

REDLINED • Week 2: Anger

Daily Briefing • Day 2 of 5 • Does Venting Actually Help?

WEEKLY MEMORY VERSE

Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; ²⁰for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

James 1:19–20

On Sunday we walked through five responses to selfish anger. Today we deal with the response almost everybody reaches for instead, the one that feels productive and is not. You can watch or listen to the sermon at 1mso.church or on the One Missoula app.

OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, I pray that You would take my rage and my wrath from me. Help me be strong. Help me be unshakable, so that I affect the room I walk into rather than being affected by it. I pray that everywhere I go I would bring peace with me, and that I would grow in Your righteousness and help others do the same. I ask these things in the name of Jesus. Amen.

TODAY'S TEACHING

In March of 2024, two researchers at Ohio State University published a review of anger research that pulled together everything it could find. They gathered 154 separate studies covering 10,189 people and asked one question: what actually reduces anger? Everything that calmed the body down worked, including slow breathing, relaxation, meditation, and simply taking a break. Everything that revved the body up failed, including yelling into a pillow, hitting something, and even going out for a hard run. The lead researcher said it plainly: “Venting anger might sound like a good idea, but there’s not a shred of scientific evidence to support catharsis theory.” (Catharsis is the old idea that letting anger out drains it away.)

Here is the part worth enjoying. It took 154 studies and more than ten thousand participants for the universities to arrive at a conclusion Solomon wrote down roughly three thousand years ago. The world has to wait on slow research and careful measurement to learn what God simply told His people. We were handed the answer before anyone thought to run the experiment. That is not why we believe it, though, and the distinction matters. Scripture is not true because an academic journal agreed with it, and the Bible would still be true if the next study muddled the water. But it is worth noticing who got there first (God), and it is worth asking what else God has already told us that we have been slow to obey.

Proverbs 29:11 says, “*A fool gives full vent to his spirit, but a wise man quietly holds it back.*” Notice what the Bible does not call the venting person. It does not call him weak, or emotional, or even wrong. It calls him a fool, and in Proverbs a fool is not someone with a low IQ. A fool is someone who refuses instruction and cannot see what his own behavior is costing him. He empties himself into the room and walks away believing he accomplished something.

Your memory verse this week explains why he did not. “*The anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.*” Whatever your anger was trying to accomplish, it will not succeed. When you unload on your spouse, your anger does not produce righteousness in you. When you unload about your boss to a coworker in the break room, your anger does not produce righteousness in him either. James 1:19–20 is speaking first about what your anger does to you, and the application runs outward from there. Anger is a poor tool for making anyone holy. Neither you nor the person you unload on grows in the righteousness of God through your venting.

So what does venting produce, if not righteousness? Proverbs 15:18 answers the question. “*A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, but he who is slow to anger quiets contention.*” That is the trade you are making. You wanted peace, or to be understood, or to have somebody finally admit you were right. What you produced was strife, and you spread it to everyone within earshot. Meanwhile the person who is slow to anger walks into the same argument and the argument settles instead of spreading. Both people are affecting the room. Only one of them is making it better.

Venting is not the answer, which is why we laid out the five tactics at the end of Sunday’s message. (1) Expect friction, because Jesus promised you trouble in this world. (2) Relate horizontally, because you have failed other people’s expectations plenty of times yourself. (3) Give judgment back to God, because vengeance belongs to Him and not to you. (4) Call your sinful anger sin and repent of it rather than calling

it your personality. (5) Calibrate vertically by looking hard at what God has done with His anger toward your sin. None of those is as satisfying in the moment as letting it fly. All of them work. Letting your anger fly does not.

READ & MEDITATE

Proverbs 29:11

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

Proverbs 15:18

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

Read both verses slowly and notice that each one puts two people side by side. In Proverbs 29:11 the difference is what they do with what is inside them. One empties it out and one holds it back. In Proverbs 15:18 the difference is what happens to the room around them. One leaves strife behind and one leaves quiet behind. Then read your memory verse again and ask whether your anger has ever once produced the righteousness of God in anybody.

REFLECT

Reminder: honest introspection and Scripture-informed self-assessment are far more beneficial than self-delusion and wishful thinking.

Venting does not always look like yelling. Going silent for three days and telling a third party everything, which is gossip, are also ways of giving full vent to your spirit.

What is your version of venting? Be specific about what you actually do when you handle anger sinfully.

Venting always promises you something. That is why you keep going back to it.

The last time you vented, what were you hoping it would accomplish?

Did it accomplish what you hoped? Write down what actually happened afterward.

Proverbs does not describe the venting person as out of control. It describes him as foolish, which means he cannot see what this is costing him.

Fill in the blank from Proverbs 29:11:

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

**These fill-in-the-blank questions use the ESV text. Your Bible may use different words for the same idea.*

What is venting your anger costing you that you have not been willing to look at?

Strife spreads to people who were never part of the problem. The coworker, the group chat, family members, roommates, and the friend on the phone all end up carrying something that was never theirs. They all have enough negativity in their own lives without you adding to it.

Who have you handed your anger to this month? Name the person who had to carry your strife even though they had nothing to do with it.

Every one of the five responses costs you something in the moment. Venting is free right now and expensive later, which is exactly why it wins so often.

Which of the five tactics from Sunday is hardest for you, and what would it cost you to do that one this week instead of venting? Then rate yourself from one to ten on how quickly you reach for venting when somebody provokes you. Do some honest introspective self-assessment before moving on.

PRAYER

Write your prayer or pray out loud. Ask God to make you the person who quiets contention instead of the person who spreads it.

MEMORY VERSE

Write or recite James 1:19–20 from memory:
