

GTO Seeds for Growth

The Truth about Anger

By Harold & Bette Gillogly

Here are four truths about anger. If we really believe these truths and act upon them, we will take a **giant step** toward handling our anger.

Psalm 37:8 — *Refrain from anger and turn from wrath; do not fret — it leads only to evil.*

Proverbs 30:33c — *...stirring up anger produces strife.*

Ephesians 4:22-24 — *You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.*

Matthew 5:22a — *But [Jesus] tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment.*

Proverbs 27:4a — *Anger is cruel and fury is overwhelming.*

Proverbs 17:14 *Starting a quarrel is like breaching a dam; so drop the matter before a dispute breaks out.*

1. We get angry because real life is not the way we think it OUGHT to be (Psa. 37:8).

“She should understand me.” “He shouldn’t treat me this way.” There are a lot of “shoulds” and “shouldn’ts” in this world. We want to be treated a certain way. In fact, we think we **deserve** to be treated a certain way. And when we aren’t, we become angry and resentful. If we refuse to let go of our expectations of what “ought to be,” we will end up bitter and depressed old codgers.

2. Expressing your anger does not lessen your anger. It usually INCREASES it (Prov. 30:33c).

It’s amazing how many of us still believe the old “pressure cooker theory” which promotes the benefits of “letting off steam.” Have you ever seen a pressure cooker at work? There’s a little valve on top that releases steam when the pressure builds up too much. Then the pressure cooker is fine until the next time the steam builds. But we are people, not pressure cookers. When we let off a little steam, it usually turns into a lot of steam; our partner’s defenses kick in, so we let off more steam. This trend definitely **escalates the anger and conflict.**

3. How you deal with your anger was LEARNED (Eph. 4:22-24).

This is good news. Whatever we learned, we can unlearn. Then we are free to develop **NEW** responses to handle our anger and get it under control. God is in the process of renewing believers (v. 23). As we grow, He expects us to behave responsibly in obedience and holiness (v. 24). So, not only **can** we change, but we are actually **given the power** to do so.

4. Your partner is not RESPONSIBLE for making you angry. You are (Matt. 5:22a).

Have you ever said, “**You** make me so angry”? This truth snatches from us our “right” to say that, or even think it. Jesus makes it clear that each of us is **responsible for his own anger.** The Bible never says we are responsible for another’s anger, but it says plenty about how we should handle our own. This is a hard truth to hear and to apply in our lives; but since **we are responsible**, we must take this truth to heart.



Which of these 4 Truths About Anger is the hardest to believe and apply? Why?

Wife: _____

Husband: _____

BLAME fuels the fires of anger.

We blame our mates thinking that we can IMPROVE them (Prov. 27:4a).

What a useless and self-defeating pursuit! Does being blamed make **you** straighten up and become a nicer person? Does it make **you** want to change for the better? **Blame does not work...it overwhelms.**

When you blame, you TRIGGER your partner’s self-defense system (Prov. 17:14).

The dictionary defines “a breach” as “a gap made by battering a wall.” Boy, does that describe blame! It’s like battering the wall of a dam until it breaks. The results? A destructive flood.

When you blame, it keeps your anger GOING.

It doesn't make it go away. This is another facet of the "pressure cooker theory." It doesn't work, remember?

When you blame, it distracts you from discovering a SOLUTION to your frustration.

Our oldest daughter once had a pet rat. "Roger" would jump into the big wheel in his cage and run, and run and run. Unfortunately, Roger never got anywhere. When he finally tired out and slumped off the wheel, he'd still be in the same old place — his cage. Blame is like that. It never gets us anywhere, and wears us out trying. And what makes it even **more counterproductive**, is that we get so accustomed to the "wheel of blame," we can't see that it **keeps us** from finding the true escape route.

The solution? Ephesians 4:32 — *Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.* **FORGIVENESS releases you** from the pressure of making your mate PAY for what they have done to you.

You're not the judge, jury and executioner. **God is**, and **He forgives**. God forgives you, not because you **deserve** to be forgiven, but because He **chooses** to forgive you. Your mate may not deserve your forgiveness, but you can choose to show compassion. You don't need to wait until forgiveness is deserved. God gives you the **power to forgive by choice...like Him**. The truth is, **blame will make you sick; forgiveness will make you well.**

Carrying a pattern of **blame** into our marriage got me (Harold) into trouble more than once. I have finally learned that when something goes wrong, I can't find the person to blame and nail them to the wall. If there is a problem, we need to discuss it, but **without blame**. I still need to remind myself that blame **does not work**.



List some negative effects of blame in your relationship with your mate?

Wife: _____

Husband: _____

If you tend to blame, how can you apply the solution of forgiveness?

Wife: _____

Husband: _____



REFLECT TOGETHER: Read Ephesians 4:22-27. Who gets a foothold when we allow anger to stay in our lives?

PRAY TOGETHER: Dear Father, help me take responsibility for my anger. And help us open ourselves to You, so that You can teach us a better way to handle it.

Ephesians 4:32 — *Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.*

Blame will make you sick;
forgiveness will make you well.

In the book, every time you see four little feet walking across the page like this, you know they will be followed by something for you to do.

There is an opportunity at the end of each day's study for both of you to write your personal application from the study for that day. These **daily application sections** are bound by an intertwined rope symbolizing couples jointly "tying together" the significance of the study.

The **REFLECT TOGETHER** and **PRAY TOGETHER** sections, found at the end of each day's study, are identified with the cross and anchor symbol, signifying the lasting relationship bond that reading God's Word and praying together can fortify.

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