their Roman coin into Jewish coin to make their offering of "half a shekel".
- c. The Roman coin had an image on it but the Jewish coin did not.
- d. The money-changers were making money by exchanging the Jewish coin for the Roman coin that the Jews brought with them.
- e. Because thousands of people came to the temple this was a lucrative business, because the money changers cheated the people which really hurt the poor.

Also...

E. **Jewish Law** required animal sacrifices (doves, pigeons, cattle, and sheep) for temple sacrifices.

"And he said unto Aaron, Take thee a young calf for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering, without blemish, and offer them before the LORD" (Leviticus 9:2).

"And he brought the people's offering, and took the goat, which was the sin offering for the people, and slew it, and offered it for sin, as the first" (Leviticus 9:15).

"And when the days of her purifying are fulfilled, for a son, or for a daughter, she shall bring a lamb of the first year for a burnt offering, and a young pigeon, or a turtle dove, for a sin offering, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, unto the priest" (Leviticus 12:6).

Consider that...

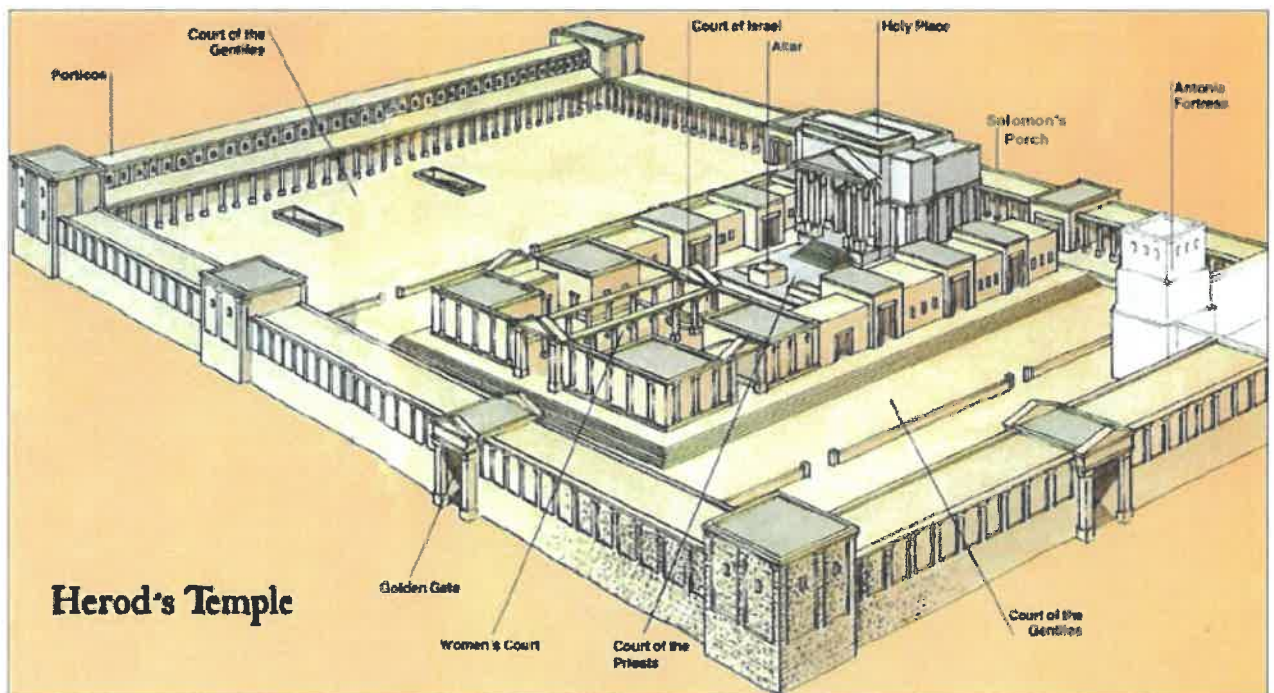
- F. Many Jews traveled **long distances** to the temple and it would be difficult to travel with their sacrifice so they would purchase one when they got to the temple. It also would have been hard on the animal. Those who sold the animals for sacrifice also exploited the people, just like the money changers, by over charging them. There were three feasts that the Jews traveled to the temple in Jerusalem to celebrate:
 - a. Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacles (tents or booths)
- G. **Jesus** was angered with **righteous** anger/indignation. There are basically two opinions of what it was that angered him:

Reason #1

1. The **activities** of buying and selling, and the noise of the animals and the voices of the sellers, do not belong in a house of prayer. It was these activities going on in the temple that angered Jesus. The temple was not a place of business. Some commentaries took this view but many held the second view, which is the view I hold too as well.

Reason #2

2. It wasn't the actual activity of exchanging foreign coins for half-shekels, or the selling of animals for sacrifices, that angered Jesus. Nor was a reasonable price for doing so offensive. It was that **they over-charged** and took advantage of the people in order to make a big profit for themselves. In doing so they were also exploiting the poor. This made the money-changers and those selling the animals "thieves". Stealing is an offense to God and cannot be tolerated in his house of prayer. Consider...
 - Jesus of course knew that the Jews needed **somewhere** to exchange their foreign coins and that they needed to be able to purchase animals without blemish. Traveling for long distances would be difficult both on the people and the animals. So it was reasonable for both to be available in the Court of the Gentiles. It was the thievery of the money-changers and how they were exploiting the Jews that angered Jesus.
 - One other thing to consider is perhaps the money-changers and those who sold animals were **dominating** the use of the Court of the Gentiles and therefore interfering with the ability of those gentiles to learn about the God of Israel.
 - Notice too that Jesus **did not say** they had made it a den of "bankers or sellers of animals"; but Jesus did say they had made it a den of "thieves". You can sell something without being a thief.



From Jesus we see another example of righteous anger...

6. **Jesus** had righteous anger with the hardness of the Pharisee's hearts

"And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored, whole as the other" (Mark 3:5).

- A. Jesus was angered because the Pharisees were **unwilling** to place the physical needs of someone ahead of keeping the letter of the Law (Fourth Commandment: do no work on the Sabbath). They did not grasp that it is **not** a violation of the Law **to heal** someone. Within them they felt no duty to God to see this man be healed of his withered hand. They were more concerned about keeping the strict letter of the Law than the **true spirit** of the Law. It was this **unloving condition** of their hearts that angered Jesus.

Now let's look at an example from the life of Moses...

7. **Moses** had righteous anger at the **idolatry** of the children of Israel

"And Moses turned, and went down from the mount, and the two tables of the testimony were in his hand: the tables were written on both sides; on the one side and on the other were they written. And the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables. And when Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said unto Moses, There is a noise of war in the camp. And he said, It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery, neither is it the voice of them that cry for being overcome: but the noise of them that sing do I hear. And it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing: and Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount. And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strawed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it" (Exodus 32: 15-20).

The background...

- A. While Moses was upon mount Sinai for 40 days receiving the two tables of the testimony the children of Israel became **impatient**. They grew tired of waiting for Moses and began to wonder what had happened that he was gone for so long. So they asked Aaron, the brother of Moses and the priest, to make them a calf to worship. Later, when Moses asked Aaron about this, Aaron simply said the children of Israel are set on mischief and when they placed the gold in the fire out came a calf. It appears Aaron just **caved into** their demands to keep peace hoping for Moses' arrival.
- B. Moses' anger was at the **idolatry** of the people. He was angry because the children of Israel were worshipping a golden calf they had made in his absence. Moses was angry at what also offends God.

We have examined three examples of righteous anger (indignation), now let's examine three examples of sinful anger...We will begin with Cain...

8. **Cain** had sinful anger because God didn't accept his offering that was given in disobedience. "But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect, and Cain was very wrath, and his countenance fell. And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wrath? And why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? And if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him" (Genesis 4: 5-7).

- A. **Cain** was very angry at the LORD because he **didn't accept** his offering but yet he accepted Abel's offering. *Did Cain have an excuse for not giving God an offering he would respect?*

Remember...

- B. **God** had shown Adam and Eve **how to approach him** along with the times and place to make an offering before him. As their parents, Adam and Eve would have **taught** Cain and Abel how to approach God: what their offering should be and where to offer it to God. So Cain cannot say he didn't know what God had required! Rather, Cain chose to offer God something of his own choosing. *Now...*
- C. God accepted **Abel's** offering because Abel was **obedient** to what God required. God did not respect **Cain's** offering because Cain was **disobedient** to what God required.

We see that...

- e. Cain's anger was **sinful** because it was based upon **his pride**. He had decided that his offering was better than what God had required; or at least just as good. In his pride he may have thought he'd show off the work of his hands as a tiller of the ground. Whatever motivated him, Cain was being disobedient and he would have known it. Instead of being humble when God didn't accept his offering Cain became very angry at God about it. His anger was based in his pride so it was **sinful anger**.

We saw the righteous anger of Moses but now we will see the sinful anger of Moses...

9. **Moses** had sinful anger because of his unbelief and pride
- A. As the children of Israel traveled from Egypt toward the promised land of **Canaan** they showed a **pattern of complaining**. As they neared the eastern border of Canaan in Numbers chapter 20, there is yet another incident of complaining. Although their need for water is real; their grumbling showed their memory **lapse** of all the miracles they had already experienced! They had not learned to trust in God for their needs.

"And there was no water for the congregation: and they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron. And the people chode with Moses, and spake, saying, Would God that we had died when our brethren died before the LORD! And why have ye brought up the congregation of the LORD into this wilderness, that we and our cattle should die there? And wherefore have ye made us to come up out of Egypt, to bring us in unto this evil place? It is no place of seed, or of figs, or of vines, or of pomegranates; neither is there any water to drink. And Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and fell upon their faces: and the glory of the LORD appeared unto them" (Numbers 20: 2-6).

Now we will see how...

- B. **Moses** himself became angry. We see this by his **action** taken at the **rock** and how he didn't follow God's specific instructions. *Let's compare what God told Moses to do and what he actually did...*

"And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink" (Numbers 20:7-8).

Specifically, what did God tell Moses to do?

1. Take the rod
2. Gather the assembly together
3. Speak to the rock as the people watch
4. The rock will give water

But what did Moses actually do?

"And Moses took the rod from before the LORD, as he commanded him. And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice; and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also" (Numbers 20: 9-11).

1. Took the rod
2. Gathered the assembly together before the rock...*but then he...*
3. Lectured and took credit for assisting God. "Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?" *then...*
4. Moses hit with force the rock two times as the people watched.
5. The rock gave water.

- C. Moses' **sinful anger** came from his **unbelief and pride** which is shown by...
- a. The angry lecture he gave the children of Israel which was an unholy thing to do because he falsely represented God's attitude. He said things God did not tell him to say. In addition, Moses took the people's complaining too personally and he also became angry at them.
 - b. Moses had unbelief because he choose to strike the rock twice rather that speak to the rock as God had instructed. *Also...*
 - c. Moses' took credit for assisting God which came from his pride. *It is also possible that...*
 - d. Moses may have grown weary and resentful of dealing with the continual complaining of the people and this may have developed into being resentful of the people.

The result for Moses and Aaron was...

- D. The LORD judges Moses and Aaron's behavior. **Neither** Moses nor Aaron were allowed to lead the children of Israel into the Promise Land because their behavior in giving the children of Israel water did not honor or glorify the LORD. Moses displayed sinful anger in his unbelief and disobedience of God in providing them water.

"And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them" (Numbers 20:12).

We see that...

- E. God had **mercy** on Moses because before he died, God **allowed him to see** the Promise Land. However, neither Moses nor Aaron were allowed to lead the children of Israel into it. God told Moses the reason why he was not being allowed to enter into the Promise Land.

"Because ye trespassed against me among the children of Israel at the waters of Meribah-Kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin; because ye sanctified me not in the midst of the children of Israel. Yet thou shalt see the land before thee; but thou shalt not go thither unto the land which I give the children of Israel" (Deuteronomy 32:51-52).

Now we will look at the runaway prophet, better known as Jonah...

10. **Jonah** had **sinful anger** at what God told him to do.

- A. Jonah ran away when God told him to go to Nineveh and preach repentance to its people. Nineveh was an enemy of Israel and Jonah just didn't want to do it and see them escape destruction. The people of Nineveh worshipped Baal and were a wicked people.

"Now the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me. But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD" (Jonah 1:1-3). *In other words, Jonah went the opposite direction...*

- B. The **LORD caused a storm** at sea and the sailors cast Jonah into the waters at his consent. They feared Jonah had caused the raging storm because of his disobedience to his God.

"So they took up Jonah, and cast him forth into the sea: and the sea ceased from her raging" (Jonah 1:15).

- C. The LORD had prepared a **great fish**, probably a whale, to **rescue Jonah**.

"Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights (Jonah 1:17).

- D. After **Jonah's ordeal** in the belly of the great fish he decided **to obey God** and preach repentance to Nineveh (as God had originally told him!). When Jonah did preach repentance the people of Nineveh believed God, fasted, and put on sackcloth. The king of Nineveh arose from his throne, took off his robe, and put on sackcloth and sat in ashes. The people of Nineveh repented of their evil and turned to God.

"And **Jonah** began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown. So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. For word came unto the King of

Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes" (Jonah 3:4-6). *Now...*

- E. Jonah was **not at all happy** about Nineveh's repentance toward God. Instead he was very **angry**. Jonah knew God was merciful and just what he didn't want to happen; ended up happening. He knew that because God was both gracious and merciful the people of Nineveh might repent and escape destruction.

"But it displeased Jonah, exceedingly, and he was **very angry**. And he prayed unto the LORD, and said, I pray thee, O LORD, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country: Therefore, I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil" (Jonah 4:1-2). *We see that even though...*

- F. The LORD showed **kindness** toward Jonah; he still continued to be angry. Jonah pouted over Nineveh's repentance and went just outside of the city to watch the city. God used a gourd and a worm to show Jonah that he should have pity on Nineveh as he had for the gourd that died. But Jonah is stubborn and continued to be angry. God admonishes Jonah for his lack of pity for Nineveh. (Jonah 4:3-11).

"Therefore now, O LORD, take, I beseech thee, my life from me; for it is better for me to die than to live. Then said the LORD, Doest thou well to be angry? So Jonah went out of the city, and sat on the east side of the city, and there made him a booth, and sat under it in the shadow, till he might see what would become of the city... And God said to Jonah, Doest thou well to be angry for the gourd? And he said, I do well to be angry, even unto death. Then said the LORD, Thou has had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hast not labored, neither madest it grow; which came up in a night, and perished in a night: And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?" (Jonah 4: 3-5, 10-11).

We see how...

- G. Jonah's anger was **sinful** because he had **no pity** on the people of Nineveh. All he could see was they were the enemy of his people Israel. His lack of regard for them ran **so deep** that he couldn't bear seeing them repent and turn to God. His anger was sinful because it was based in **pride** and a need to see them punished. Jonah was not seeing these people and their need the way God saw them.

Let's consider a caution from Jonah's anger: Be careful we don't love our Country so much that we too cannot see the need of our enemy's people as our God does.

Let's look into God's Word for more instruction on anger that we can apply personally...

11. What sets us up for **destruction**? What gives us **true strength**? What helps us in **angry situations**? When we are arrogant, and think we know everything, we won't listen and learn from others. Our pride will end up leading us into destruction. Also, someone who keeps their emotions under control will give themselves the time to see all sides of a situation and make a sound decision. Don't seek to be right but seek to resolve in love.

Scriptures for our instruction on anger:

"Hatred stirreth up strife: but love covereth all sins" (Proverbs 10:12).

"A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger" (Proverbs 15:1).

"He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding: but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly" (Proverbs 14:29).

"Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall" (Proverbs 16:18).

"He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city" (Proverbs 16:32).

"With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love" (Ephesians 4:2).

"Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves" (Philippians 2:3).

Now ...

- A. When anger **is directed at us** we need to...
 1. First, stop and pray, asking God for his wisdom and the ability to understand.
 2. Consider they may have a good reason; they just aren't saying it well. Try to stay calm and listen. Avoid defending yourself right now. Try to talk it over with them if they are willing.
 3. If they are so angry that they are losing control, it's best to let it rest. Excuse yourself, walk away and pray. This will keep you from responding in sin and saying things that you will wish you hadn't said later. God will lead you when it's a better time. Pray about it.

Also...

12. How do you keep from fighting "**fire with fire**" and seeking **revenge** when you've been hurt?

"Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, VENGEANCE IS MINE; I WILL REPAY, saith the LORD" (Romans 12: 17-19).

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose, For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren" (Romans 8:28-29).

Consider...

1. Don't try to **get back** at someone for the wrong they have done to you. Remember that all evil will be repaid by the LORD so don't try to do it for him; it's God's job.
2. Don't **put yourself** in a situation where anger is likely to happen. Do what you can to live at peace with others.
3. It really is a matter of having patience and **trusting God** to do what he has said he will do. A question we can ask ourselves should we feel "compelled" to repay the evil is this: Do we think God **needs our help** in repaying the evil? Do we really believe that he will repay the evil? If we believe what God has said then we will be patient and trust in God.
4. Understanding that even when you have been **treated badly** by someone God can use it to teach you to be more like his Son Jesus. Perhaps increasing your ability to be more patient and long suffering. God could be doing more, so go to him in prayer and ask him. It also teaches you to lean on God rather than yourself or someone else for your strength.