

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Sermon: “*Restraint Over Anger*”

Series: “*Vice & Virtue*” Dave Sattler NSAC September 21, 2025

Text: Matthew 5:21-26 Sub-texts: Exodus 34:6, Psalm 13:1-2,
Proverbs 14:16-17, 17:27, 29:11, Isaiah 55:8-9, Ephesians 4:29-32

I. Introduction Questions:

- Where do you see anger causing damage in our world? Give examples.
- In Matthew 5, Jesus pushes beyond specific behaviours punished by the law to the kind of *heart* that generates such actions. Do you believe it's important to address anger at the heart level? Why or why not?

II. Read Matthew 5:21-26

III. Questions on Matthew 5:21-26

1. How does Jesus begin? (V21). Why do you think He starts with “You know the rules and consequences?”
2. In V22, Jesus seems to equate anger with murder. How does this sit with you? Explain.
3. Is there a difference between obeying God's rule (not murdering anyone) but ignore God's intent and continuing to resent and rage at people? Discuss.
4. How might anger affect our relationships with others, our relationship with God (and our worship)? (V23-24) Explain.
5. Why do you think Jesus encourages His people to “settle matters quickly”? (Discuss the short parable in V25-26)
6. Have you ever forgotten the original reason for the conflict you're in because you've said even more hurtful things in the process of trying to resolve it? How does this problem relate to what Jesus is saying?

IV. Applications Questions

1. Bat around Big Question #1: Is every angry emotion we feel a sin?
 - Some say anger is a natural, healthy, human emotion: in and of itself, anger is not sinful, unless it rages out of control, or, hurts others. Others believe anger is never something we should feel: it's okay to be angry at sin, the devil, or evil powers, but never towards people, or, God.

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2. How might our anger be connected to a sense of justice? And what are the strengths and pitfalls of us acting on these feelings? Discuss.
3. Read Psalm 13:1-2. Where is the best place to voice our angry feelings? Note: God's not afraid or disappointed to hear this kind of cry from us.
4. Bat around Big Question #2: Is it healthy to be angry all the time?
5. Pastor Dave said: "If we find ourselves feeling angry all the time, it's a sure sign to pay attention. Often there's anger lurking just beneath the surface and I need to address it: How have I been hurt? Where do I need healing? What do I need to confess?" Discuss.
6. Read Proverbs 14:16-17 and Proverbs 17:27. What's it mean / look like to exercise **restraint** rather than allow our anger to control us?
7. How might we process our deeply felt emotions in constructive ways and at appropriate times with the right people?
8. Discuss the dangers of allowing our anger to give birth to yelling, cursing, and name-calling.
9. Discuss the dangers of allowing our anger to lead us to shun or avoid people or harbour bitter resentment in our hearts towards others.
 - Chew on this quote from author and theologian Frederick Buechner: "Of the Seven Deadly Sins, anger is possibly the most fun. To lick your wounds, to smack your lips over grievances long past, to roll over your tongue the prospect of bitter confrontations still to come, to savour to the last toothsome morsel both the pain you are given and the pain you are giving back - in many ways it is a feast fit for a king. The chief drawback is that what you are wolfing down is yourself. The skeleton at the feast is you." (Buechner, p34)
10. Pastor Dave said, "Often anger hits us most in that painful gap between life's expectations and life's reality." How might our anger be connected to unmet expectations in life?
11. Read Isaiah 55:8-9. At the core of anger is the question: Am I in charge or is God? How is comforting (or frustrating) to know that God is God and we are not!? Discuss.
 - Some questions to take into **PRAYER**: how are you dealing with anger? Where or with whom is your anger boiling over? And, where are you holding your anger in? Who is it you're having a hard time forgiving?