

**Guest Opinion Article First Published in Loveland Reporter-Herald 6/2/2025**  
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**When is it time for righteous anger?**

“I’m mad as hell and I’m not going to take this anymore.”

The quote from the 1976 movie *Network* is prophetic. Ratings are abysmal and someone needs to do something to salvage the network. The veteran newscaster Howard Beale (Peter Finch) enters and temporarily saves the day by preaching his angry populist message in front of live studio audiences who chant the popular phrase. Years later angry people still produce ratings for the networks and people are angry for hundreds of reasons. The protestors fueled by righteous anger, unrighteous anger, and most times a combination of both, but they are angry!

Righteous anger, which is morally justifiable, frequently targets injustice or misconduct and can inspire individuals to take measures to rectify the situation. Scripture teaches that the underlying causes are the same issues which anger God. Some common themes include injustice, oppression and exploitation of others, a proud look, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that run to evil, a false witness who speaks lies, and one who sows discord are a few mentioned in Micah 6:8 and Proverbs 6:16-19. Righteous anger, characterized by a deep-seated desire for righteousness, is a response against wrongdoing. Characterized by first loving God and then loving humankind as those God created in His image, righteous anger confronts, admonishes, and warns of sin and simultaneously strives for the restoration of sinners. Lastly, it seeks to uphold truth and promotes righteousness, mirroring God's own responses to sin as seen in Scripture. Ephesians 4:26 states, "In your anger do not sin: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry." This passage highlights that anger itself is not inherently sinful; rather, it is our response to that anger that defines its morality.

On the other hand, unrighteous anger stems from selfishness, vengeance, and bitterness. Unrighteous anger arises from a place of pride, entitlement, or insecurity, often leading to destructive behavior and negative consequences. "Whoever is slow to anger has great understanding, but he who has a hasty temper exalts folly (Proverbs 14:29)." The author captures the impulsive nature of unrighteous anger and underscores the importance of restraint and understanding. Unrighteous anger stems from personal frustration, not divine displeasure. It erupts without warning, destructive in nature and exhibits power by condemning, accusing, threatening and even violence as in Cain murdering Abel. It is commonly based on subjective opinions, often deficient in truth.

Everyone must self-reflect to engage in righteous anger. People often fool themselves by accepting lies over truth as self-centeredness is an expert in deceit. Before going off in a fit of rage, begin with examining the cause of the anger. Identify which act of unrighteousness is triggering the anger. Is it a genuine violation that angers God, or is it something else? Righteous anger should be rooted in established moral or ethical concerns that protect others, not harm others.

It seeks positive change, not revenge or hostility. Evaluate our planned response to ensure it involves constructive actions, like advocacy or dialogue, rather than actions that may lead to bitterness, hostility, or unnecessary divisions. Our expression of righteous anger should lead to actions of healing and justice, not harm. As Christians we should pray for wisdom and seek

guidance through scripture, prayer and counsel from trusted mentors, pastors, and friends.

God certainly has not called Christians to walk around in a daily fit of rage, but Jesus left us with specific instructions to make disciples of all nations, baptizing and teaching them to obey his commands (Matthew 28:18-20). In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus uses the metaphors of "salt" and "light" to describe his followers' role in the world. He tells his disciples to be a positive influence, calling them the salt of the earth. He also calls them the light of the world, so that others might see their impact and glorify God (Matthew 5:13-16).

Righteous anger is essential for Christians as it reflects God's justice, promotes compassion, and fosters spiritual growth. When balanced with love and intentionality, it can lead to transformative results for individuals and society. How is God calling you to be a change agent for His glory?

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