

# DON'T LET ANGER TAKE CONTROL

READ: EPHESIANS 4:29-32

*didn't do anything wrong*, Hayley thought as she stared at the TV, wiping away tears. Her dad never yelled at her like that. She had just been singing. He had told her before that he loved to hear her sing.

"Aren't you going to eat with us?" Hayley's older brother peeked into the room.

Hayley shook her head. "I'm not hungry."

"What's wrong?" Mikey walked over to her.

Hayley's brother was a teenager. He would think she was stupid for crying. "Nothing."

"Something is wrong, Hay." Mikey sat down beside her. "Spill."

"Fine." Hayley closed her eyes. "Dad yelled at me in the car. He told me to shut up."

"What?" Mikey looked shocked.

"I was just singing. And we're not supposed to say that." Hayley started to cry again.

Mikey hugged her. "I'll save you some dinner in case you're hungry later."

Hayley rested on the couch with her eyes closed, her dad's words playing over and over in her head, until she heard footsteps come into the room. She peeked her eyes open as her dad knelt on the floor beside the couch.

"Mikey told me you're upset," Dad said. "I was really stressed in the car. The traffic was bad and I was trying hard to focus." He brushed her hair back from her face. "I should have asked you nicely if you could be quiet instead of yelling at you."

"You hurt my feelings," Hayley said.

"I know, and I'm sorry," Dad sighed. "It's like how you sometimes get angry if your brother makes a lot of noise while you're trying to practice for your recital. Sometimes we let anger take over when we're nervous and say hurtful things. But we don't have to let that happen. We can trust God to help us control our anger instead of letting it control us."

Hayley knew her dad was right—she sometimes got angry when she was stressed too. She just hadn't expected that from him. "If God helps us control our anger, why did you let it control you?"

Dad gave her a sad smile. "I'm not perfect. God's still working on me. I let anger take control today, but I'm glad I can always depend on God to forgive me and help me do better. I hope you'll forgive me too." ♥ EMILY ACKER

---

## DON'T LET ANGER CONTROL YOU

**KEY VERSE:** BETTER A PATIENT PERSON THAN A WARRIOR, ONE WITH SELF-CONTROL THAN ONE WHO TAKES A CITY. PROVERBS 16:32 (NIV)

---

Do you sometimes let anger take over? Do you yell or say hurtful things? Even adults struggle with anger sometimes.\* But as Christians, we don't have to let anger control us. Through the Holy Spirit's power, we can control what we say and do when we feel angry. Remember He's working to make you more like Jesus, and trust Him to help you control your anger.

\*If an adult is hurting you because they can't control their anger, tell another adult who can help.

## GOD'S CHOICE

READ: ISAIAH 55:8-9

Is it a boy? It is, isn't it?" Carter jumped around the kitchen while his grandmother talked to his dad at the hospital. Carter was so excited, he almost dropped the apple he was eating. "It's a boy, isn't it, Grandma?"

Grandma hung up the phone. "You now have a beautiful baby sister," she said gently. "Her name is Oakleigh."

"No!" Carter dropped his apple. "I've been praying for months for a brother." He felt like crying. "It's not fair! Oscar got a baby brother, and he didn't pray at all. Why wouldn't God give me a brother when I asked for one?"

Grandma leaned against the counter. "I remember how happy your mom and dad were when they were expecting you. When people asked if they wanted a girl or a boy, they said they just wanted a healthy baby."

Carter picked up his apple from the floor and rinsed it off at the sink. "I'm sure they were glad I turned out to be a boy."

"Yes, but I was a little bit disappointed. I was hoping for a little granddaughter."

"Grandma!" Carter was shocked. "You didn't want me?"

"Of course I did! But I already had three grandsons. I thought it would be nice to have a girl in the family. But another boy was God's choice for them, and you know what? Now I couldn't love anybody more." She gave Carter a big hug.

Carter sighed. "I still don't think it was very nice of you to wish I was a girl!"

Grandma's eyes twinkled. "No nicer than for you to wish your sister was a boy."

Carter looked surprised. "I guess I wasn't being nice either."

"I know you were hoping for a brother, Carter, but God has given you the gift of a baby sister instead. Remember that He loves her just as much as He loves you, and He will help you be a good brother to her." Grandma squeezed Carter's shoulder. "Even though a sister isn't what you were expecting, God's gifts to us are always good, and we can be thankful knowing the same God who loves us so much He saved us from sin promises to do what He knows is best."

Carter nodded and bit into his apple. "So when can Oakleigh come home?" ♥

RUTH MCQUILKIN




---

### GOD KNOWS BEST

**KEY VERSE:** IN EVERYTHING GIVE THANKS; FOR THIS IS THE WILL OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS FOR YOU. 1 THESSALONIANS 5:18

---

Do you get upset when God doesn't answer your prayers the way you want? He has a purpose for everything, and when He answers your prayers in His own way, He's doing it to fit His perfect will. Remember how much He loves you—so much that He sent His Son, Jesus, to die for your sins so you could be saved—and trust Him to make the choices He knows are best.

## HELPING HANDS

READ: 1 CORINTHIANS 1:26-31; GALATIANS 6:9-10

**W**hy do we have to pick up Mr. Cook?” asked Brady. “The nursing home is a long way from the park.”

“If we don’t pick him up, he won’t get to come to the church picnic,” Dad answered as he drove. “Since we pick him up on the way to church each week, we can bring him to the picnic too. It’s a small thing we can do for the Lord.”

Brady thought about that. “It seems like a funny way to do something for God. I mean, God could take Mr. Cook to the picnic on a flying carpet if He wanted to. He doesn’t really need our help, does He?”

Just then they arrived at the nursing home. Mr. Cook was waiting outside just like each Sunday when they picked him up for church. But today he had a small brown bag, which he waved in the air. “I remembered it was a picnic,” he said. “I brought some lunch.”

At the park, Mom spread their lunch on a picnic table. She had brought ham and cheese sandwiches, potato salad, carrots with dip, lemonade, watermelon, and chocolate chip cookies for dessert. Brady saw Mr. Cook open his bag at the end of the table and take out a bologna sandwich. Mom motioned for him to move closer to all the food. “Don’t eat all by yourself,” she told him. “Come on! Put your lunch with ours and we’ll share. There’s plenty to go around.”

Mr. Cook grinned and scooted over. He carefully placed his sandwich next to the ham and cheese sandwiches. *He might as well not have bothered with that,* thought Brady. *Who’s going to eat it?* They prayed and began to eat. To Brady’s surprise, his little sister immediately reached for the bologna sandwich.

Dad leaned toward him. “Brady,” he whispered, “we help God in much the same way Mr. Cook is helping us. God has all the power and all the resources, but He invites us to join Him in building His kingdom. He doesn’t need our help, but He wants to bless us by allowing us to participate in the work He’s doing. He will use whatever efforts we have to offer to work in people’s lives and point them to the love of Jesus.” ♥ CATHERINE RUNYON




---

### YOU CAN SERVE GOD

**KEY VERSE:** GOD HAS CHOSEN THE WEAK THINGS OF THE WORLD TO PUT TO SHAME THE THINGS WHICH ARE MIGHTY. 1 CORINTHIANS 1:27

---

Do you feel like God doesn’t need your help? He’s all-powerful, but He wants you to be a part of the work He’s doing in the world. He’ll use your small efforts to help more people know about Jesus and His love for them. The Bible tells how God used a boy to kill a giant and how one boy’s lunch fed over five thousand people. Look around you and find ways you can be a helping hand for Jesus and show others His love.

## CHANGING WINDS

READ: JOHN 3:1-8; ROMANS 6:3-10

“Look at the wind!” exclaimed Clover as she stood at the window. “The trees are swaying back and forth, and some of the branches are breaking off.”

“Wow! It’s really blowing hard!” said Beau as he came into the room. “I’ve never seen so much wind!”

Dad joined them at the window. “You can’t really see wind,” he reminded them. “You can only see what it does.”

“It’s making that garbage can roll down the street,” Clover remarked.

The three of them watched in silence for a few minutes, then Dad said, “Jesus compared the blowing of the wind to becoming a Christian. We can’t actually see the wind, and we can’t actually see Jesus coming into somebody’s life.”

“It’s His Spirit that comes in, isn’t it? And spirits are invisible,” said Beau. He looked at Clover. “That’s why you still look the same,” he told her. “You still have freckles, just like before you trusted in Jesus at Bible camp last summer.” Beau loved teasing his sister about her freckles.

Dad smiled. “We see what the wind does though, and we also see what Jesus does in a person’s life. He changes that person. When someone becomes a Christian, they have a new desire to obey the Lord and show His love to others—and not do things that aren’t pleasing to God.”

Clover nodded. “I still do bad things sometimes, but I don’t want to,” she said. “When I know I’ve done something wrong, I ask Jesus to forgive me and trust Him to help me not do it anymore. Before I was saved, I didn’t really care very much.”

“Yeah,” said Beau. “And you don’t get mad anymore when I tease you about your freckles. That’s no fun.”

Clover grinned and made a face at him, then cringed as a rather large branch cracked and fell off a neighbor’s tree. “I’m glad the wind doesn’t always blow this hard.”

“I am too,” said Dad. “But I’m even more glad that Jesus is always in our hearts. Even though we can’t see Him, we know He’s there to help us live in a way that shows how He’s changed us.” ♥ MATILDA H. NORDTVEDT

---

### JESUS CHANGES YOU

**KEY VERSE:** ANYONE WHO BELONGS TO CHRIST HAS BECOME A NEW PERSON. THE OLD LIFE IS GONE; A NEW LIFE HAS BEGUN!  
2 CORINTHIANS 5:17 (NLT)

---

Are you different from the way you were before you became a Christian? Can others see the change Jesus has brought into your life? If you were saved at a very young age, you may wonder if you changed at all. God says you did, and He’s continuously working to make you more like Jesus. Trust Him to help you grow in your obedience to Him and in your love for others.

## SPECIAL CREATION

READ: GENESIS 1:27; PSALM 139:13-16; ROMANS 5:6-8

**G**ood morning,” Mrs. Fields said to her class at Potter Christian School. “Mason, can you remind everyone what special thing we’re going to do today?”

Using his communication device, Mason answered, “We’re going to Potter’s Woods to pick wildflowers.”

“That’s right,” said Mrs. Fields. “We’ll leave after morning recess.”

When the recess bell rang, Cody, a new member of the class, stayed behind while the other kids filed out of the classroom.

“Did you have a question, Cody?” Mrs. Fields asked.

Cody nodded. “How can Mason pick wildflowers if he can’t walk or use his hands?”

“He can do lots of things, Cody. He has a special chair to help him go places and a special device to help him talk. He’ll let us know if he needs our help.”

“Okay. Since I can do everything by myself, I’ll help Mason if he can’t do something,” Cody said.

“Thank you, Cody, that’s very kind of you. But don’t forget that even though you can do many things by yourself, everyone needs help sometimes. We all have different abilities because God made each of us special. Think about the flowers we’re going to pick. Do you think they’ll all be alike?”

Cody shook his head. “My sister’s class had a field trip to the woods yesterday, and they found all kinds of different flowers.”

“I’m sure they did,” said Mrs. Fields. “Flowers don’t all look the same, but they’re all beautiful. That’s true of people too. We’re all beautiful in God’s eyes. He loves us all so much that He sent His Son to do what none of us could do ourselves—Jesus died and rose again to save us from sin. We all have equal need of His help, yet He created each of us with special abilities so we could help one another in different ways.”

“So Mason has special abilities too?” Cody asked.

Mrs. Fields nodded. “Cody, like most of the class, you can do some things Mason can’t do, but as you get to know him, you’ll be surprised to see all he is able to do—even some things you can’t do.” She smiled. “I’ll tell you one thing he’s very good at. He spreads the joy of Jesus with his cheerful and loving attitude.” ♥ BEVERLY B. PAPIZAN

## THERE IS BEAUTY AND ABILITY IN EVERYONE

**KEY VERSE:** WHEN WE WERE UTTERLY HELPLESS, CHRIST CAME AT JUST THE RIGHT TIME AND DIED FOR US SINNERS. ROMANS 5:6 (NLT)

Do you sometimes need help doing certain things? Because we live in a broken world, we all struggle with different things in our lives, but Jesus did what none of us could do—He died and rose again to save us and make us whole. Because of Him, we can use the different abilities God gave us to point others to Jesus. God says you are wonderfully made. He created you in His own image and gave you special abilities that you can use to help others.