



## *Anger* – Matthew 5:21-26

On the surface, I am not concerned with the prohibition against murder, but when Jesus makes the connection between my anger and murder, things start to change. Jesus is not here suggesting that anger and murder are equivalent sin issues, but He is making a connection for us so that we properly understand how one leads to another. Further, this connection is not intended to mark a line in the sand for which on one side we find sin and on the other, we do not. Rather, Jesus is pointing out that the sin of murder has its source in our nurturing a prior sin of anger.

Before we throw out all expressions of anger, we should examine passages like Ephesians 4:26-27, in which Paul tells us to “Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger”. This can help us in understanding the connection between anger and murder, while not overplaying the place of anger in our lives. There are various places in the Bible where we read about God’s anger, yet there is no implication that this anger was itself sinful. It is rather, how we dwell upon and deal with our anger that marks the difference between sinful anger that can be rightly compared to murder and the righteous anger of God.

When in my anger I degrade the humanity of those I am angry with, I am crossing a sinful line. God is angry when we sin, but the value He places on our lives does not change. If in our anger, we devalue others, we sin and begin to move toward a view of others that would justify murder. Like all sin, this sin in our anger can be forgiven in Christ, but we are here warned not to dismiss the sin that it is.

## *Thoughts for Reflection*

How can you keep your anger from crossing a line that leads you to sin?

21 “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.’ 22 But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be liable to the hell of fire. 23 So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. 25 Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison. 26 Truly, I say to you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.