

The Deadly Sin of Anger – Pt. 3

Matthew 5:21–26

—
Tom Pennington

Feb. 1, 2026

MAIN IDEA: In Matthew 5:21–26, Jesus Christ addresses the sin of anger. And he teaches that in God’s eyes, sinful anger violates the sixth commandment (“You shall not murder”).¹ As Jesus’ disciples, we must never excuse our sinful anger, and we must reconcile quickly when anger has breached our relationships.

SERMON OUTLINE:

- I. The Law Against Murder Quoted (21a)
- II. The Law against Murder Misinterpreted (21b)
- III. The Law against Murder Explained (22)
- IV. The Law against Murder Applied (23-26)
 - A. Reconcile First, Before You Worship (23-24)
 - B. Reconcile Quickly, Before the Full Consequences of Anger Are Settled (25-26)
 1. Before the human consequences come to pass (25-26)
 2. Before the divine consequences come to pass (26)

Righteous vs. Sinful Anger

- There is righteous anger...
 1. God is often righteously angry with sin and sinners (Dt. 1:37; Zech. 1:2; Heb. 3:17).
 2. Jesus became angry during His life on earth without sin...
 - With the buyers & sellers in the Temple (Mt. 21:12)
 - With the Pharisees (Mk. 3:1)
- What’s the difference between righteous & sinful anger?
 - a. Righteous anger is always because God has been dishonored or others are being treated unjustly.
 - b. Sinful anger is always about me and my real or perceived rights being violated.

How to Pursue Reconciliation

1. Go to the person privately—you must take the initiative.
2. Name the sin.
3. Accept full responsibility.
4. Ask for their forgiveness & wait for it to be offered.

¹ For an in-depth explanation of the sixth commandment, see Pastor Tom’s book, *The Biblical View of Abortion* (Southlake, TX: The Word Unleashed, 2025).

5. Don't blame the one you've sinned against, if there are consequences for your sin...
 - If your anger is a habit, the person may be slow to believe your repentance is genuine.
 - If your anger has been a habit for a long time, there may be a breach of trust that will have to be slowly rebuilt over time.

BIBLICAL/THEOLOGICAL QUESTIONS

1. Read Matthew 21:12–19. Discuss the context of this scene and why Jesus' anger is righteous and not sinful. What makes Jesus' anger so different from our expressions of anger? Discuss.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

1. Why are murder and the anger from which it flows attacks against God and His character? As we seek to reconcile with someone who has been on the receiving end of our anger, why must we have in mind that they are image-bearers of God? How will this help us in our pursuit of reconciliation?

2. If we as Christians provoke someone else to anger, are we in sin (Eph. 6:4)? If so, what are the practical steps that we should take to make things right with God and the person we provoked? Discuss.

3. Are there relationships in your life that have been affected by your anger? Have you reconciled with whom you've sinned against? Why must reconciliation mark a true Christian? Discuss.