

GLENKIRK CHURCH



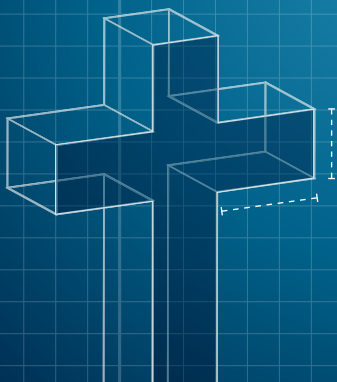
WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

# The DEVO

SEPTEMBER 13 - 17, 2021

# FAITH WORK

the book of  
James



# MONDAY

**Genesis 4:5-7; Matthew 5:21-22**

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How can a person be anger free in an angry world? This week we'll be seeking to answer this question and others. What are the causes and effects of anger? What is the cure and antidote to anger? What does anger have to do with our faith in God? And, what about righteous anger?

According to [justdisciple.com/righteous-anger/](http://justdisciple.com/righteous-anger/), "The Bible talks about the righteous anger of God as grief over sin." It is "being angry at all the things that oppose God—unrighteousness, evil, idolatry, impurity, and sin," including the sin of anger itself, which Jesus describes in Matthew 5:21-22: "*But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment.*" "Community is destroyed by carried anger." (Tim Fearer)

In Genesis 4:5-7, God asked Cain why he was angry, saying that if Cain did not do what is right, then sin was at the door wanting to come into his heart. God told Cain that sin wanted to have him and rule over him. Cain needed to rule over sin. But, as it turned out, sin ruled over Cain, and he killed Abel, his brother. God asked, "Where is your brother?" Cain deflected by asking, "Am I my brother's keeper?"

If only Cain had known and put into practice Paul's words in Ephesians 4:26: "*In your anger do not sin: do not let the sun go down while you are still angry.*" Better still would have been for Cain to ask God how to please Him with his offering.

God grieves over sin, and that is what Jesus was doing when He grieved over the stubborn, tradition-bound synagogue-goers who found fault with Jesus healing the shriveled hand on the Sabbath. *“Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?”* (Mark 3:4-5). That is what Jesus was doing when He drove out those who were buying and selling in the temple courts, saying, *“My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations, but you have made it a ‘den of robbers’”* (Mark 11:15-17).

## QUESTIONS

Do you grieve over the sins of people, or do you raise your voice in anger? How can you keep the sun from going down on your anger?

## PRAYERS FOR CHRISTINA HACK (CHI ALPHA STUDENT MINISTRIES)

Pray that God would provide energy, creativity, and stamina for the Chi Alpha staff during Welcome Week. It’s a very busy season, but they do not want to lose sight of what the Lord has in store for this upcoming academic school year with the students.

# TUESDAY

## James 1:19-21

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Losing my temper produced the least proud moments of my life. So why did I do it? Where did it come from?

The movie *Anger Management* pokes fun at the subject, but it is no laughing matter—often striking fear in others and destroying relationships. Jesus' brother, James, gently advised, “Be slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires” (James 1:19-20). Anger is exactly the opposite of the fruits of the Spirit and the character of God.

When we get frustrated with others or with ourselves, we may blow up. Moses did (Numbers 20:11). He was frustrated with the people he was leading to the Promised Land—their constant grumbling and complaining, their lack of cooperation, and their disrespect. So he yelled at the people and hit the rock twice with his rod instead of speaking to the rock as God instructed. As a result of Moses' anger, he did not lead the people into the Promised Land. That was the penalty for his dishonoring God through disobedience. Nevertheless, Moses was with Jesus and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration (Mark 9:4).

William Carey, considered the father of the modern evangelical missionary movement and translator of the Bible into Bengali and other languages, famously said, “Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God.” That's what Moses was doing when

he lost his temper. He was leading the Israelites on a 40-year journey through the wilderness. Paul said it this way: “... if I have a faith that can move mountains [in Moses’ case, moving people], but do not have love, I am nothing” (1 Corinthians 13:2).

You and I both know people who are not happy with the way their life has turned out. They are angry with themselves for past mistakes or poor choices. For them, it isn’t about forgiving others as much as it is believing God’s love and forgiveness for themselves. It’s forgiving themselves and believing God for His redemption and “restoring the years the locust has eaten [in their lives]” (Joel 2:25).

## QUESTIONS

For what do you struggle to receive God’s forgiveness? Knowing God’s pardon is a big step toward forgiving oneself. What desires has God placed on your heart that you think are out of reach and dare not hope for anymore? Pray for God to enlarge your faith? Pray for people you know who have given up on life?

## PRAYERS FOR CHRISTINA HACK (CHI ALPHA STUDENT MINISTRIES)

Pray that Christina and the Chi Alpha staff would be in tune with the Spirit and the divine appointments waiting for them. They will be having their “Word of the Year” event in which they seek the Lord for a word of inspiration for the year.

# WEDNESDAY

## James 1:22-25

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Anger has a domino effect. It produces fear, then conflict and war and death and more fear and so on. My bouts of anger almost caused the death of our marriage. My wife wanted to be away from me; she wanted out. Who could blame her?

Abel, the first victim of anger, is also the first name in the book of Hebrews' "Hall of Faith" (Hebrews 11:4). But even before Abel, Satan, in the form of a serpent, became angry at God for whatever reason and sowed the lie in Adam and Eve that God was holding something back. In the end, God held back nothing. He gave His "only begotten" Son—Jesus, who became Himself a victim of the anger of religious grievance. Religious leaders, in the name of protecting God's honor from Jesus' presumed blasphemy and His hobnobbing with sinners, killed Jesus, who claimed to be God, which He is.

Love, too, has a domino effect. As the Good Shepherd, Jesus laid down His life for the sheep (John 10:11). "*Greater love has no one than to lay down one's life for one's friends*" (John 15:13). Jesus did this for us. In Him and His love, victims become victorious (Romans 8:37-39; 1 Corinthians 15:57). The perfect love of God casts out fear (1 John 4:18). The only thing that really works in this life is love-based faith (Galatians 5:6).

Anger and death could not and did not hold Jesus in the grave. God's love conquers all, including anger.

How did God heal our marriage? Through a combination of miracles, contrition, forgiveness, humility, faith and love, over and over. And, oh yes, patience and endurance, too. At one point, God promised to turn our marriage relationship around, and He did. This word of promise sparked a faith and hope in God's ability to do what He said, which began to overcome disappointment and discouragement. This led to a growing resolve to work on our relationship and to see each other through the eyes of love. Slowly but surely feelings of love were restored.

## **QUESTIONS**

Have you been the victim of anger? How did you overcome it?  
How will you overcome anger now?

## **PRAYERS FOR CHRISTINA HACK (CHI ALPHA STUDENT MINISTRIES)**

Pray that Christina and the Chi Alpha staff would meet and connect with many freshmen at the "Welcome Week Student Fair."  
Pray that many students would come to the saving knowledge of Jesus as their Savior this year.

# THURSDAY

## Matthew 6: 21-26

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“Nothing physical or verbal in anger.” These were the instructions of our Christian family counselor and her student intern who were helping us to parent our middle school-age second son. Because our son was entering his teenage years, this advice was especially necessary. But as the father, I felt straight-jacketed and emasculated. What could I do? I could pray for him. I could love him. I could provide structure for him by joining his mother, my wife, in a united front and by regularly showing her affection in the presence of our son. Difficult, except for that last part.

The project proved to take a while. Three years later, between his 10th and 11th grades in high school, our son made a 180-degree turn-around.

From Scripture and experience, I understand that anger can be both a character flaw and an unclean spirit. Our pastor at the time pointed out that we do not die to evil spirits and cast out our flesh. Rather, we die to our flesh and cast out demons.

Note: As Christians, we are not possessed but can be oppressed. Jesus provides deliverance from evil and freedom to both the oppressed and possessed (Matthew 6:13). If Jesus sets us free, we are free indeed (John 8:36). This freedom is both prepared



for and maintained by discipleship, also known as spiritual formation. This is how God transforms us “*from glory to glory*” (1 Corinthians 3:18).

Another way to look at this process and these moments of “*being cleansed from all unrighteousness*” (1 John 1:9) is in the prayer Jesus taught us to pray: “*Lead us not into temptation; deliver us from evil*” (Matthew 6:13). Resisting temptation is always easier than escaping bondage. “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure” is the English proverb. Jesus is our Savior and our salvation for both. He is our Justifier and Sanctifier. Jesus is both the prevention and cure of anger.

## QUESTIONS

How much of an issue is anger for you? How has Jesus helped you become anger free? Who is discipling you? Has God asked you to disciple anyone?

## PRAYERS FOR CHRISTINA HACK (CHI ALPHA STUDENT MINISTRIES)

Pray that the student welcome events would be safe, impactful, and fun for the Chi Alpha students, both new and old. Pray that students and staff will feel connected as they begin the upcoming year.

# FRIDAY

**James 1:19-27; Galatians 5:22-23; Philippians 4:8**

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James was the lead pastor in Jerusalem, a city under Roman occupation. Times were difficult and about to get worse. James made a career out of making better choices and helping others to do the same. He called this “doing the Word.” Not just listening to it or even memorizing it—both good things—but following through and doing it. James was a doer of the Word.

Life is a series of curves and choices. Anger is a poor choice. James redirected angry people from being legitimately angry to using their energies to make more positive choices. He redirected his energies and others’ to doing the Word. How do we know James did this? James’s older half-brother, Jesus, said, *“Before now you have asked nothing in My name; ask and you will receive that your joy might be full”* (John 16:24). This is part of the Word. We know that James did this part of the Word because he was so much of a “pray-er” and “ask-er”; he was known as “Camel Knees.” Tradition tells us that was his nickname.

James also showed us and told us what being a “Word-doer” is like: it’s helping widows and orphans, homeless people and foreigners.

When you are occupied with doing the Word, anger gets crowded out. Paul said as much when he dictated his letters. To the church at

Philippi, he advised them to think on true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent and praiseworthy things (Philippians 4:8), because if you think on those things, you will not be thinking thoughts that make you angry.

To the churches of Galatia, Paul's letter talks about the fruit of the Spirit: *love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control* (5:22-23). A Spirit-filled person is a doer of the Word, loving God and others, joyful and cheerful, at peace. Forbearance is the ability to put up with circumstances and people who might normally tempt us to anger. Goodness (or righteousness) is something we all hunger and thirst for. Faithfulness is being a doer of God's Word. Our grandchildren—and especially our cat—are drawn to my wife's gentleness and self-control. The key to being emptied of anger is to be full of the Holy Spirit.

## QUESTIONS

What does “being a doer of the Word” mean for you? Has becoming a disciple of Jesus helped you to displace anger with better choices? What better choices are you making?

## PRAYERS FOR CHRISTINA HACK (CHI ALPHA STUDENT MINISTRIES)

Pray that the first services and small groups would go well! This year Christina will be leading the Chi Alpha senior small group and talking about transitions to help the seniors age out of college gracefully and get connected with church communities.

## Sources

- Quotes from Justdisciple.com can be found at <https://justdisciple.com/righteous-anger/>
- Tim Fearer's quote was taken from his sermon at Glenkirk Church on May 30, 2017.

