

## Authentic Christianity Part 3: Discipline Your Mind

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Matthew 5:21-26

The authentic Christian disciplines the mind concerning anger. The mind is where all the sin begins with in regard to internal anger against others.

The **Christian** who has conquered anger in their lives has a daily total commitment to the Lord in the face of injustice and being abused and maligned. He is content and peaceful. He looks to God, is patient, and waits on the Lord. He defers judgement to God. He allows God to exact justice. Rev. 6:9 gives a description of the Tribulation saints who have been glorified and deferring judgement to the Lord. We too will conquer anger when we die!

**>>From Matt 5:21-26, Jesus draws from the OT passages on how to judge murderers.**

**V21:** Jesus references "in ancient times:" Ex. 20:13 and Deut. 5:17, the command "You shall not murder." Jesus also references Deut. 17:7-13 in a situation that judgement is brought by a priest when the death of a person was difficult to determine.

**V22:** Jesus then references three courts: 1) "danger of the judgement," 2) "danger of the council," and 3) "danger of hell fire." These are varying degrees of judgement. The first is judgement of the elders and local leaders. The second is the more formal Sanhedrin, and the third is the courts of heaven. Jesus describes three expressions of anger/reviling in **verse 22**.

- 1) **Reviling your brother in the mind:** a verbal or thought abuse of another. This word "anger" is used in Matthew and is used as a precursor to a sinful or act of destruction. Matt. 18:34, "moved with anger, handed over to torturers," 22:7, "enraged" and sent armies to destroy the murderers. This isn't minor anger or frustration, but when not dealt with it turns into habitual rage. Jesus speaks about a relationship between brothers. Jesus gives an example in Matt. 25:40 of how Jesus gave preference to how brothers treated one another as if doing the kind act unto Himself. Gal. 6:10, tells us to do good to all, especially those of the household of faith.
- 2) **Reviling the humanity of the brother:** "Raca" means "empty headed or stupid," but it is used with the connotation of dehumanizing and treating another as less valuable, worth, and less than human. Reviling is verbal abuse or curses upon another. It is seeing others as trivial, holding contempt for them, insulting, scorning, intimidating, and verbal murder. It comes out of the abundance of the heart, Matt. 12:34.
- 3) **Reviling the salvation of the brother:** "you fool," this goes beyond describing the humanity of a brother. In the Greek it is an adjective. It is used in Matt. 7:26, "foolish man who built his house on the sand," and in 23:17, "Fools and blind," speaking of the Pharisees, in 25:2-3 speaking of the "foolish virgins." This word "you fool," is used to say of another, "You are unworthy to be a believer," or that they can't be saved.

How is this different than what Jesus commanded believers in dealing with a sinning brother in Matt. 18:15-20? V17, this is referred to step 4 in church discipline when the elders tell the church that the sinning brother should be as to us "like a heathen and a tax collector." Matt. 18 isn't a reviling against the brother or a judgement that they can't be saved, but a call to repentance into obedience to the Lord. Internal sin is the focus of Christ's law and the believer's heart is changed to obey Christ.

Jesus is speaking in Matt. 5:23-26 about 2 scenarios. (1) is a brother and brother and (2) a believer with anyone else.

**Scenario 1: Brother and Brother: V23-24:** Assumes that the other brother wants reconciliation and the brother in Matt. 5:23 won't give it. He is commanded to leave his gift at the altar and go and be reconciled. Jesus' example depicts a man who has bound the animal, ready to slay it, and remembers that he hasn't reconciled. Leviticus 6:1-7, describes how restitution should be made before the trespass offering is offered to the Lord- these are signs of actual repentance.

This brother should be reconciled first to his brother and then offer his sacrifice to God signifying a right relationship with God. The inability to reconcile demonstrates an abiding anger within the brother unwilling to forgive. 1 Sam. 15:22, Hosea 6:6, and Micah 6:6-8, all declare that God desires obedience more than sacrifices and offerings. We should correct the relationship with our brother before worshipping the Lord.

**Scenario 2: Believer and Anyone Else: V25-26:** What would prevent a believer from resolving a conflict with another? Abiding anger against another even when know he knows he is wrong. We must settle this issue of anger reinforced by pride and stubbornness before it takes over. Humble repentance of a believer demonstrates the grace of God before others.

Scripture gives names of those whose sins have become evident and unrepentant: 1 Cor. 6:9-10, calls out the sexually immoral, those that steal as thieves, those that desire the things of this world as covetous and idolators, and those who are controlled by pride and anger as revilers. Paul warns these who practice these things won't inherit the kingdom of God.

## Further Discussion and Application

Paul recognized in Acts 23:1-3 the sin that he committed in unknowingly reviling against the high priest. How did Paul demonstrate his submission to authority? Why did Paul repent of his reviling against the high priest? Was Paul's example one of showing that he was maligned and mistreated? In what circumstances should we hold our peace and suffer for righteousness' sake?

In what ways do we need to obey Romans 12:1-2 in the area of anger, frustration, evil speaking and attitude towards personal sin? According to Matt. 15:1-20 (specifically V18-20) what do our actions reveal about us? How can we use the help of other believers to identify our sin?

How do we dissipate the sin of anger in our lives? What has God ordained in our lives with regards to anger and frustration with others and our family? How does God help us in our sanctification through the preaching, fellowship, and study of the word of God?

What are our internal thoughts revealing about us in our love and thoughts of others? What is our attitude towards giving our time and money to the Lord? What do our words reveal about our love and gratefulness for our spouse? What do our words reveal about our love and gratefulness for our children?