

GLITTERING ILLUSIONS

Wraith





Wrath

SCRIPTURE

Galatians 5:1, 19-25 + Luke 6:43-45

“Wrath is the love [for a desire] for justice [which ought to restore something to its rightful state] perverted into the desire for revenge and for the injury of someone else; justice is the proclaimed motive for every manifestation of Wrath.”

HENRY FAIRLIE, *THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS TODAY*

Thomas Aquinas suggests that anger always has a common “target”: injustice. Whether an offense is inflicted upon us personally or harm is caused to others, anger is a natural human emotion, fueled by our desire to right the wrong. Righteous anger can embolden us from complacency toward courageous action and spur us into a loving resistance to injustice. This type of anger, illustrated by Jesus and characteristic of God, “stands against any violation of love.” However, despite our claims of justice-seeking, what lies behind our anger often is more sinister, destructive, and selfish.

“Anger becomes a vice when it so disturbs reason that it twists any real concern about sin or injustice into service of the self, protecting our own egos...”

Anger can become wrath when it stops being about love and justice and becomes about me—my rights, my expectations, my reputation, my sense of what I deserve. Perhaps wrath’s greatest illusion is that while it’s often a strong outward expression, it is a covering for what lies *inward*. Marriage researchers John and Julie Gottman liken our emotional life to an iceberg: only anger shows above the surface, while fear, grief, and shame often lurk below. And underneath that can be something even deeper: *I don’t trust that God will make this right, so I need to take control*. Wrath attempts to make life work without God. True justice is lost in the tilt away from God and toward self-preservation and self-promotion. Our power gives us the illusion of control, but its aftermath is often ruptured relationships and destruction.

So, how do we set our aim on the correct target and surrender our claim to control, trusting God to restore what is broken and set right what is wrong?

Practice

PAUSE + REFLECT DAILY EXAMEN

PAUSE + REFLECT

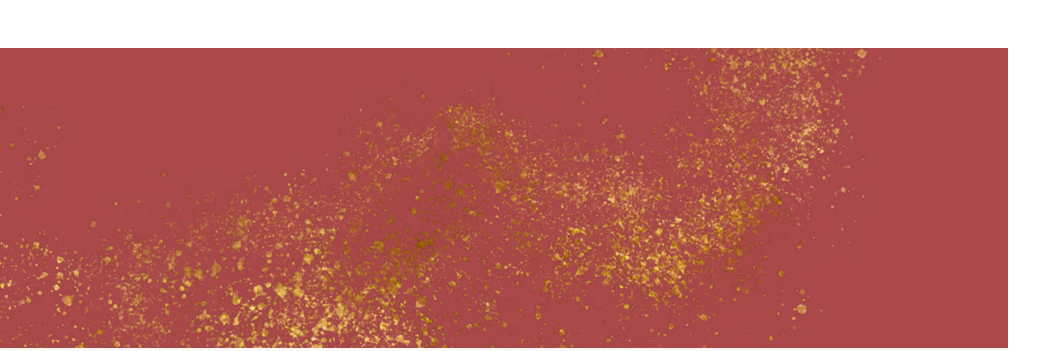
Dallas Willard said, “There is nothing that can be done with anger that cannot be done better without it.” Anger can move us toward action, but when we allow it to take control, it can distort our perception, our words, and our responses. The goal is not to simply deny or suppress anger, but to create enough space to bring it before God before we act.

Breathe. When you notice anger rising, stop. Take three slow breaths and become aware of God’s presence. Choose not to act on what you are feeling in this moment.

Pause. When you feel compelled to respond—to send the text, defend yourself, correct someone, make your point, or say what you really think—wait. Give yourself time before responding—an hour, or two, or a day. If necessary, write what you want to say, but don’t send it. Return to it later after you have invited the Spirit into your response.

Surrender. Ask: Jesus, what is Your invitation to me here? What belongs to me to do, and what do I need to entrust to You?

Then respond to His invitation.



DAILY EXAMEN

At the close of each day, invite God to use your anger to reveal what is happening beneath the surface of your heart.

Notice. Bring to God the moments when anger surfaced today. Choose to be radically honest—you don't have to hide your anger from Him or justify it. Simply notice it and welcome God into it.

Ask. Jesus, show me what my anger is revealing. What is my anger guarding?

- *What kind of hurt or threat is my anger responding to? What do I love that feels threatened, and what am I afraid I will lose?*
- *What am I trying to control or make right?*
- *Where has my desire for justice become a desire for someone to suffer?*
- *Where have I stopped trusting You to make things right?*

Lament. Rather than rushing to fix, explain, or move past what you discover, allow yourself to lament. Lament allows us to name what is wrong without taking responsibility for making

everything right. Feel your desire for justice without needing to be the one who delivers it.

Offer to Jesus:

- *I bring You what hurts.*
- *I bring You what feels unjust and unfair.*
- *I bring You my losses and what I cannot make right.*

Surrender. Allow Him to meet you in what you've noticed. Invite Him to show you anything else He wants you to know. Ask: What would it look like to surrender not only my need to control the outcome, but also my claim to what I believe I deserve?

Close with this prayer:

*Lord, I give You the thing I cannot make right.
I give You the person I cannot change.
I give You the outcome I cannot control.
Help me to lament what is broken,
to trust Your justice,
and to remain rooted in Your love.
I give everyone and everything to You, God.*

REVIEW THE PRACTICES



Revisit the previous practices that have helped you connect to God's heart. This week, also consider meditating on the Lord's Prayer (specifically Matthew 6:10), Psalm 103, James 1:19-20, Ephesians 4:31-32

*Quotes taken from *Glittering Vices: A New Look at the Seven Deadly Sins and Their Remedies* by Rebecca Konyndyk DeYoung.

Pastoral Word

+ NEXT STEPS

Jesus, while He flipped tables, was able to return the following day to continue to share life with the same people and share more Good News. Meditate on that. Yes, Jesus responded powerfully, but He did so in such a way that His anger didn't diminish His ability to love and remain present even among people who opposed Him. As a disciple of Jesus—a life in which we desire to be with Him, to become like Him, to do the kinds of things He did—how might remembering Jesus' way of responding to injustice change us? Perhaps journal about how remembering Jesus' way might reshape your own responses.

WHAT'S NEXT?

- Do you have a trusted friend you can share with?
- Consider using the **Pause** app by John Eldredge to relinquish control to God throughout your day.
- Attend our Generational Healing Service November 15.
- Consider meeting with a Spiritual Director.
- Schedule a session with our Care and Prayer team using the QR code.





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