

**LESSON 2: ANGER**

This includes:

- 1. LEADER PREPARATION**
- 2. LESSON GUIDE**

**1. LEADER PREPARATION****LESSON OVERVIEW**

We all face plenty of moments in life when we get angry because of something that happens or something that is said. Anger can be righteous—we see Jesus display this kind of anger in the Gospels—but for most of us, anger becomes sin quickly. Our anger is usually rooted in selfishness or pride or other sinful attitudes. In this lesson, your students will look at how Jesus can help them respond differently to anger—and how they can replace anger with acts of kindness.

**LESSON OBJECTIVES**

- 1. WHAT:** When something angers us, we need to respond in ways that bring out the best in us and in other people.
- 2. WHY:** Anger is like fire and can easily spread—kindness works in the same way and can turn someone’s heart completely around.
- 3. HOW:** Teenagers can turn to Jesus and ask him to help them in the journey of listening more, speaking less, and reacting with anger less quickly.

**PRIMARY SCRIPTURE**

James 1:19-25

**SECONDARY SCRIPTURES**

Proverbs 14:29; Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 4:31-32

**TEACHING PREP**

**LEADER  
TIP**

**Use this short overview to prepare for your lesson. While you may not want to convey this information word-for-word with your group, you’ll want to absorb it as you prepare to lead.**

**Read James 1:19-25.**

Anger is like a fire, or a contagious disease. If you’ve ever watched a basketball game when someone gets angry because of a call or a foul, what happens? Other players start to get angry, too, and play more aggressively. If you get near it, you will likely catch it—or you’ll get burned.

James is filled with practical, simple, life-changing wisdom for life. Here in James 1 we are given a model of how to react when things happen to us. Be quick to listen—investigate what you hear and see. Take in what is being said. Then respond slowly. Don’t have a knee-jerk reaction. No one wins if you do that. When

you process through what has happened and you commit yourself to a slow reaction time, you can discover whether or not it's really worth being angry.

James goes on to talk about the need to hear God's truth and then obey it, not just listen to it and then forget it. He continues to challenge us to control our tongue, knowing this is a difficult thing to do.

This lesson will give your students some practical tips about how to react to stressful, difficult situations. For many, knowing they can have victory over their anger is half the battle.

When we enter into a relationship with Jesus, we become a new creation, as Galatians 2:20 teaches us. We no longer have to be controlled by our pride or our selfish desires to be right. It may jump up and bite us at times, but we need to remember that we are not the same person we were before we met Jesus. He changes everything! He changes us!

## **THE BEFORE & AFTER [OPTIONAL]**

### **TEXTS OR TWEETS**

**Send one or both of these messages to your students prior to your meeting. As with the rest of the curriculum, edit these questions to fit the needs of your ministry.**

- Are you tired of constantly being angry? Come out tonight—you won't regret it!
- Looking for some good advice on handling anger? Get ready for great conversation this week.

### **PARENT EMAIL**

**Send this email to parents following the lesson to encourage them to continue the conversation at home. Feel free to edit and customize the email to fit your ministry needs.**

Dear parents,

We're continuing our series on the topic of lifestyle, with an emphasis on choosing and living wisely. Our goal each week is to provide a very practical series of conversations about issues teenagers are facing today: drugs and drinking, anger, entitlement, and laziness.

In our second lesson, we talked about how to deal with anger. James is one of those books in the Bible that's filled with practical, simple, life-changing wisdom for life. In James 1 we are given a model of how we can react when things happen to us. Be quick to listen—investigate what you hear and see. Take in what is being said. Then respond slowly. Don't have a knee-jerk reaction. No one wins if you do that. When you process through what has happened and you commit yourself to a slow reaction time, you can discover whether or not it's really worth being angry.

This week, I encourage you to spend a few minutes talking with your teenager about our lesson. Here are some questions worth asking:

- What's the difference between an occasional angry response and a pattern of constant anger?
- What does it mean to "be quick to listen"? How is that different from the way most of us use our listening skills?
- How can we as a family work on our responses to each other this week so that we are quicker to listen and slower to speak and slower to get angry?

Thanks for all your prayers for our students and our ministry. Have an amazing week!

**LESSON 2: ANGER****2. LESSON GUIDE****GETTING THINGS STARTED [OPTIONAL]****LEADER  
TIP**

Each person will need a piece of paper and a pen or pencil for the opening activity. If you turn the activity into a competition, you also may want some sort of prize.

Welcome your students and invite them into your meeting area. Open in prayer, distribute supplies, and then lead students in this opening activity.

Have each student create a list of his or her pet peeves—things that make him or her angry or irritated. Explain that they'll have a couple of minutes to write as long of a list as they can. Give them two minutes to do this, and then go around the group and have each person share what they wrote down.

If the first person reads something that others have, the other students have to raise a hands and say, "I got it" and then all cross off that pet peeve from their lists. When the first person is done, have the next person do the same thing. At the end, see which student has the longest list of unique pet peeves that don't appear on anyone else's list.

To turn this activity into a competition, simply award points for each unique pet peeve. The person with the most points wins.

**ASK:**

- Which pet peeve in our group did you find most surprising, and why?
- If you had a longer list than others, how did it feel to realize that so many things irritate you or get you angry?
- Why do those things irritate you as much as they do?

**SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** *I bet the complete list of things that get you mad or irritate you is longer than what you wrote down in those two minutes. You may have even thought of some more as others were reading their lists! Some of us fly off the handle quickly, while others have the ability to stay relatively calm in similar situations. Today we're going to look at the problem of anger—and some ways we can be calmer in tough situations.*

## TEACHING POINTS



Use the Teaching Points to help students capture the essence of each lesson with more discussion and less lecture-style teaching. Remember: All throughout these lessons, it's up to you to choose (1) how many questions you use and (2) the wording of the main points—keep ours, or change the wording to make it clearer for your audience.

Read James 1:19-25 together as a group. Consider dividing verses among your students so several people have a chance to read.

**SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** *Let's spend a few minutes discussing what James is saying in this passage. It is super practical but can seem like it's completely impossible.*

## 1. BE WILLING TO FACE YOUR ANGER

### ASK:

- How many times today have you gotten angry? What things tend to make you angry?
- Do you typically get angry quickly or does your anger build slowly in frustrating situations? Explain.
- Describe a recent time you got angry quickly. How did things play out for you—and for the person you got angry with?
- What's the difference between an occasional angry response and a pattern of constant anger?
- How can anger be a form of bondage that keeps us from living a life of freedom?

**SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** *Sometimes we choose to respond to anger with more anger. Sometimes we feel irritable and annoyed, and words quickly fly out of our mouths. Sometimes anger is a slowly growing beast—and it comes out at just the wrong moment. However it happens, anger has the potential to hurt others deeply. That's why it's important to examine the situations, people, and stressors that lead us toward anger. Identifying those things doesn't mean we'll never get angry, but it can help us think differently, respond differently, and treat people differently.*

## 2. SPEND MORE TIME LISTENING AND LESS TIME TALKING

### ASK:

- What does it mean to “be quick to listen”? How is that different from the way most of us use our listening skills?
- James says we need to be slow to speak—tell us about a time that you probably wouldn't have gotten angry if you had just kept your mouth closed.
- What challenges do you face in listening more? in talking less?
- Read Galatians 2:20—what are some things that changed in you once you placed your trust in Jesus?
- How can more listening and less talking open the door to greater freedom in Christ?

**SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** *As followers of Jesus, our old self was crucified with Christ. We can choose to trust God with our lives and the big and small issues that come our way. We can stop, pause, breathe, and reflect.*

### 3. REPLACE ANGER WITH ACTS OF KINDNESS

**ASK:**

- *Look at James 1:20—what kinds of righteousness does God desire in our lives?*
- *Angry words, sarcasm, mockery, and cutting someone down—what do these all have in common?*
- *How can those things fuel anger?*
- *Even as a follower of Jesus, you're human and you will still get angry—people will say or do things that create the feeling of anger inside of you. Why does your response matter?*

**SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** *Imagine if we each chose to react differently when anger rises up in us. How would that change our situations? Imagine beyond that. What if you decided that whenever you felt yourself getting angry with someone, you did something kind for that person? How would things change for you and that person? It would dramatically change things!*

### EXTRA DISCUSSION [OPTIONAL]

Ask students to form groups of two or three to discuss these questions.

**ASK:**



- *Read Proverbs 14:29. How can understanding help you control your anger?*
- *Do you agree that “a hot temper shows great foolishness”? Why or why not?*
- *Read Ephesians 4:31-32. Why are the habits and character traits in verse 31 so destructive?*
- *How can each of the habits and traits in verse 32 help you gain greater freedom from the power of anger in your life?*

Bring everyone back together, and ask for volunteers to share answers to the previous questions, as time permits.

### LIVING IT OUT

**ASK:**

- *How do you need Jesus' help to live out Ephesians 4:32?*
- *How can you spend more time listening and less time talking this week?*
- *What is one specific way you might replace anger with an act of kindness this week?*

**SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** *If you need a change in how you react to people and situations, make time to just stop and be with Jesus. Listen to him. Talk to him. Ask him for help in this journey. This is not an instant fix. It takes time to heal our pain and wounds, and it takes time to move beyond our ingrained habits, including our tendencies toward anger. But Jesus is eager to do this work of transformation in your life.*

Ask students to each find a quiet spot in your meeting area for a few minutes of prayer and reflection. Consider praying together as a group or asking if any students would like prayer from the rest of the group.

## SUMMARY



Provide a quick summary or take-home challenge based on (1) this lesson's content, (2) the dialogue that took place today, (3) your understanding of the issues and struggles your teenagers are facing, and (4) the big picture of your youth ministry and what your leadership team wants accomplished with the teaching and discussion time.

## FOR KEEPS [MEMORY VERSE]

Encourage and/or challenge your teenagers to memorize the Scripture below.

*"Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. Human anger does not produce the righteousness God desires" (James 1:19-20).*