

The Thermostat vs. The Volcano

God gives us the power to calm anger in ourselves and others.

Time:

10-15 minutes

Focus:

Temptation & Self-Control, Love & Family, Forgiveness & Bitterness

Scriptures

Proverbs 15:18
Proverbs 25:28
Proverbs 19:11
Ephesians 4:27
Matthew 7:3-5
James 1:19
Proverbs 18:19
Ephesians 6:4
Matthew 6:15
Proverbs 16:32
Galatians 5:22-23
Proverbs 19:19
Ephesians 2:16

Parking lot

Write down distracting thoughts here:



Settle in

Take a deep breath. Turn off notifications on your phone. Ask God to help you see the truth about anger and its effects, and to give you the power to calm it.



Thought starter

Proverbs 15:18 AMP

A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, but he who is slow to anger and patient calms disputes.



There are two ways of handling anger in this verse: we can be hot-tempered and stir up arguments, or we can be slow to anger and bring calm. When we choose the first way, we are like a volcano erupting. We build up pressure until we blow, leaving nothing but lava and ash in our relationships. God calls us to be a thermostat, not a volcano—regulating the room's temperature with cool, calm, Spirit-led control.

Here's what we'll learn in this Quick Quiet Time:

- An unmanaged temper leaves us wide open to the forces of darkness.
- We need to cool off the heat inside of us before we can bring calm to other people.
- God gives us the power to master our internal world.



An unmanaged mood is a security hazard.

Proverbs 25:28 GNT

If you cannot control your anger, you are as helpless as a city without walls, open to attack.

Proverbs 19:11 ESV

Good sense makes one slow to anger, and it is his glory to overlook an offense.

Ephesians 4:27 AMP

And do not give the devil an opportunity [to lead you into sin by holding a grudge, or nurturing anger, or harboring resentment, or cultivating bitterness].



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Notes:

 **Truth bomb:** Good sense and a quick temper can't live together

- Becoming a thermostat instead of a volcano starts with telling ourselves the truth about our short temper and its effects.
- The second we lose our temper, our good sense packs its bags and leaves.
- It's easy to justify a quick temper. We might tell ourselves we are simply "passionate" or "honest." Those things could be true, but passion and honesty without emotional self-control can hurt us and other people.
- A lack of emotional self-control makes us defenseless against the enemy's next ambush. If we nurse a grudge, it is like actively co-signing a lease with the devil. He can manipulate us into hurting people instead of loving them.

**Reflect**

- Do I see my short temper the way God does?
- What are some ways I defend or excuse myself when I get angry quickly?

 We can't be the thermostat if our hearts are generating heat.

Matthew 7:3–5 AMP

Why do you look at the [insignificant] speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice and acknowledge the [egregious] log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me get the speck out of your eye,' when there is a log in your own eye? You hypocrite (play-actor, pretender), first extract the log from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

James 1:19 AMP

Understand this, my beloved brothers and sisters. Let everyone be quick to hear [be a careful, thoughtful listener], slow to speak [a speaker of carefully chosen words and], slow to anger [patient, reflective, forgiving].

 **Truth bomb:** We often blow up in anger at others because we are blind to ourselves.

- Anger makes us hyper-focused on the tiny speck of dust in someone else's life while completely ignoring the massive, blinding log obstructing our own vision.
- Every speck of dust we see adds fuel to the flame of our anger until it becomes a roaring blaze.
- Bitterness is a master manipulator—it creates a habit of blame-shifting, urging us to point fingers at everyone else's flaws without facing our own.

 Metaphor moment

Imagine driving in a rainstorm with broken windshield wipers when the car in front of you brakes. It's easy to yell at them for stopping without facing this truth: we wouldn't be as upset if we had fixed our own windshield wipers.

Notes:

 Nerd note

For self-awareness, it helps to distinguish between two types of anger described in the Bible's original Greek:

1. **Thymos:** A sudden, emotional flare-up.
2. **Orgē:** A gradual indignation that has become settled.

In James 1:19, the Greek word for anger is orgē. When James says "slow to anger," he's telling us to deal with the smoldering fire of past offenses, bitterness, or unresolved hurt that has already whittled down our fuse.

We can put out the fire by being "patient, reflective, and forgiving." Every time we reflect on our own need for forgiveness and forgive someone else, we calm the indignation inside of us and get a little more patient.

 A lifetime of connection is worth more than a momentary explosion.**Proverbs 18:19 TLB**

It is harder to win back the friendship of an offended brother than to capture a fortified city. **His anger shuts you out** like iron bars.

Ephesians 6:4 NLT

Fathers, **do not provoke your children to anger** by the way you treat them. Rather, bring them up with the discipline and instruction that comes from the Lord.

Matthew 6:15 AMP

But if you do not forgive others [nurturing your hurt and anger with the result that **it interferes with your relationship with God**], then your Father will not forgive your trespasses.

 **Truth bomb:** A moment of anger can cause expensive damage in our relationships.

- Recognizing how anger interferes with our relationships with God and people will help us say no to it.
- It takes deliberate, patient work to build trust in a relationship, but it only takes one match of unchecked anger to blow it up.
- Anger can lie to us—telling us that the only way to handle an offense and to be treated fairly is to explode aggressively or shut someone out passively. It may look like we are setting boundaries, but if anger is driving our actions, what we call a boundary could actually be a broken bridge.
- When we don't regulate our own hearts, we end up taking out our internal pressure on the people around us. This often happens with parents and children, as Ephesians 6:4 says. We need a calm heart to instruct and train our children rather than punishing them out of anger.

Notes:

 Metaphor moment

Building trust in a relationship is like building a bridge. Piece by piece, you carefully create a strong connection. But a moment of uncontrolled anger is like a stick of dynamite that blows up all the work on the bridge. It takes a massive bulldozer of forgiveness and love to clear the wreckage and rebuild a connection destroyed by a thoughtless tongue.

Don't trade a lifetime connection for a momentary explosion.

**Reflect**

- Who have I been hurting or punishing with my anger? How can I make these relationships right?

**God helps us master our internal world.****Proverbs 16:32 AMP**

He who is slow to anger is better and more honorable than the mighty [soldier], And he who rules and controls his own spirit, than he who captures a city.

Galatians 5:22-23 NIV

But the fruit the Holy Spirit produces is love, joy and peace. It is being patient, kind and good. It is being faithful [23] and gentle and having control of oneself. There is no law against things of that kind.

Proverbs 19:19 AMP

A man of great anger will bear the penalty [for his quick temper and lack of self-control]; For if you rescue him [and do not let him learn from the consequences of his action], you will only have to rescue him over and over again.

Ephesians 2:16 TLB

As parts of the same body, our anger against each other has disappeared, for both of us have been reconciled to God. And so the feud ended at last at the cross.



*** Truth bomb:** God says managing our internal world takes more true power than a military siege.

- In Proverbs 16:32, mastering our spirit is compared to capturing a city. In ancient warfare, capturing a fortified city required immense tactical genius, time, and strength.
- God helps us do this by giving us his Holy Spirit, producing patience, kindness, and self-control.

Notes:

- God also helps us master our anger by letting us face natural consequences, like a good parent trains their child. Facing the consequences of our anger in our relationships will motivate us to change and draw near to God for his help to do so.
- Jesus's death on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins has the power to end anger and feuding. Our gratitude for his death should motivate us to spread undeserved love and kindness rather than anger and fighting.

**Reflect**

- Am I rescuing a habit? Am I constantly bailing out my own bad temper—or someone else's—instead of letting the natural consequences teach a lesson?
- What are some practical ways I can draw nearer to God and experience the fruit that his Holy Spirit produces?

**Final thoughts: The thermostat challenge**

Building trust in a relationship is like building a bridge. Piece by piece, you carefully create a strong connection. But a moment of uncontrolled anger is like a stick of dynamite that blows up all the work on the bridge. It takes a massive bulldozer of forgiveness and love to clear the wreckage and rebuild a connection destroyed by a thoughtless tongue.

**Further study: A deep dive for a cooler spirit**

Check out these Bible passages on anger, forgiveness, love, and gentleness to keep working on developing a cool, calm spirit!

**Gentle answers vs. harsh words****Proverbs 15:1 AMP**

A soft and gentle and thoughtful answer turns away wrath, but harsh and painful and careless words stir up anger.

Proverbs 25:15 CEV

Patience and gentle talk can convince a ruler and overcome any problem.

**Hot-tempered arguments****Proverbs 15:18 AMP**

A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, but he who is slow to anger and patient calms disputes.

Notes:

Proverbs 29:22 Voice

A hot-head provokes quarrels, and one mastered by anger commits all kinds of sins.

 Family, parenting, and discipline**Proverbs 19:18 AMP**

Discipline and teach your son while there is hope, And do not [indulge your anger or resentment by imposing inappropriate punishment nor] desire his destruction.

Colossians 3:21 KJ21

Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.

Proverbs 21:19 YLT

Better to dwell in a wilderness land, Than [with] a woman of contentions and anger.

 Anger in friendships**Proverbs 22:24-25 NASB**

Do not make friends with a person given to anger, Or go with a hot-tempered person, [25]
Or you will learn his ways and find a snare for yourself.

Ephesians 4:26 GNT

If you become angry, do not let your anger lead you into sin, and do not stay angry all day.

James 1:20 AMPC

For man's anger does not promote the righteousness God [wishes and requires].

 Get rid of all anger, not just some**Ephesians 4:31 CSB**

Let all bitterness, anger and wrath, shouting and slander be removed from you, along with all malice.

Notes:

Colossians 3:8 NLT

But now is the time to get rid of anger, rage, malicious behavior, slander, and dirty language.

 Anger as part of our old sinful nature and way of living**Galatians 5:19-21 NLT**

When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, [20] idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, [21] envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

Ephesians 2:3 ERV

In the past all of us lived like that, trying to please our sinful selves. We did all the things our bodies and minds wanted. Like everyone else in the world, we deserved to suffer God's anger just because of the way we were.

Colossians 3:5-8 NCV

So put all evil things out of your life: sexual sinning, doing evil, letting evil thoughts control you, wanting things that are evil, and greed. This is really serving a false god. [6] These things make God angry. [7] In your past, evil life you also did these things. [8] But now also put these things out of your life: anger, bad temper, doing or saying things to hurt others, and using evil words when you talk.

 How anger affects the church**2 Corinthians 12:20 ERV**

I do this because I am afraid that when I come, you will not be what I want you to be. And I am afraid that I will not be what you want me to be. I am afraid that I will find arguing, jealousy, anger, selfish fighting, evil talk, gossip, pride, and confusion there.

1 Timothy 6:3-4 ERV

Some people will teach what is false and will not agree with the true teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ. They will not accept the teaching that produces a life of devotion to God. [4] They are proud of what they know, but they understand nothing. They are sick with a love for arguing and fighting about words. And that brings jealousy, quarrels, insults, and evil mistrust.

Notes:

2 Timothy 2:16 TLB

Steer clear of foolish discussions that lead people into the sin of anger with each other.

1 Timothy 2:8 NLT

In every place of worship, I want men to pray with holy hands lifted up to God, free from anger and controversy.

James 1:26 AMPC

If anyone thinks himself to be religious (pious, devout) and does not bridle his tongue, but deludes his own heart, this person's religion is worthless (futile, barren).

 How anger affects the church
Proverbs 17:9 NLT

Love prospers when a fault is forgiven, but dwelling on it separates close friends.

1 Corinthians 13:5 AMP

[Love] is not rude; it is not self-seeking, it is not provoked [nor overly sensitive and easily angered]; it does not take into account a wrong endured.

Colossians 3:12-13 ERV

God has chosen you and made you his holy people. He loves you. So your new life should be like this: Show mercy to others. Be kind, humble, gentle, and patient. [13] Don't be angry with each other, but forgive each other. If you feel someone has wronged you, forgive them. Forgive others because the Lord forgave you.

1 Peter 4:8 NCV

Most importantly, love each other deeply, because love will cause people to forgive each other for many sins.

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