

*“Be quick to listen, slow to speak,
and slow to anger” ~ James 1:19*



Dealing with Anger

Read: John 2:13-25

When anyone asks you “What would Jesus do?” remind them that getting angry and flipping over tables is a legitimate option. In the gospel we hear the story of Jesus chasing the moneylenders out of the temple. Although many people think anger is something to be avoided, there is such a thing as righteous anger. This is the type of anger Jesus displays in the gospel. We can be angry at things that are unjust and sinful, however, that does not mean we have the right to lose our cool.

We all have a tendency to get a bit emotional when our passions are aroused. When I was young my dad and I used to watch Rider games with a friend of his. I recall one incident where the Riders lost the game and our host reacted by throwing a lamp across the room. We quickly departed when his wife arrived on the scene seconds later.

Anger is simply an emotion; it can be used for either good or bad. The trick is to be “meek” like Jesus. Now, whenever we hear the word “meek” we immediately think of pushovers. People who just sit there and get walked all over. That doesn’t sound very impressive. But that’s not the model Jesus portrays for us. What people don’t know is that the word “meek” is a classical husbandry term that means to harness raw energy. That is precisely what Jesus does. He was a carpenter and in those days it also meant you fashioned stone. To put it lightly, Jesus was cut (the ripped image of him on the cross is not far off). Yet Jesus took all the power he had at his disposal and “meeked” it. He used it for good and harnessed the raw energy inside. That’s what we are supposed to do, but it’s not an easy task.

So, how do we “meek” ourselves? Well, for starters, we need to encounter Jesus through prayer and the gospels. We need to conform our lives to his example and act with righteous anger and not irrational anger. We need to discipline ourselves in order to harness the potential God has given us and use it for good. Before we react, we need to stop and ask ourselves, “what would Jesus do?”

Reflection: What types of situations make me angry? How can I better control my anger when I am provoked?

Discipleship Challenge: Memorize the Bible passage: “Be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger” James 1:19. Next time you feel the urge to get upset take a deep breathe and repeat the verse to yourself until you feel your emotions settle.