



### Matthew 5:21-26 New Revised Standard Version

<sup>21</sup> “You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, ‘You shall not murder’; and ‘whoever murders shall be liable to judgment.’ <sup>22</sup> But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister, you will be liable to judgment; and if you insult a brother or sister, you will be liable to the council; and if you say, ‘You fool,’ you will be liable to the hell of fire. <sup>23</sup> So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, <sup>24</sup> leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift. <sup>25</sup> Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are on the way to court with him, or your accuser may hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison. <sup>26</sup> Truly I tell you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.

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GEICO Insurance is known for its many creative and, at times, corny commercials related to auto and homeowners’ coverage. One of their most recent ones features a couple discussing their new

home, but indicates “the birds are a problem.” Suddenly, animated birds are seen crashing into the backside of the house and a neighbor poses the question, “Why are these birds so angry?” It is a take off of a popular game called “Angry Birds.”

A more important question might be, “Why are so many people angry?” We live in a world which has seen an increase in anger in recent years due to a number of factors. Anger is described as a “secondary response.” That is, it surfaces as a result of some underlying issue. While there is nothing against healthy anger within Scripture, that which is “out of control” has the ability to be dangerous.

Jesus’ words from the Sermon on the Mount challenge our understanding of anger. He says that while we may not commit murder in the conventional sense, we can do harm to others and ourselves when our anger is not kept into perspective. Anger may cause us to lash out at others or either try to suppress such feelings on the inside.

According to Aristotle, “Anybody can become angry-that is easy; but to be angry with the right person, and to the right degree, and at the right time, and for the right purpose, and in the right way-that is not within everybody’s power and is not easy.” This is what we call “righteous anger,” but unfortunately much of our anger comes across as “unrighteous.” This form of anger proves devastating to our relationships and even our own personal health when it remains unresolved.

### Thoughts to Consider:

1. There is nothing inherently wrong with anger.
2. Inappropriate anger can be destructive like murder.
3. Notice anger and danger are only one letter apart.

**Prayer Pebble:** Lord, reveal to me the source of any anger within and help me to handle it in a constructive manner.