

Praying Through Anger

INTRODUCTION: Have you ever spent a sleepless night, tossing and turning, full of hurt, dismay, frustration or a sense of fear?

1. Certainly, we all have. What we are doing is struggling with *anger*.
2. And anger is *not* always a sinful thing. Often it is a very normal, healthy and even right response to evil, injustice and injury.
 - a) The *anger* a girl feels when she is molested.
 - b) The *anger* we sense when unjustly passed over or laid off.
 - c) The *anger* a single mother (dad) lives with after her (his) spouse walks out on the family.
 - d) The *anger* most Americans wrestle with as they experience one disappointment after another from Washington, D.C. (Raleigh)
 - e) The *anger* a person rightly feels when others do wrong to them and the situation goes unresolved and unreconciled.
3. **Les Carter** and **Frank Minirth**, two Christian Psychiatrists and Counselors, explain anger quite well.
 - a) Book: *The Anger Workbook*; pp. 4, 10, 21
 - b) *Anger is an emotion that is common to every person. Because we are imperfect people in an imperfect world, we are guaranteed to regularly encounter this emotion.*
 - c) *As we come to know and understand our anger, its management is far less daunting. Anger can be felt even when others don't see it. Anger is defined as an intent to preserve (1) personal worth, (2) essential needs, and (3) basic convictions.*
 - d) *By defining anger as the emotion of self-preservation of your worth, needs, and convictions, it is easier to detect your moments of vulnerability to it. But while we recognize our times of vulnerability, we still need to answer a common question: Is anger good or bad? The answer is, it all depends. There are times when anger is incorrectly associated with trivial matters. And there are times when it may be associated with legitimate concerns, but is managed irresponsibly. Balance is found when anger is linked to a reasonable issue and is communicated in a proper manner. This requires delicate sifting through the options of anger management.*
4. The Bible *assumes* we will get angry. It even gives us *permission* to do so, provided we channel (manage) that anger in an appropriate (spiritual) manner:
 - a) *Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil ... Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be*

kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.
(Eph. 4:26-27, 29-32)

- b) When Paul wrote ... *Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger* (Eph. 4:26)
- c) He was quoting Psalm 4:4-5
*Be angry, and do not sin;
ponder in your own hearts on your beds, and be silent. Selah
Offer right sacrifices,
and put your trust in the Lord.*
- d) Giving it an Apostolic paraphrase and application.

5. **Carter** and **Minirth** inform us that there are generally **Five ways** people handle (process) their anger:

- a) **Suppressing Anger:** These people deceive themselves and say to others, “I’m not angry; I don’t have a temper.” Nonsense. Anger is common to mankind. They put on a store front of self-control but inside they are awash with feelings of inner rage, pain and frustration.
- b) **Open Aggression:** Open expressions of rage, intimidation and blame. They get loud, get mean or get even. These folks we say, have “an anger issue.” They do, but it’s just less concealed than other people’s anger.
- c) **Passive Aggression:** Often called “passive aggressive disorder,” these folks sulk, withdraw affection, give others the silent treatment, gossip, refuse to cooperate, or do subtle things to frustrate others in order to get even. This is cowardly anger in process.
- d) **Assertive Anger:** These people express anger with both firmness and respectfulness. It is how more mature people handle anger. But it can border on “putting people in their place,” being insensitive and overstating one’s case. This kind of anger however, can actually strengthen relationships and solve problems.
- e) **Dropping Anger:** This is God’s way of expressing His righteous anger. He simply forgives. He tolerates our sinful behavior and seeks for reconciliation and restitution. Danger: *When we try to drop anger it often returns in greater force. Hence, we need to forgive again and again until our anger abates and acceptance of others returns.*

Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. (Eph. 4:29-32)

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. (Eph. 5:1-2)

6. Don’t kid yourself, because you’re not kidding others: *The proof that you have an “anger issue” are those sleepless nights, that knot in your stomach, your dislike for another person, or your desire to either get even or remove all affection from a brother or sister in Christ.*

7. Remember the words of Brother James:

Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.
(James 1:19-21)

8. Let's do just that: "receive with meekness the implanted word which is able to save your souls" ...

a) ... and deliver you from anger...

b) namely Psalm 4: To the Choirmaster: with stringed instruments. A Psalm of David.

c) *Answer me when I call, O God of my
righteousness!*

You have given me relief when I was in distress.

Be gracious to me and hear my prayer!

*O men, how long shall my honor be turned into
shame?*

*How long will you love vain words and seek after
lies? Selah*

*But know that the Lord has set apart the godly for himself;
the Lord hears when I call to him.*

Be angry, and do not sin;

ponder in your own hearts on your beds, and be silent. Selah

Offer right sacrifices,

and put your trust in the Lord.

There are many who say, "Who will show us some good?"

Lift up the light of your face upon us, O Lord!"

You have put more joy in my heart

than they have when their grain and wine abound.

In peace I will both lie down and sleep;

for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety. (Psalm 4:1-8)

I. UNDERSTANDING PSALM 4

1. Just as Psalm 3 is considered a *morning prayer*, Psalm 4 is regarded as an *evening prayer*.

2. Bible scholars find justification in referring to Psalm 4 as an *evening prayer* in verse 4 ...

Be angry, and do not sin;

ponder in your own hearts on your beds, and be

silent. Selah (Ps. 4:4)

3. The Psalms come in different *genres* (types or styles). **Tremper Longman**, and OT scholar at Westmont College (California) believes there are seven basic types (genres) or Psalms.

a) *Hymns*

b) *Laments*

c) *Thanksgiving*

d) *Trust* (confidence)

- e) *Wisdom*
 - f) *Remembrance* (historical)
 - g) *Kingship* (Messianic)
 - h) **note:** Psalms often combine genres in one Psalm
4. Psalms 3 and 4 are Psalms of *personal lament* and *trust in God*.
- a) Many try to attach Psalm 4 to Psalm 3, and place both in the context of David's struggle with Absalom's rebellion.
 - b) But Psalm 4 has no *historical superscription*.
 - c) In Psalm 3 David is struggling against *physical danger from enemies*.
 - d) In Psalm 4 David is struggling against *slander and lies*.
 - e) In four stanzas this "Prayer," set to music (*To the Choirmaster: with stringed instruments*) wrestles though the pain, anger and sense of injustice when slander arises against you.
5. Children often chant to one another, on the playground: "*Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me.*"
- a) Of course this is not true.
 - b) Words do hurt, and usually those wounds are deeper and more long-lasting than a punch in the face!
 - c) What do children know? They've learned how to use words as weapons!
6. So, David prays, while struggling to go to sleep, knowing that a whispering campaign of lies, gossip, slander, false accusations and sinister insinuations are gathering momentum against him in the Royal Court and Royal City. Here's what he prays ...
7. **First:** He invokes God's mercy and asks Him for *relief* (not revenge)
- a) *Answer me when I call, O God of my righteousness!*
You have given me relief when I was in distress.
Be gracious to me and hear my prayer!
(Psalm 4:1)
 - b) He tells God he is in *distress*. (In Psalm 3 he was in *danger*)
 - c) Perhaps Psalm 4 was written *before/prior to* Psalm 3, when Absalom was working a plan of slander and lies to undermine King David.
 - d) *After this Absalom got himself a chariot and horses, and fifty men to run before him. And Absalom used to rise early and stand beside the way of the gate. And when any man had a dispute to come before the king for judgment, Absalom would call to him and say, "From what city are you?" And when he said, "Your servant is of such and such a tribe in Israel," Absalom would say to him, "See, your claims are good and right, but there is no man designated by the king to hear you." Then Absalom would say, "Oh that I were judge in the land! Then every man with a dispute or cause might come to me, and I would give him justice." And whenever a man came near to pay homage to him, he would put out his hand*

and take hold of him and kiss him. Thus Absalom did to all of Israel who came to the king for judgment. So Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel. (2 Samuel 15:1-6)

- e) Problem: *Gossip, lies, insinuations and slander are very real yet invisible enemies. You know when they are there but you know not where. It's very unsettling.*
- f) But, God knows; so David asks God for grace, answers to prayer and relief from false reports.
- g) *Answer me when I call, O God of my righteousness!
You have given me relief when I was in distress.
Be gracious to me and hear my prayer! (Ps. 4:1)*

8. **Second:** David, in his mind, speaks to those secret enemies who are seeking his ruin.

- a) *O men, how long shall my honor be turned into shame?
How long will you love vain words and seek after lies? Selah
But know that the Lord has set apart the godly for himself;
the Lord hears when I call to him. (Psalm 4:2-3)*
- b) He addresses them as, “*O men*” because he can never really prove who they are. Gossips and slanderers are **always** sneaky cowards, who’ll deny they ever said such false things.
- c) Literally: *O men of rank*. These are David’s peers, his friends, the princes and rulers of Israel (and perhaps Absalom’s supporters).
- d) He speaks to them (in God’s hearing) and states three truths
 - (1) The Slanderers are seeking to turn his *honor* into shame (They are impugning his character and integrity)
 - (2) The Gossips love *vain words* and seek after *lies*; they traffic in half-truths and outright falsehoods.
 - (3) These whisperers forget that “*the Lord has set apart the godly man for Himself.*”
When they malign the good man they mess with the great God!
- e) The *Selah* after verse 2 means that David wants the worshippers and those who pray to *pause* to think about these two provocative questions.
- f) In his restless, sleepless night David tries to reason with his accusers; but you really can’t traffic in truth with gossips, slanderers and liars.

9. **Third:** David wrestles with his anger, righteous indignation, over this whole affair.

- a) *Be angry, and do not sin;
ponder in your own hearts on your beds, and be silent. Selah
Offer right sacrifices,
and put your trust in the Lord.
(Psalm 4:4-5)*

b) This is **the Heart** of the Psalm; the middle verse, 4 out of 8, and **central thought**.

c) Hence: a second *Selah* (a pause to meditate)

*Be angry, and do not sin;
ponder in your own hearts on your beds, and be
silent. Selah (Psalm 4:4)*

d) Is David now speaking to Himself or to his slanderers?

(1) Commentators are mixed, some say one things and others take the opposite view.

(2) Perhaps it is *both*!

e) To his slanderers David says: “*Do not let your anger toward me, my policies or even my sins cause you to use your words as weapons against your King. Sleep before you speak. Take time to think (Selah). Use your words to pray to God about what has upset you. Go to the Tabernacle and offer your sacrifices before you react. Trust God to both give you proper perspective and correct any wrongdoing on my part.*”

f) And to Himself he says: “*It is legitimate for you to be upset and even angry over the lies, slander and gossip leveled at you. But pray on your bed to God. Sleep on it. Go to worship in the Tabernacle and continue to do the right thing. Trust God to both defend and vindicate you. Don’t return evil words for evil words. Two slanders can’t make a truth!*”

g) This is how Paul interprets these verses and how he applies them to mean-spirited Ephesian Christians –

Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil ... Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. (Ephesians 4: 26-27, 29-32)

h) Either way, David is saying **the best way to deal with your anger is to wrestle through it with God in prayer!**

10. **Fourth:** David now returns to speaking to God, and He asks God to restore joy to his heart and give him peace of soul.

a) *There are many who say, “Who will show us
some good?*

Lift up the light of your face upon us, O Lord!”

You have put more joy in my heart

*than they have when their grain and wine
abound.*

In peace I will both lie down and sleep;

for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety. (Psalm 4:6-8)

b) David acknowledges that he is surrounded by **pessimists** who doubt that anything good could come out of David's administration: *There are many who say, "who will show us some good?"*

(1) When slander and gossip go too far they blind people to any good that may be found in the person they're upset with

(2) This is the ruinous result of wayward words!

c) But David knows that **God** is for him. so he does three things –

(1) He asks God to lift up the light of His face, smile on him and bless him.

*There are many who say, "Who will show us some good?
Lift up the light of your face upon us, O Lord!" (Ps. 4:6)*

*The Lord bless you and keep you;
the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you;
the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace. (Numbers 6:24-26)*

(2) He acknowledges the *joy* God has given to him all his life; a joy his critics have never known!

*You have put more joy in my heart
than they have when their grain and wine abound. (Ps.4:7)*

(3) He embraces God's *peace (shalom)*, and this allows him, finally, to roll over and drop off to sleep.

*In peace I will both lie down and sleep;
for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety. (Ps. 4:8)*

d) In God, David is safe even from slander! *"For you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety"* (v.8)

11. **James L. Mays:** *Psalms: Interpretation Commentary*; p. 55.

In the culture of ancient Israel, honor was of the greatest value; it is in most societies. Honor is the dignity and respect that belong to a person's position in relation to family, friends, and the community. It is an essential part of the identity that others recognize and regard in dealing with a man or a woman. In Israel its loss had tragic consequences for self-esteem and social competence. Shaming and humiliating a person was violence against them worse than physical harm.

The prayerful and theological significance of this psalm is that God is the ultimate basis of the "honor" of the faithful. The psalmist has a basis of identity that transcends the judgments of others – the relation to God. He calls the Lord "God of my right," that is, the one on whom his "rightness" as a person depends. One's righteousness is finally a matter of God's judgement.

12. **Please notice:** All those things that cause anger in us are here in this Psalm

a) **Carter and Minirth definition:** Anger is the intent to preserve (1) personal worth, (2) essential needs, and (3) basic convictions.

- b) David's *personal worth* was demeaned by the lies, gossip and slander leveled against him. Look at verse 2 again.

(1) *O men, how long shall my honor be turned into shame?
How long will you love vain words and seek after lies? Selah (Ps. 4:2)*

(2) *Honor* turned to *shame*: a denial of self-worth.

- c) David's *essential needs* were in jeopardy. He lists these needs in Psalm 4: his welfare, his joy, his peace, the favor of God, his security and his personal well-being.
- d) David's *basic convictions* were being challenged: "Who will show us some good?" His belief in God's love, favor and support.

*But know that the Lord has set apart the godly for himself;
the Lord hears when I call to him. (Ps. 4:3)*

*In peace I will both lie down and sleep;
for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety. (Ps. 4:8)*

13. So David handles his anger through prayer: *He pleads his cause before God, as if he and his detractors stood before God's throne of justice – which they do!*

II. PRAYING PSALM 4

1. I have prayed Psalm 4 perhaps more than *any* other Psalm, in all the Psalter. Why? *Because gossip, slander, false reports, character assassination and verbal assaults are part of my daily life.*
 - a) People who do not want to hear what I say.
 - b) People offended by the disclosure of sin in their life my sermons inadvertently caused.
 - c) People who get angry with me, and whose anger festers and grows until it turns into spite.
 - d) People nursing a grudge that becomes a mission to harm or even destroy me.
 - e) People who misinterpret what I say; conjecture falsely upon my motives, or react irrationally against what I say – sometimes, literally against *one word* I use.
 - f) People who feel dishonored or even insulted by my opinions, sermon applications, or beliefs.
 - g) People whose expectations I've not met or who are somehow disappointed in what I did (or did not do).
 - h) *on, and on, and on, and on, unendingly so!*
2. Who? *My peers*: fellow Christians, fellow elders, deacons, Presbytery members, staff pastors or their wives, visitors, or those who've read some of what I wrote. *Supposed "friends" who've become foes!*
3. Their **anger** is rooted in one of three things:
 - a) They feel like I devalued their *self-worth (honor)*.
 - b) They believe I failed to meet their *essential needs (welfare)*.
 - c) They think I have opposed their *basic convictions (beliefs)*.

d) And **most of the time** I have neither intended to do so, nor in fact done so.

4. **Key Truth:** *Their disappointment, anger and then spite have grown to such a level that all I am, say, and do is reinterpreted and represented falsely:*

- a) If I speak about myself, I'm vain; if I don't speak about myself I'm too aloof and not relational.
- b) If I make a joke, it's either offensive to them (insult) or it's not funny; I'm just being smart aleck.
- c) If I tease them in good nature or good fun, they say I'm ridiculing or dishonoring them; making fun of them.
- d) If I'm adamant, I'm angry; If I'm straightforward, I'm insensitive; If I'm cautious, I'm cowardly; or if I'm open-minded, I'm liberal.
- e) Whatever I do ends in three sad reports:
 - (1) **Gossip:** failures that are spread abroad and purposefully embellished.
 - (2) **Slander:** false things said about me as though they were facts.
 - (3) **Lies:** unflattering statements intended to ruin other peoples' trust and love for me.
- f) *I am, with these folks, damned if I do and damned if I don't. I simply can't win for losing!*

5. **I will tell you the truth:** The things I will enjoy the most when I retire are these three things –

- a) First, I won't awake each day or go to my bed each night with someone angry, upset, or offended by me.
- b) Second, I won't have to put up with such abuse by anyone in order to keep my job. I will actually be able to defend myself.
- c) Third, I won't have to preach God's word which angers sinners, who take out their anger at God on me!
- d) When I retire *I won't pray Psalm 4 as much as I do now.*

6. But *for now*, here's how one can pray through Psalm 4 ...

- a) **First:** Remember that God in Christ is your *righteousness*. My identity, my worth, and my honor are found in Christ and not in what others think of me.
 - (1) This *will* look arrogant, smug, even self-righteous to your critics, but remember: *They will always choose to interpret your actions or motives in a negative light because their anger at you has festered so long that they harbor spite for you.*
 - (2) St. Paul is our model here in how we see ourselves.

This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful. But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me. Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the

Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God. (1 Cor. 4:1-5)

(3) Be faithful. Trust in Christ. Don't judge yourself or listen to others' false judgments. Let God judge you in due time.

(4) *Rest in your justification* (righteous), *your adoption* (loved), and *your sanctification* (God is at work in you.)

b) **Second:** Live each day with this opening thought in the morning and concluding thought at night ...

(1) *But know that the Lord has set apart the godly for himself; the Lord hears when I call to him.* (Ps. 4:3)

(2) You belong to God, are sealed with the Holy Spirit, and branded by Christ (baptism)

From now on let no one cause trouble for me, for I bear on my body the brand-marks of Jesus. (Galatians 6:17 NASB)

(3) Personally: I often pray this back to God. A truth found in both 1st Chronicles and Psalm 105 –

*he allowed no one to oppress them;
he rebuked kings on their account,
saying, "Touch not my anointed ones,
do my prophets no harm!"* (1 Chron. 16:21-22)

*he allowed no one to oppress them;
he rebuked kings on their account,
saying, "Touch not my anointed ones,
do my prophets no harm!"* (Ps. 105:14-15)

(4) **Remember:** In the end slanderers, gossips and liars are ruined while the godly man is preserved. They go too far, cross the line and pit themselves against God! *They ruin themselves.*

c) **Third:** Pray though your own anger, lest you fall into the same patterns of ruin your detractors do.

(1) Listen to St Paul: *Don't go to bed angry!*

*Be angry, and do not sin;
ponder in your own hearts on your
beds, and be silent. Selah
Offer right sacrifices,
and put your trust in the Lord.*
(Psalm 4:4-5)

Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil. (Eph. 4:26-27)

- (2) Unresolved anger at bedtime turns into devilish work overnight, until you wake up with spite (hate) in your heart.
- (3) *Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.* (James 1:19-21)
- (4) Anger never fixed anything. Nothing can be accomplished by anger that cannot be done better without it.
- (5) **As you pray** learn to look for your own “brand” of anger, and do not lie to yourself that you’re “anger free”
- *Stuffing suppressed anger (seething)*
 - *Exploding in open aggression (temper)*
 - *Passive aggression (cowardly and sneaky anger)*
 - *Assertive anger (confrontation)*
 - *Dropping anger by forgiving again and again and again*
- (6) Learn how to offset that anger the next day:

Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. (Eph. 4:29-5:2)

- d) **Fourth:** State your case before God the judge, and then leave the solution to Him. He is faithful.
- e) **Fifth:** Before you go off to sleep claim again the three marks of favor God has repeatedly shown you –

- (1) *There are many who say, “Who will show us some good?
Lift up the light of your face upon us, O Lord!”
You have put more joy in my heart
than they have when their grain and wine abound.
In peace I will both lie down and sleep;
for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety.* (Ps. 4:6-8)
- (2) His favor, His joy and His peace.
- (3) Give yourself these two benedictions
- *The Lord bless you and keep you;*

the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace. (Numbers 6:24-26)

- *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. (2 Cor. 13:14)*

(4) Close your eyes meditating on these three eternal truths

- *Your self-worth is honored by God. He values you greatly. He purchased you with His son's blood!*

knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. (1 Peter 1:18-19)

- *Your essential needs will always be met by God's grace and His riches in Christ.*

And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen. (Phil. 4:19-20)

- *Your basic convictions are grounded in the Gospel of God and guarded by the Holy Spirit.*

The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. (Romans 8:16-17)

7. **Release** your rightful anger to God, then sleep well!

Conclusion: Living with my own anger in relation to other peoples' anger at me has been a way of life for me since I was 33 years old ...

1. ... when I first became a pastor. *I've spent many an angry, hurt, tearful and distressful night, praying for God's favor, joy and peace. Ask Jane if that isn't true.*
2. I've come to these **three** conclusions:
 - a) The slander, gossip and lies of upset people are not going away. If anything, in our culture they're only getting worse and more vitriolic.
 - b) My biggest spiritual challenge is not other peoples' false reports about me or resentment of me. The Biggest thing is my *own anger*. Slander, lies and gossip cannot ruin me; my own anger can! Learning about my own anger is #1 priority.
 - c) God has *always* come to my relief, my rescue and my defense. I am, in Christ, a godly man, set aside for the Lord. Vicious tongues have not been able to ruin me ... yet.
3. I take comfort in these three truths: *God's goodness, Christ's joy and the Spirit's peace. (We must learn to choose these 3 gifts over our own anger!)*

4. If the day ever arrives when all my angry “friends” persuade the elders and people of Christ Covenant to fire me –
- a) It will be because God allowed it to be so,
 - b) that God intends for me to go do something else,
 - c) but never that He has rejected me!
 - d) *God will be for me forever, because I belong to Christ!*

*But know that the Lord has set apart the godly for himself;
the Lord hears when I call to him. (Psalm 4:3)*

5. **And, what’s true for me is true for you.** So, don’t lose sleep, and never harbor anger. Release fear and temper to God, and sleep in the peace of Christ.

*In peace I will both lie down and sleep;
for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety.
(Psalm 4:8)*