



*Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for edifying, as fits the occasion, that it may impart grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and slander be put away from you, with all malice, and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.*

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I went to the dentist this week. After the cleaning, she said “do you grind your teeth?” And I said, “no, not that I am aware of.”

But I was lying. My jaw is tight, and I can feel it right now, even as I read the scripture. It has been tight for a good two weeks.

As we come into the final stretch, white knuckled, hell bent on learning the outcome, as we daily relive the trauma of such a divided angry electorate, I have been steaming, simmering, holding my anger so tightly. Watching political documentaries like an addict – it’s not good for me, but I cannot turn away.

I am filled with fury, stoking my own flames. If I am intolerant of the intolerant, does that make me intolerant?

Anger is a signal that something is wrong, that an important boundary is crossed. That you perceive a threat. It’s an instinctive, wild animal, prehistoric kind of feeling. And my response is similarly preverbal. Some days, like a child, I look for the grownups to step in, to put things right. On other days, like a caveman, looking for some kind of weapon, to take up arms, to rip something apart.

But my answer is to go Vote. Put the black mark in the circle. Fold the paper and put it in the envelope. Seal it, put it in a box and get a sticker. Done. Wave goodbye to the poll workers. Friendly, safe, tired, steady. Faithfully serving in their offices to promote a just and fair election for all. This year, I wish voting required a more guttural, physical task, like chopping down a tree or digging a ditch.

As I hold my breath and try to pray, I know I need help. I need my Lord, I need the holy spirit. To submit to a greater power, one who envelops me in love, and puts me gently on a different path. To let go of my wrath. To allow the love and forgiveness that I need wash over me.

-Abby Carr