

Is It a Sin to Yell at Your Kids?

I. Necessary Groundwork

- **Be in Control.** Titus 2:1-8 tells older men older women, younger women, and younger men to have self-control. Proverbs 4:23 commands us to guard our minds. And Ephesians 5:18 reveals that the only way to have true, Christ-honoring self-control is ultimately to be controlled by the Holy Spirit.
- **Be Loving.** (Ephesians 4:15) It doesn't matter if you're screaming or giving the silent treatment, if it's unloving, it's a sin.
- **Be Angry without Sin.** This passage has given many people trouble because they often look at it in a vacuum. How can you be angry but not sin? Doesn't the Bible condemn anger in other passages? The key lies in our first point; when we lack self-control our anger is nearly always motivated by sinful desires. It's not founded in God's holiness and love. And since it's so easy to angry for the wrong reasons, we have Proverbs 22:24, 29:22, and Colossians 3:8 that prohibit sinful anger and command us to throw it away from us. Regardless, we can know for certain that if our blowing up or clamming up is motivated by selfish desires, neither glorifies God.
- **Be Gentle.** (Colossians 3:12, 4:6) How could we ever be considered compassionate, kind, humble, meek, or patient if we're raising our voices? Individuals who perfectly fit that description have — in fact — yelled at people. Our misunderstanding of these words relates to definitions. Compassion is most closely related to emotional longings and desires. Kindness is most often defined as moral goodness and integrity. Humility is giving proper place to God, others, and ourselves. And meekness is similar to humility, but also carries with it the idea of strength under control. The term translated "graciousness" in Colossians 4:6 is also difficult, but has the idea of that which affords grace, good will, loving-kindness, and favor. If we know that if we raise our voice or speak quietly in an un-compassionate, unkind, prideful, impatient, ungracious way . . . we're sinning.
- **Be Patient.** Galatians 5:22 tells us patience and long-suffering are a fruit of being Spirit-filled. And Ephesians 4:2 tells us that our calling is to humble and gentle, with patience, bearing with one another love. Responding to people out of impatience is a sin regardless of the decibel.
- **Be Peaceful.** In Mark 9:50 Jesus tells us to be at peace with one another. In Matthew 5, Christ teaches us that we are blessed if we're peace-makers. In Romans 12:18 and 14:19, Paul tells us that being peaceful is so important that we should pursue it if it's even remotely possible. If we're yelling or silent, but our motivation is to divide, we're likely sinning.
- **Be Joyful.** The Fruits of the Spirit is a memorable passages where we're commanded to have joy. If you're not joyful, you shouldn't be speaking at all — no matter the volume.
- **Biblical Principles Concerning Yelling**
 - Proverbs 15:1 informs us that, "*A soft answer turns away wrath.*"
 - Proverbs 29:11 explains that only a fool gives "*full vent to his spirit, but a wise man quietly holds it back.*"
 - Proverbs 17:19 reveals that, "*Whoever loves transgression loves strife.*"

II. The Principle of Divine Shouting

- **Shouting in Joy** - There are so many verses that deal with this, but I want to look quickly at an extensive list in the Psalms (20:5; 32:11; 33:1; 35:27; 65:8; 66:1; 71:23; 81:1; 132:9; 136:16). No fewer than 10 times, scattered all throughout the Psalms we read the words “*shout for joy.*” I also love Ezra 3:13. Referring to the people of Israel praising the Lord, it says, “*The people shouted with a great shout and the sound was heard far away.*”
- **Shouting in Triumph** - This is similar to the first, but is unique in that its motivated by overcoming something or someone. Twice in Psalms (60:8, 108:9) we read, “*Moab is my washbasin; upon Edom I cast my shoe; over Philistine I shout in triumph.*” And who is saying these words? God is.
- Being able to shout in triumph often follows **Shouting in War**. I love the historical accounts of Joshua and Gideon. They’re amazing accounts with so much to learn, but both of these men led armies into a humanly impossible situation where they were commanded by God to have their armies – among other things – to yell as loud as they could.
- If you and I were facing an impossible battle, we may be tempted to participate in this fourth category of yelling, **Shouting in Prayer**. The phrase “cried to the Lord” appears throughout the Bible over 30 times. I love the prayer Stephen offered as he was being stoned to death. Acts 7:60 reads, “*And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, ‘Lord do not hold this sin against them.’*” Even Jesus cried out in prayer to His Father from the cross, “*Why have you forsaken me?*” (Mark 15:14). Of course, our word “cry” has a couple meanings. But this word is the same word used to describe the crowds shouting, “*Crucify him!*”
- And the last category of Divine Shouting is **Shouting in Preaching**. Twice in the book of John (7:37, 12:44), Christ cries out to the people to believe in Him.

III. An Illustration of Divine Shouting

- Matthew 21, Mark 11, Luke 19, John 2
- The messiah, Jesus, God Himself just made a whip and used it to drive the animals and people out of the temple. He’s physically turned over tables and threw money on the floor. And though the word “told” has many possible meanings, it can refer to a haranguing; which is a forceful or angry speech.
- Many people do not like this picture of the Savior. It rarely shows up in movies or Easter plays. It seems almost at odds for the meek and mild servant-Lamb of God. But I believe this account is recorded in all four gospels for a number of reasons. By the way, Jesus’ miraculous birth wasn’t even recorded in all four Gospels, but *this scene* was. This passage shows us exactly what God means by, “*Be angry but do not sin.*”
- Is it ever appropriate to get angry with your children? Is it ever appropriate to yell? In order to answer those questions, we must ask ourselves this:
 - Why are you angry? If I’m angry, it must be motivated by the same zeal that Christ had for His Father’s temple. It must never be motivated by annoyance, impatience, or a lack of self-control.
 - Why are you yelling? There are very appropriate times to raise our voices. For example: is a car careening toward your out-of-reach child? When a child is being a terrorist, we’re engaging in a spiritual war. If a controlled, loving, **War Shout** awakens their senses and allows them to cease their sinful tirade long enough for the Truth I’m speaking to pierce their hearts and drive them to a willing submission to God – that will be warrant for a **Shout of Joy** to God!