

Understanding Anger

The words "**anger**" and "**angry**" are found eleven times in the King James New Testament and are from the Greek *orge*. Originally, any natural impulse, desire, or disposition signified anger and was considered the strongest of all passions. However, in the New Testament, the Greek *thumos* (translated "wrath") became the stronger of the two words. It indicated a more agitated condition of feelings, usually with an outburst from inward indignation. *Orge* suggests a more settled or abiding condition of mind, often (but not always) with a view to revenge. *Orge* is less sudden in its rise but more lasting in nature. *Thumos* expresses the inward feeling and *orge* the more active emotion. The Greek word *kakia* (translated "malice") is used in connection with both *orge* and *thumos*. The difference in the words is the degree of their intensity as will be illustrated later.

Please note that the mere fact of being angry does not constitute sin. If so, then Jesus sinned against the Pharisees for He "**looked round about on them with anger**" ([Mark 3:5](#)). The sin involved with "anger" is what one allows it to lead him into doing. Jesus was greatly agitated over the hardness of the Pharisees' hearts. Previously, He had explained to them the circumstances of His disciples by David eating the shewbread and the priests working on the Sabbath. When the Pharisees sought again to accuse Him after this explanation, Jesus became angry. To illustrate, let's say a brother falsely accuses you of sin but you explain to him the circumstances and facts in the situation and, in fact, no sin was involved. But later, this same brother accuses you of the same sin and this time publicly. By implication, he has called you a liar, betrayed a trust, and has misrepresented you. In this case, not only do you have every right to be angry but you should be angry "**being grieved for the hardness of (his) heart.**" This is commonly called "**righteous indignation.**"

Unjust anger, however, can lead one further into sin. In [Colossians 3:8](#) Paul writes, "**But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice.**" When these words are used alone they virtually have the same meaning. But when they are used in the same sentence they represent degrees of intensity of an evil temper which results in an evil feeling and intention of malice. Anger is an emotion, which when stirred up, should not be retained after sunset ([Ephesians 4:26](#)). If anger occurs, which is not a sin in and of itself, it should be worked out between the parties at that time. If the anger continues it may develop into wrath which is a more fixed and agitated state. And **wrath** can and often does lead to malice which is simply defined as "**hateful spite.**" It is this state which results in **bitterness** (strong hatred), **clamor** (a disorderly demonstration against another), and **evil speaking** (unfavorable remarks against someone said for the purpose of injuring him). In [Ephesians 4:31](#), these evils are to be "**put away from you**" or avoided by members of the body of Christ.

Christians (and especially elders) must be "**not soon angry**" ([Titus 1:7](#)). The Greek here is *meorgilos*. *Meorgilos* means "prone to anger, irascible" and therefore "not prone to anger, not irascible." Concerning this, brother **L. R. Wilson** said, "A man who is quick to 'fly off the handle' and make rash statements will make enemies for himself and the church." Brother **Rex Turner** said of this phrase, "He must not be soon angry - or not vengeful, hotheaded or impetuous." One who views a situation and, not knowing the circumstances and the facts thereof, becomes angry and makes boisterous and rash statements is one who is "soon angry." simply means "not" and

Anger is an emotion given to us by God. It can be used or abused. Let us be careful! "**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](#)).