

The Attitude of Anger

Jesus made a rather startling statement concerning anger. It is found in the context of the way the Jewish teachers had instructed the people concerning murder. Jesus emphasized the seriousness of anger toward another person:

You have been taught that you will bear the judgment of the court for murder. I am telling you that you will bear the judgment of the court for your anger.
(Paraphrase of Matthew 5:21-22)

To 'bear the judgment of the court' meant that a person was *accountable* to the local court. The court was not held to determine whether the person was guilty, but to hand down a sentence because of guilt. So, Jesus told the people that anger should be dealt with in the same way as a convicted murderer. A person should be held accountable to the local court and receive a sentencing based on their guilt.

Consider what it would mean if the statement of Jesus became a reality in our legal system. You became angry with your spouse or your parents; off to court to receive a sentence for your anger.

- You did not get that promotion;
- A teenager cut you off in traffic;
- Your in-laws _____ ;
- The car broke down...again;
- The preacher, the song leader, the elders did (or did not do) something . . . and you are mad.

So, off to court.

By nature anger devalues another person. It belittles them by justifying one's own personal superiority. Anger judges.

Jesus said that the one who is angry should be judged!

'Raca' (Matthew 5:22) was an Aramaic word meaning: empty. In our day it would be equivalent of calling someone 'empty-headed' or 'retarded.'

"You fool" (also v. 22) comes from the Greek word 'moron' (the source of our English word 'moron'). To call someone 'moron' was not just silliness; it was a humiliating reference meaning 'worthless.' It was an expression coming from an attitude that looked on another person as having no value as a human being. The 'moron' (fool) could justifiably be treated like household garbage, worthless.

The attitude behind anger, "raca," and "you fool" intentionally devalues other people. This attitude is a slap in the face of God. By devaluing others it minimizes God's sacrifice of his Son as something done in vain.

Anger does not accomplish the will of God.