

CONNECT AND GROW

The Jesus Way: The Danger of Anger

Matthew 5:21-26; 38-48

October 4, 2026

Icebreaker: How was anger typically expressed in your home growing up?

Opening Discussion: Looking back on your Message Notes, what stands out to you the most?

Study Summary:

1. **Following Jesus means learning to respond to people differently than the world does.**
2. **How we respond to people who disagree with, hurt, or oppose us can be a powerful witness to the way of Jesus.**
3. **Jesus calls us not only to avoid retaliation but to actively pray for, bless, and love those who oppose us.**

Digging Deeper:

Read Matthew 5:21-26; 38-48

1. Which part of Jesus' teaching in this passage is most challenging or shocking to you? Why?

1. Do you think Christians are noticeably different from the culture in the way we handle anger, resentment, and conflict? Why or why not?

1. What makes it difficult to respond with kindness toward someone you strongly disagree with?

1. In verses 38-42, Jesus calls His followers to respond to mistreatment with unexpected grace. Why do you think Jesus calls us to actively respond with grace rather than simply avoid retaliation?

1. Is it possible to love someone while maintaining healthy boundaries? What might that look like?

Read this statement: “Christian love is not determined by how other people treat us; it is determined by how God has treated us.”

Read **Romans 5:8-10** and **2 Corinthians 5:18-20**.⁶ **What do these passages teach us about how God has loved and reconciled us? How should that change the way we respond to people who hurt or oppose us?**

7. Why is loving our enemies one of the clearest demonstrations of faith? Why is reconciliation so important to God?

Jesus transforms the way we respond to conflict:

The World's Way:

Anger ▶ retaliation ▶ revenge ▶ separation

The Jesus Way:

Grace ▶ reconciliation ▶ forgiveness ▶ love

Want to see what this looks like in real life?

Read the story of Stephen in **Acts 6:8-15; Acts 7:54-60**. What do you notice about Stephen's response to those who were attacking him?

8. Think of someone you disagree with or who has hurt you. How could you cultivate compassion toward them? What is one specific step you could take this week?

Challenge for the week:

Pray for one person who has hurt you, frustrated you, or with whom you strongly disagree.

Ask God to help you see that person as He sees them. Pray for God's blessing in their life, and ask God to show you one appropriate way to demonstrate Christ's compassion toward them.

Remember: You are salt and light. Let your response to difficult people show the difference Jesus makes in your life.

Prayer: Father, forgive us for the times we respond to anger and hurt with retaliation, resentment, or revenge. Thank You for loving us and extending grace to us when we did not deserve it. Give us the grace to extend that same love and grace to others. Help us forgive, pursue peace, maintain healthy boundaries when necessary, and pray for those who hurt or oppose us. Make our lives a clear witness to the way of Jesus. Amen.

