This lesson came from http://www.executableoutlines.com/top_misc.htm (Mark A Copeland)
Though I preached part of this, the whole is worth looking at. RT

"CEASE FROM ANGER, AND FORSAKE WRATH"

Managing Anger

INTRODUCTION

1. An article in Newsweek ("Better Temper That Temper!", 1/3/83) raised the question...
   a. Is it best to let off steam? (reduces blood pressure, but produces hostility in others)
   b. Is it best to suppress one's anger? (raises blood pressure, but prevents hostility)

2. This prompted me to study the subject of anger from a Biblical perspective...
   a. Which for the Christian provides the final word
   b. For all things, including human behavior

[What follows is the results of my study. I began by taking...]

I. AN OVERALL LOOK AT ANGER

A. IN THE OLD TESTAMENT...
   1. The OT books, especially Proverbs and Ecclesiastes have a lot to say about anger
   2. Two passages provide this warning:
      a. Pr 14:17 - "He who is quick-tempered acts foolishly..."
      b. Ec 7:9 - "Do not hasten in your spirit to be anger, for anger rests in the bosom of fools"
   3. The following pretty well sums it up: "Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; Do not fret -- it only causes harm." - Ps 37:8

B. IN THE NEW TESTAMENT...
   1. It appears anger is not compatible with the Christian disposition
      a. Anger and wrath are to be replaced by kindness and forgiveness - Ep 4:31-32
      b. We are told we "must also put off all these: anger, wrath, malice..." - Col 3:8
      c. James tells us to be "...slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God." - Jm 1:19-20
   2. Yet we also note there appears to be a place for a certain kind
of anger
a. Jesus expressed anger on several occasions
   1) Toward the money changers in the temple - *Jn 2:13-17*
   2) Toward the hypocritical Pharisees - *Mt 23:13ff*
b. God is a God of anger as well as a God of love - cf. *Ro 1:18; 2:5; Ep 5:6*
c. Many point out Paul's comments in *Ep 4:26* (see more below)

[How do we reconcile those passages which demand anger be put off with those which speak of anger on the part of God, Christ, and the Christian? Let's take...]

II. A CLOSER LOOK AT ANGER

A. CONCERNING THE ANGER OF GOD...
1. God's anger is always a just reaction to evil - cf. *Ro 1:18; 2:5-9*
2. His wrath is never misguided; He is therefore capable of properly manifesting anger
3. Man, with his imperfections, is not so capable
   a. His anger is often misguided and misdirected
   b. Because of ignorance, false presumptions, misunderstanding, etc.

B. CONCERNING THE ANGER OF CHRIST...
1. In the examples of His anger...
   a. There is nothing of self-interest
   b. Only holy anger against unrighteousness which is abhorrent to God
2. He could be angry, but only for God's honor
   a. When personally abused, He said nothing - cf. *1Pe 2:21-23*
   b. But when it was against God, He displayed righteous anger (as in the temple)
3. Man, with his imperfections, does not always properly use anger
   a. E.g., we remain silent when sin is exalted and God is dishonored
   b. Then get angry when someone offends us personally!

C. CONCERNING "BE ANGRY, AND DO NOT SIN..."
2. Paul is telling us that if anger comes to the heart...
   a. It must be controlled ("do not sin...nor give place to the devil")
   b. It must be dispelled before nightfall ("do not let the sun go down on your wrath")
3. Compare this with the meaning of the Greek words often
translated "anger" and "wrath"

a. **Thumos** (most often translated "wrath")
   1) "the sudden outburst of passionate anger" - ZPEB
   2) "the blaze of temper which flares into violent words and deeds, and just as quickly dies" - Barclay

b. **Orge** (often translated "wrath", but also "anger")
   1) "indignation which has arisen gradually and become more settled" - Thayer
   2) "suggests a more settled or abiding condition of mind" - Vine

4. The effects of Paul's remarks in **Ep 4:26-27** are in harmony with **Ep 4:31**
   a. "do not sin" - i.e., don't let anger become wrath (outburst of anger), which is sin
   b. "do not let the sun go down on your wrath" - i.e., don't let anger remain and become settled, for that is also a sin

5. The point is simply this:
   a. It is wrong to "blow off steam"
      1) Which is the idea involved in the word thumos
      2) Sometimes translated "outbursts of anger"
   b. It is wrong to "have a lasting, suppressed anger"
      1) Which is the idea involved in the word orge
      2) Sometimes translated "anger"

[But if it is wrong to be angry or to display wrath, is it humanly possible to remove these emotional reactions to trying and difficult situations? Yes! But only as we undergo a "transformation"...]

III. PUTTING AWAY ANGER AND WRATH

A. TRANSFORMATION IN THE LIFE OF THE CHRISTIAN...
   1. When a person becomes a Christian, a change is now possible
      - **2Co 5:17**
      a. This change involves many things, one of which is our relation to sin
         1) Before, we were "slaves of sin" - **Ro 6:17**
         2) Now, we can be "free from sin" - **Ro 6:18**
      b. This does not mean that we cannot or do not sin
         1) Only that we do not "have to sin" - cf. **Ro 7:14-24**
         2) We are now free to present ourselves to God, to serve as instruments of righteousness - cf. **Ro 6:11-14,19**
   2. When a Christian willingly presents himself to God, transformation is possible!
      a. Made possible by "renewing your mind" - **Ro 12:1-2**
      b. This renewing of your mind occurs as we:
         1) Set our minds on things above, especially on God and
Christ - Col 3:1-2
2) Behold (contemplate) the glory of the Lord - cf. 2 Co 3:18

c. With a mind being renewed in this way, it becomes possible...
1) To put off things like anger, wrath - Col 3:8-11
2) To put on things like kindness, love, the peace of God - Col 3:12-15
   a) Things which in themselves prevent anger and wrath from becoming a part of our lives
   b) Especially the "peace of God", which if allowed to rule in our hearts will give us the inner calm and harmony we need in trying times!
   c) Crucial to putting on such things as "peace" is the Word of God and prayer! - cf. Jn 14:27; 16:33; Php 4:6-7

3. Transformation leads to reacting differently...
   a. Even as Christians, before we are transformed we will react according to the works of the flesh (with anger and wrath) - Ga 5:19-21
   b. But the more we are transformed into the image of Christ, the more we will react according to the fruit of the Spirit (kindness, gentleness, self-control) - Ga 5:22-23

[During the process of transformation through the Word of God and prayer, it does not hurt to benefit from suggestions which complement what the Bible teaches. Along this line, perhaps it will be helpful to include some thoughts regarding...]

B. ANGER MANAGEMENT...
1. Seneca, a Roman philosopher-educator (4-65 A.D.), offered the following self-control techniques in his book "Of Anger"...
   a. Avoid frustrating situations by noting where you got angry in the past (cf. Mt 26:41; Pr 4:14-15)
   b. Reduce your anger by taking time, focusing on other emotions (pleasure, shame, or fear), avoiding weapons of aggression, and attending to other matters (cf. Php 4:8)
   c. Respond calmly to an aggressor with empathy or mild, unprovocative comments or with no response at all (cf. Pro 15:1)
   d. If angry, concentrate on the undesirable consequences of becoming aggressive (cf. Ps 37:8)
      1) Tell yourself: "Why give them the satisfaction of knowing you are upset?"
      2) Or "It isn't worth being mad over."
   e. Reconsider the circumstances and try to understand the
motives or viewpoint of the other person (cf. Php 2:3-4)
f. Train yourself to be empathic with others (cf. 2Ti 2:24-26)
   1) Be tolerant of human weakness
   2) Be forgiving (ask yourself if you haven't done something as bad)
   3) Follow the "great lesson of mankind: to do as we would be done by" (cf. Mt 7:12)

2. From MyMindField.com come these suggestions for controlling anger through behavior modification
   a. **Reduce your frustrations**
      1) Find the source of your frustration, whether they be people or subjects or situations
      2) Attempt to reduce or eliminate your exposure to these negative stimuli
   b. **Reduce violent stimuli in your life**
      1) Choosing to avoid violent movies, violent and aggressive friends is part of this approach
      2) Be very selective with your friends so that they do not goad you into anger and rage
      3) Eliminate drugs and alcohol as stimulants of anger.
   c. **Reveal yourself and understand others**
      1) Announce you may be having a bad day to others
      2) Attempt to indicate to others they are having a bad day and offer to listen or let them vent
   d. **Stop hostile fantasies**
      1) Cease dwelling on issues or people which aggravate
      2) Think smooth. Think cool.
   e. **Do not escalate the violence** - Aggressive action on your part may cause an equally aggressive response which starts a vicious cycle
   f. **Suppress or convert your violent reaction**
      1) Count to ten, take a deep breath, or go work out are variations on this theme
      2) Think of the source of the aggravation and whether a violent reaction will accomplish any purpose other than remorse, which is not a goal
   g. **Cease using temper to get your way** - While successful in the short term, using anger to win points is a losing strategy in the long run
   h. **Use stress inoculation** - This approach involves awareness of our own irrational fantasies, learning better understanding of why others are weak when they show rage, and rehearsing how to be calm in the face of angering stimulation
   i. **Disconnect anger from frustrating people or issues or desensitization**
   j. **Consider meditation and mild exercise to relax**
3. Some other useful sources for "Anger Management" on the Internet:
   a. Psychology In Daily Life - Controlling Anger--Before It Controls You
   b. Mental Health Net - Anger And Aggression

CONCLUSION

1. Instead of trying to determine whether we should react to difficult situations...
   a. By letting off steam
   b. By suppressing one's anger
   ...the goal of the Christian should be that of changing the inner person - the more we are transformed, the more likely we will react with love, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, gentleness, and self-control

2. Following the example of Christ, there may be a place for anger, but only in things pertaining to the honor and will of God; in all other things, we do well to remember:
   a. The example of Jesus - 1Pe 2:23
   b. The words of David - Ps 37:8

Let us "cease from anger, and forsake wrath" by presenting ourselves to God, allowing our minds to be renewed as we behold His glory revealed in the Bible.

Do you wish to be a "new creation"? You must be "in Christ" (2 Co 5:17), and that begins by being baptized "into Christ" (Ga 3:27)...