



# Sermon Resource Guide

## Sermon on the Mount | Week 5

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This resource is intended to aid you as you study this week's Scripture passage (Matthew 5:21-26) on your own, with others, or even in your Gospel Community.

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### [The Angry Person: Always the Last to Know](#)

Only once have I rebuked a class of students. It was a Doctor of Ministry class. Fine students, dead boring material – statistics, research design – though I tried my best to make it interesting. Some of the students were not putting in any effort.

I stopped for a moment from the fascinating world of t-tests and spoke personally to them. I said something like, "Some of you are not prepared for class and are just going through the motions. I want you to consider what you are doing here and decide if you want to continue."

And a handful of students went home and repented. The next day they came and asked my forgiveness. They were, of course, THE WRONG STUDENTS. The ones who repented were diligent and faithful. Ideal students. The students *who* didn't have the problem heard me; the ones who had the problem were deaf. This "deafness" is common, but with some sins, the consequences are far worse than those of uncommitted graduate students.

I am talking again about anger.

The problem with anger is that those who don't have the problem take it to heart; those who *are* angry are confident in their right-ness and over time can become massively, utterly, completely deluded, blind and (this is no exaggeration) can feel quite good about themselves after bludgeoning someone close them, as if they have set the world aright. Arrgghh. I hate anger.

But I also want to hate this evil in myself before I hate it in other people. How? By zeroing in on the more subtle expressions of anger, such as a critical attitude toward someone, complaining, not wanting another's best, jealousy at the level of my imagination, any hint of "I am right and you are wrong," sarcasm, or "whatever." I want to keep asking my wife and at least one other person if they have seen me frustrated or angry. I want to have no wiggle room for righteous indignation. By that I mean that since ninety-nine percent of my anger is sinful, I don't want to give tacit permission to my frustration by calling it righteous indignation. If I am angry because of what was done to another person I am on safer

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ground. If I am angry because of what someone did to me, I am always wrong. "Be angry and don't sin" – forget about trying to master that one. Don't let it authorize one blasted scrap of anger.

Now, back to the matter of the how the angry person doesn't get the message. This should scare us all, unless, of course, we are certain that we have a problem with anger. If you believe you have a problem with anger, if you have confessed that to others, and if you have a ruthless agenda for putting this monster to death, then you are in the advanced course of sanctification and please feel free to teach the rest of us. For the rest of us, here are a few questions.

1. Do you stretch and enlarge the category of anger so it includes you? I know a man who doesn't think he is angry even though every hour or so he threatens to rip off someone's head. His narrow definition of anger? An angry person actually rips off someone's head. Since he only wants to rip off someone's head, he isn't angry.
2. Have you enlarged the spectrum of your anger by filling in some of the details from the Sermon on the Mount? (Matthew 5:21-22) For example, at one extreme is murder, at the other is our internal muttering, "what a jerk." What's in between? Of course, everything on this spectrum is murderous.
3. In the last six months have you confessed your sin of anger, to both God and the injured person?
4. In the last six months have you asked those closest to you, "When have you seen me angry in the last few weeks?" When will you ask them? Is the real cause of your frustration/anger usually something or someone other than you? Do you understand the real cause is not "THEM" and is really "I WANT and I'm not getting what I want"? (James 4:1-10)
5. Do you know that Jesus was *never* angry because of something done to him? Do you care?
6. Are you ever wrong? Angry people, against all the odds, are nearly always right.
7. "Do you have a right to be angry?" This is God's patient question to Jonah.

In a world where we are god, anger makes perfect sense. Anger stands above all things in omniscient and infallible judgment. But in the real world, where we are creatures and not the Creator, and where the Creator chose the path of a servant in order to rescue, comfort and encourage, our anger is ugly and perverse.

Lord, help us to recognize our anger and not be the "last to know" about it. Be merciful to us and give us power to show mercy.