

ANGER

I have encountered anger in many ways; in raised fists and even brandished weapons. I have seen it shown in slamming doors, screaming and yelling, even furniture flying, resulting in breakup of relationships. In community I have seen anger arise from disagreements, intolerance, possibly someone lording it over another. When anger is not handled well, it can lead to disenchantment or loss of a member even in community.

Must we show our anger when we do not agree with one another? Are we to confront or rebuke each other on every occasion? Do we always speak our minds much like we see in the corporate world?

Is there a place for anger in the Christian realm? Throughout most of my life, I thought it was a sin to be angry. However, in what seems to be a contradiction, Paul tells us in Ephesians 4:26 **“Be angry and do not sin”** How can this be?

Throughout scripture we see anger, wrath, temper, indignation, fury expressed by God. (Jeremiah 30:23-24, Rev. 19:14-15). However it is important to realize that God’s anger, in all cases, is not toward the person but at sin.

In ministry, I once encountered intense disagreements with an older member. I felt, together with other members, that certain items were being inappropriately handled resulting in bad fruit. My initial reaction was of unbelief followed by anger. The anger increased as we tried to ‘confront’ the member and utter disbelief ensued from his unyielding stance. Our confrontation, however, was done in a manner that showed our love for each other as members of the body of Christ. Whatever differences we had, we reconciled in Christ’s love as Jesus tells us in Matthew 5:23-24, **“Therefore, if you bring your gift to the altar, and there recall that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift there at the altar, go first and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift.”**

We show more love when we try to correct another rather than letting things slide, because it will most likely lead to shoddier things later on. In Scripture, the word often used is “rebuke”. We see correction in one of the most stunning exchanges between Jesus and Peter in Mark 8:33 **“But turning and seeing His disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, ‘Get behind me, Satan’!** For you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men”. Peter was wrong and Jesus confronted him.

When we approach one another in fraternal correction, we can only show anger, not at the person, but at the deed or sin. More importantly, anger should not be the last thing remembered, but rather love.