



## Freedom

Scripture: Matthew 21:12-13, Luke 19:45-47, Mark 3:1-6

As women growing in Christlikeness, it is important to become free from reacting out of anger or being controlled by our old self. There is a difference between righteous anger and sinful anger. In the Bible, there are several passages that describe what Jesus felt and did out of a righteous anger. Matthew 21:12-13 and Luke 19:45-47 describe Jesus' anger with the vendors as He was cleansing the temple. In this reflection, we will focus on the account in Mark 3:1-5 when Jesus healed the man with the withered hand and became angry with the Pharisees.

Mark 3:1-6

*"Another time Jesus went into the synagogue, and a man with a shriveled hand was there. Some of them were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, so they watched him closely to see if he would heal him on the Sabbath. Jesus said to the man with the shriveled hand, 'Stand up in front of everyone.' Then Jesus asked them, 'Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?' But they remained silent. He looked around at them in anger and, deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts, said to the man, 'Stretch out your hand.' He stretched it out and his hand was completely restored. Then the Pharisees went out and began to plot with the Herodians how they might kill Jesus."*

Read the above passage several times. In your mind's eye, place yourself into the scene as a character in the synagogue. Engage your feelings as you watch the man with the withered hand interacting with Jesus. Now, imagine the Pharisees watching Jesus. Notice how you feel as you watch Jesus question the Jews about healing on the Sabbath. What are the words your Bible uses to describe the different feelings Jesus had throughout the situation? How do you feel as He expresses His emotions?

Jesus felt anger and yet did not sin. Therefore, anger is not always a sin. Jesus' anger was a holy anger. He was angry because the Pharisees missed the whole point of the law when He healed on the Sabbath. Jesus was angry at the same things that make God angry. He sought to do the right thing (heal the man) in order to correct a wrong. It is Christlike to be angry about injustices such as child abuse, rich exploiting the poor, fraud, deception and neglect. These injustices make God angry. Our anger can be used to motivate us with holy righteousness to work for a change to right the wrong in our world.



· Recall a time when you or someone you know reacted out of a righteous anger. Journal about the situation and how you/they reacted. What was the injustice that was going on at the time? How did you feel when it was over and what was the result of your anger?

Our anger can be in alignment with the Holy Spirit, or it can be an unrighteous anger erupting out our old sinful wounded self, in which case we need to ask God's forgiveness. An unrighteous/sinful anger comes from our old nature which may be triggered from a past experience or wound.

Reflection:

During your weekend, we explored some of the reasons why women become angry. We also became aware that many women do not allow themselves to feel anger. They suppress or ignore their anger because it is not an "acceptable" feeling for a Christian woman. You identified where you hold anger in your body. You were able to release your anger in a safe place. By acknowledging and pouring out anger, allowed the Holy Spirit to enter and heal the wounded area(s) and fill the new space with a gift such as freedom, love, grace, or peace.

· Take some time to remember what gift you received after you did your anger work.  
· Write down any new awareness you have since your weekend about your anger; have you felt more angry? less angry? When are you angry? Who or what causes you to get angry? What do you do with your anger?

Soul Training:

The Bible address unholy anger as well.

Proverbs 29:11 *"A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control."*

James 1:19 *"My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires."*

Colossians 3:8 *"But now you must rid yourselves of all such things of these; anger, rage, malice slander and filthy language from your lips."*

How can we live out these verses in our daily lives? We are going to practice noticing when we are angry and release the feeling to the Lord. This week:



- Slow down and acknowledge any anger and share it with Jesus rather than stuffing or denying your feelings. Bring your anger into the light and PRAY. This will create space to choose how to act in the power and peace of the Holy Spirit rather than to react.
- Ask the Lord to reveal you how you are acting out in anger- whether it is a frustratingly long line in the store, running late in heavy traffic, dealing with teenagers, or two-year old tantrums, or dealing with consequences of addiction or a tough work situation; all are opportunities to practice becoming aware of any sinful anger and how you act out.
- Pray to catch yourself “in the act” of unrighteous anger. Confess it all to the Lord and ask Him to heal your anger in the moment.
- Ask the Lord to uncover what is behind your anger. Is it an unmet expectation? Is it a need to control? Is it coming from a wound or memory?
- Ask Him to heal this area of your heart and for the power of his Holy Spirit to be able to love. A great question to ask Him is, “Lord, what do I need to know about this person/situation that I don’t know?” Make time to listen for His answer.
- In your prayer time, imagine taking someone who is difficult to love to Jesus. Ask Him how He sees him/her.
- Before bed, review your day with the Lord. Ask Him to reveal any areas of anger in your heart. Turn to Him and seek his forgiveness. Ask Him to fill this area with love in the Holy Spirit. If there is an area of injustice that has ignited your righteous anger, ask Him to show you how to act to change this injustice.
- Change takes time, so be sure and give yourself grace as you seek to become more like Jesus this week.

Prayer: Lord, I desire to be more patient with myself and with others. Help me to become more like you as I respond to those who are closest to me. Help me empty out any sinful anger and be filled with your peace and freedom. Amen.