



# TRANSFORMED

DEVOTIONS CONNECTING TEENS TO CHRIST

**You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, “You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.” But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, “Raca,” is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell. Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift. Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are still together on the way, or your adversary may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison. Truly I tell you, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny.**

*Matthew 5:21-26*

## Anger

On the dirty floor of a prison, Bruce Wayne does push-ups. In *The Dark Knight Rises*, the man known as Batman must recover from a broken back to defeat supervillain Bane. A montage shows Bruce training and gearing up for battle. He will get revenge.

This might be a good picture of our hearts when we are angry at someone. We will rise up. We will get revenge and destroy our enemies—just like Batman. Except that in reality we look pathetic and miserable instead of cool and heroic.

Jesus says it’s not just the act of murder, but even our anger that God addresses in the Fifth Commandment. We try to justify our angry thoughts against our parents, our friends, our enemies. “It’s just a natural reaction!” Or “What’s the harm? The other person doesn’t even know I’m mad at them!” Jesus doesn’t buy those explanations. The truth is: we are murderers from God’s perspective. It’s a matter of the heart.

Jesus’ patience is amazing. He never lashed out sinfully at the disciples when they frustrated him. He never slammed his bedroom door on Mary and Joseph as a teenager. Jesus never had sinful anger, even as the people he came to save nailed him to the cross. He called out to his Father to forgive them. Jesus even felt the wrath of his Father so we wouldn’t ever have to face it ourselves.

When you’re struggling with anger, remember what Christ did for you to pay for your guilt. Picture the cross where your hatred was crucified. Your heart is suited up and ready for battle against anger. You are freed to forgive as you have been forgiven.

### PRAYER:

**Lord Jesus Christ, create in me a new heart full of patience and peace. Let me defeat anger each day. Amen.**