



# AN OUTRAGE ECONOMY



## PREVIEW

From the latest news headline to social media comments, there are plenty of opportunities to become outraged each day. But what if we decided to respond differently? In today's lesson we will discover how to surrender the anger that's been holding us back and keeping ourselves and others hostage.

## PRAISE

What grinds your gears? Do you think your anger/frustration is justified? How do you combat these feelings?

## PARABLE

Nowadays it seems like all it takes to be outraged or offended is a quick scroll on social media. We see it throughout our feeds—friends fighting on Facebook, controversial news headlines, and families not speaking because of something someone posted.

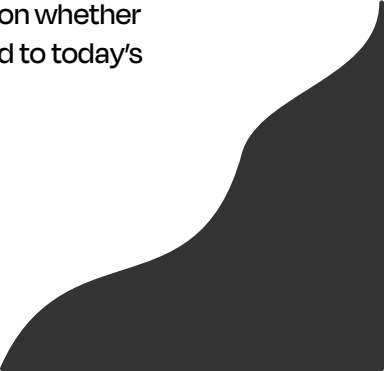
The truth is that outrage sells. Polarizing headlines get more clicks, so news outlets keep writing them. Cancel culture gets people talking, and that funds advertising revenue.

So what is it about outrage that keeps us engaged? It may be hard for us to admit, but many of us like being angry. We may not enjoy up-close conflict, but we often like taking a stance or choosing a side. We like watching the benches clear at a baseball game and we like seeing a fight break out on the ice rink during a hockey game, but many of us would not like to be in the middle of the brawl.

## PRESENT

As Christians, we sometimes even label our anger as "righteous," excusing it when we think it's for a good cause. And while righteous anger is a biblical concept, it's worth asking ourselves: "Is this anger of mine actually righteous, or is it a just an excuse for me to prove I'm right?"

Outrage economy has become so prevalent that it has been written about and analyzed by people like Simon Terry, who posted an article about it on August 31, 2020 ([simonterry.com](http://simonterry.com)). He concluded that outrage usually "plays constructive or destructive roles depending on whether it's used to seek change in the world or simply to seek attention." This can be applied to today's lesson.



**Read James 1:19–20.**

Some anger is constructive. When something hurts one of God's kids, we absolutely should get angry. But that anger should lead to acts of love and compassion—not pride and division. Ultimately, godly anger prompts us to do something to help; human anger is destructive and prompts us to do something that hurts.

**Read Proverbs 16:18.**

Let's think about our outrage for a second. Is it possible that our anger is fueled by pride? This is an important question because anger often convinces us we're right. And if we're right, that means they're wrong. And if they're wrong, then we win. And that sense of winning—being on the right side or praising ourselves for our good behavior—really fuels our pride. Unfortunately, Proverbs warns us many times that pride goes before destruction. (See Proverbs 11:2; 16:5; 29:22–23; James 4:6 cf. Proverbs 3:34.)

## PRACTICE

So how should we respond to an outrage economy? How do we live as unoffendable people in a culture that profits from and thrives on offense?

**Read James 1:21–25.**

James gives us some more good advice. Humbly accepting and living according to the Word gives us the peace and power we need to be different from the world. But it's not just knowing Scripture—it's doing what it says.

Jesus was never shocked by sin, yet we often are. We tend to point fingers, cast judgment, and get angry. Jesus simply showed up, listened well, and offered truth and grace.

As Jesus was nearing the end of His life, He said that Peter would deny Him three different times. Peter refused to believe this, saying he would never deny Jesus. "Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death!" But Jesus, knowing full well that betrayal was coming, gave this beautiful instruction to Peter in Luke 22:32 (NLT): "I have pleaded in prayer for you, Simon, that your faith should not fail. So when you have repented and turned to me again, strengthen your brothers." Jesus wasn't surprised by Peter's actions nor offended at the pain they caused Him. Instead, He called Peter to greatness after his repentance.

## PRAY

Jesus, we are so thankful that through You there is no condemnation. Help us to fully receive Your grace and mercy so we can extend it to others. Reveal to us any areas in our lives where we are harboring unrighteous anger, and help us to lay it at Your feet and surrender all of the destructive outrage we may be feeling about life, the world, or our current situations. Purify us of anything that does not please You, and help us to live humbly according to Your Word. In Jesus' name, amen.

## PLUS

Challenge your club to spend the next few days asking the following questions and discuss if time allows:

- Is my anger most often fueled by righteousness, or by my desire to be right?
- Is my anger helping others or hurting others?
- How often is pride the source of my anger?