



Is Jesus saying that if you call someone a fool you are going straight to hell? What is the spirit behind this verse? What's it saying about heart condition of the person who makes this statement?

*The whole point of these verses on anger, according to author Jonathan Pennington, is that "...Being angry and insulting another person made in God's image, not just the outward physical act of murder, is wrong and worthy of judgement." (Excerpt from The Sermon on the Mount and Human Flourishing.)*

Why would an insult toward another individual be something Jesus says is out of bounds and dishonoring to God?

In verse 23 Jesus says, "remember that your brother has something against you..."

In what sense does God even want to interrupt our worship in order to take care of a serious issue with another human being?

What could be a modern-day example of "leave your gift at the altar and go (be reconciled to your brother)"?

*What does God want us to hear?* Based on the passage and the questions above, what "takeaways" do you think God has revealed to you?

## WHAT DOES GOD WANT US TO DO?

Pastor James said, "The truth is, we all deal with anger. Some of us run hotter or colder than others but, let's be honest, we're all capable of a flare up that can ruin our day, strain relationships, or just leave a dark cloud of funk over our lives. Anger is just a part of our painful human experience."

What comes closest to your anger style: Suppressor, Detonator, Passive-Aggressive, or Assertive?

Are these verses about anger in the Sermon on the Mount saying that getting angry at someone is always wrong? Give examples from the Bible supporting your argument (e.g., Jesus flipped the money-changers tables, David was angry at Saul and his army for not standing up against Goliath, etc.)

Where do you draw the line between healthy and unhealthy anger? Justified or sinful anger?

*Ephesians 4:26-27 says "Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil."*

How does the anger mentioned in the Beatitudes in Matthew differ from the righteous anger that is often necessary when confronting an injustice?

What should be the first step toward reconciliation when dealing with someone in your life with whom you are angry?

Is forgiving someone of something the same as letting that person hurt you again with the same thing? Does forgiveness automatically mean you need to trust that person, or even be reconciled with him or her? Why or why not?

*What does God want us to do?* Flowing out of our reading and interpretation, what action does this passage or the Spirit's leading, call us to?

## WHAT DOES GOD WANT ME TO DO?

Identify people in your life toward whom you harbor anger. Take the first step in asking God to soften your heart towards them, and to open up your eyes/heart to forgiving them, and perhaps being reconciled with them (if that is possible to do safely and wisely).

Please remember that forgiving someone involves YOUR heart alone – it is possible to forgive someone without the person who hurt you ever acknowledging that they hurt you or apologizing to you, as galling as that can be. Pray about God changing your heart and allowing you to forgive the people who hurt you, so that you don't harbor any bitterness or let chronic anger poison your mind and spirit.

Talk with your accountability partner, community group, friend, or mentor about what reaching out and being reconciled to the person or people who hurt you might look like. Seek the wisdom of godly peers and mentors.

Remind yourself that everyone is made in God's image, and everyone has flaws. If outright forgiveness and reconciliation is too hard at the moment, take time to journal what forgiving them would look like for you.

*What does God want ME to do? What is the personal application and action step God is calling you, personally, toward?*