

## The Attitude of Anger

Jesus made a rather startling statement concerning anger. It is found in the context of the way the Jewish teachers had instructed the people concerning murder. Jesus emphasized the seriousness of anger toward another person:

*You have been taught that you will bear the judgment of the court for murder. I am telling you that you will bear the judgment of the court for your anger.*  
(Paraphrase of Matthew 5:21-22)

To 'bear the judgment of the court' meant that a person was accountable to the local court. In this context the court was not held to determine whether a person was guilty, but to hand down a sentence *because* of guilt. So, Jesus told the people that an angry person should be dealt with through the legal system the same way they would deal with a murderer.

Consider what it would mean if the teaching of Jesus became a reality in our day:

- You become angry with your spouse or your parents; off to court to receive a sentence for your anger.
- You did not get that promotion...
- A teen driver cut you off in traffic...
- Your in-laws did or said \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in the blank)...
- The car broke down...yet again...
- The preacher, the song leader, the elders did (or did not do) something...

**...And you are angry.**

By nature anger devalues another person. It belittles them by justifying one's own personal superiority. Anger judges.

"Raca" (Matthew 5:22) was an Aramaic word meaning: *empty*. In our day it would be equivalent to derogatory name calling, such as *empty-headed* or *retarded*.

"You fool" (also v. 22) comes from the Greek word 'moros.' (A form of this Greek term gives us our English word *moron*.) In Jesus' day, to call someone *moros* (*moron*) was not just silliness; it was a humiliating reference meaning *worthless*. It was an expression coming from an attitude that looked on another person as having *no value* as a human being. A *moros* (*moron*) could justifiably be treated like household garbage, *worthless*.

The attitude behind *anger*, "*raca*," and "*you fool*" intentionally devalues other people. This attitude is a slap in the face of God. By devaluing others it minimizes God's sacrifice of his Son as something done in vain.

Some people use different scriptures to justify their anger. The fact remains, there is no justification for devaluing people for whom Christ died. Anger simply will not accomplish the will of God.

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