

## The Entitlement Culture

# IS IT RIGHT FOR YOU TO BE ANGRY?

Jonah 4:4

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### BACKGROUND

All of us get angry at times. Anger is an emotion shared by all humans. It can happen anywhere—at home, on the job, at school, or at a business or trading centre. Anger sometimes shows up at leadership meetings (*with members, with deacons, with evangelists*), church fellowships, and in ministry discussions. Wherever people are, just wait long enough, and you will probably see anger at some point.

Have you ever been angry with God? It can be a confusing and frustrating experience.

In **Genesis 4:1-6**, we read of Cain, and Abel who brought their respective offerings to God. God respected Abel and his offering, but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell. So the LORD said to Cain, *“Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen?”*

Have you ever got angry with God for not taking your side in a matter?

Have you ever created a pattern in which you wanted God to follow in any intervention for you and God took a different pattern? If yes, can you describe what you felt for God in that situation? Probably you may be angry with God but you may not have openly said it.

Have you pre-set your mind (*on date, and time, and type*) as to what you want from God and God did something different like as if you did not clearly state your request to him? If yes, can you describe what you felt for God in that

situation? Probably you may be angry with God but you may not have openly said it.

Does any human have the right to be angry with God? Why should we angry with God in the first place?

We will find answers as we look at two Bible heroes who got angry with God.

### JONAH

The story begins with Jonah getting his *“Great Commission”*: Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, *“Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before Me.”* (**Jonah 1:1, 2**)

Nineveh was the capital of Assyria. It was one of the oldest, largest, and strongest cities of that day (**Jonah 3:3**). It is estimated that it had a population of at least 600,000 in the days of Jonah. It was a “garden city,” a beautiful place—but it was full of idolatry and wickedness.

The Assyrians were a cruel and vicious people. They were brutal in warfare and barbaric in the slaughter of their captives. They had a mania for blood and vengeance. In every city they conquered, the Assyrians built a pyramid of human skulls.

God says to Jonah, *“Go preach to these wicked people.”* God was (and is) interested in the lost, anywhere - **2 Peter 3:9**.

We would have expected God’s prophet to have said, “Yes, Sir!” and to have quickly gone to do the will of God just as today, God expects us to strive to

participate in church evangelism — but instead we read:

*But Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. He went down to Joppa, and found a ship going to Tarshish; so he paid the fare, and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD (Jonah 1:3).*

The question always comes, “Why didn’t Jonah obey God; why didn’t he go to Nineveh?”

Much speculation has taken place, and many answers have been given. Some say Jonah was afraid to go to Nineveh—but a man that can sleep through a storm does not sound much like a coward. Others say that Jonah’s pride was involved; he was afraid that God might change His mind and that would make Jonah appear foolish.

The right answer is that found in **Jonah 3:5-10** and **Jonah 4:1-4**.

*Jonah had this entitlement culture built in him. He believed he was righteous enough to determine whom God should have mercy on!*

Jonah is saying God, You are not on earth here. You do not know these people. I am the one who lives on earth. I know these people. They don’t deserve to hear my voice preaching Your word. It is simply waste of Your time and resources. In fact, their wickedness deserves death and a fast one at that before they may change after causing others so much pain. They should die.

Jonah did not want to go to Nineveh because he did not want the people in Nineveh to repent and be spared. He wanted the full measure of God’s wrath to fall upon them! Jonah believed that a people like that did not deserve God’s mercy; they needed to be totally annihilated!

Like Jonah, most of us are very sceptical when it comes to preaching the gospel to others. *“It won’t do any good to preach. People won’t listen. They are interested in other things. They are steeped in sin. Their hearts are hardened.”*

**God asked Jonah** *“Is it right for you to be angry?”* **Jonah 4:5-11. God is saying - is it right for us to be angry?**

God says to Jonah, “You don’t really even care for the gourd, just for yourself. But at least you are moved by the destruction of a gourd—a plant, a piece of vegetation. But you are not moved at all by the possible destruction of an entire city. Why, you are not even moved by the fact that the city contains 120,000 children, who don’t know their right hand from their left hand nor their left hand from their right hand.

In most cases, we don’t really care about what happens to the church, how does the church grows, what challenges is the church facing, how we can make our contributions to make the church great, and so on. What we care about is ourselves. We believed we have proven ourselves to enjoy God’s blessings alone. Sometimes, we only become concerned, and get angry with God, when those blessings are withdrawn from our lives.

**God is saying - is it right for you to be angry?**

## ELIJAH

In **1 Kings 19**, we find an amazing incident in the life of a God-fearing man named “Elijah,” a powerful, committed, faithful man who lived nine centuries before Jesus. In **chapter 18**, he was a winner. Through God’s power, he destroyed the prophets of Baal. We would think that if anyone should have been at a high point spiritually, it was Elijah.

Our story begins when Ahab was telling Jezebel *“all that Elijah had done, and how he had killed all the prophets [of Baal] with the sword” (1 Kings 19:1).*

Jezebel was an intimidating queen—not just because of her temperament, but because she was a Canaanite who worshiped Canaanite gods. Their gods were vicious, violent, and corrupt. The legends regarding them are full of carnage. They were said to kill one another, drink each other’s blood, and eat each other’s flesh. It has been said that one becomes like the gods he worships, and that was the case with Jezebel. She believed in violence, carnage, and murder.

Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, in effect, *“By this time tomorrow, one of us is going to be dead!”* (**1 Kings 19:2**).

**Verse 3a** tells us that Elijah “was afraid.” This was the beginning of his despondency. He “arose and ran for his life and came to Beersheba” (**1 Kings 19:3b**). He left his servant at Beersheba (**Vs. 3c**), went a day’s journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he prayed that he might die, and said, *“It is enough! Now, LORD, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers!”* (**Vs. 4**). Twice, the angel of the Lord told him to eat (**Vs. 5-8**). While Elijah was cowering in the cave, God asked him, *“What are you doing here, Elijah?”* (**Vs. 9b**). He first said, “I have been very zealous for the Lord, the God of hosts” (**Vs. 10a**). He then enumerated a threefold summary of Israel’s sins. He began, *“For the sons of Israel have forsaken Your covenant”* (**Vs. 10b**).

He was at the place where God had made that covenant with Israel. He then added, “[They have] torn down Your altars and killed Your prophets with the sword” (**Vs. 10c**). He concluded sadly, “And I alone am left; and they seek my life, to take it away” (**Vs. 10d**).

God asked him the second time, *“What are you doing here, Elijah?”* (**Vs 13**). **He repeated the same answer** (**Vs 14**).

Elijah was deeply disappointed. He had evidently thought the epic battle at Mount Carmel would cause the country to turn back to God, but it did not (**in his own eyes**).

Elijah was angry at God – you know I am the only righteous one, I deserve the privilege of seeing all your enemies dead, not one to survive. How could You allow others to survive and to threaten my life?

Disappointment can lead to self-pity, which in turn can lead to depression.

Many have lost faith in several things even in our country Nigeria, because we felt that despite, the several prayers, Nigeria seems to go worse on daily basis.

Some get disappointed and angry with God because despite their zeal for God, faithful attendance and prayerfulness,

things they desired from God, seems to be far away from them as each day passes away. This has led many to draw back in their relationship with God.

Then the LORD said to Elijah, it is time for someone whom you think does not exist to take your place, so you know, you are not the only one. Elisha was chosen to take his place.

God answered him *“Yet I have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him.”* (**Vs. 18**)

God went further to explain things to him (**1 Kings 19:11-13**).

When a person is facing as much difficulty as Elijah was, it is understandable that his troubles dominate his thinking.

God was trying to teach Elijah to see from a different perspective. Sometimes God does not work through spectacular events, but through small things.

Elijah needed to accept that, in spite of what had happened, **God was and is still alive, though not always visible in miraculous occurrences.**

We must be aware of that truth. When we become preoccupied with our own problems and discouragement, we fail to see the possibility that God is at work—maybe not in some impressive phenomenon, but in some simple occurrence. We must give God credit: He can still accomplish good from what we do even when we are discouraged by our lack of results.

## CONCLUSION

It’s natural to question God during times of pain, delays, disappointments, and suffering. But this does not justify us being angry with God.

**Isaiah 55:8-9** *“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,” says the Lord. “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.*

**Romans 9:20-21** *but indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed it, “Why*

*have you made me like this?" Does not the potter have power over the clay....*

Paul beautifully reminds us that Christ laid down his entitlements so that we might share in his glory (***Philippians 2:5-8***). As Christians, we should also trust God when we don't get what we want. We should also follow the example of our Savior and choose to give up what we think we deserve.

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