

Anger

By Chip Borgstadt

Even Christians experience anger. Let the Spirit work when anger surfaces; invite the Spirit to help you grow in faith.

For

Adult, Couple

Season

Winter

Needed

Bible, Anger Reflection worksheet (see last page), willingness to discuss feelings and to explore new ways of handling anger



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Prepare in Advance

Decide whether to do this activity on your own or with a trusted friend or loved one.

Make a copy of the Anger Reflection worksheet for each person.

Mark your Bible at Proverbs 15:1 and James 1:19-20.

Activity Plan

1. Say this prayer aloud to begin.

God of peace, when anger surfaces, help us open our lives to your Spirit for healing and wholeness. Amen.

2. Everyone experiences anger from time to time. After a difficult day or upsetting event, take some time to sit quietly and take five slow, deep breaths. When you feel more relaxed, go through the steps outlined on the Anger Reflection worksheet.
3. Read aloud Proverbs 15:1 and James 1:19-20 from your Bible or the text below. What words or phrases do you find encouraging? Which ones are challenging to you right now?

Proverbs 15:1: *A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.*

James 1:19-20: *Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.*

4. Here are some ways to deal with anger:
 - Talk to a friend or family member you can trust.
 - Count to ten, and if that doesn't work, count to one hundred.
 - Draw an abstract picture of your anger.
 - Play a video game or listen to calming music.
 - Take a quick walk around the block.
 - Think of something positive, such as a fun vacation or being with your favorite friends.
 - Do something active—shoot baskets, ride a bike, go to the gym.
5. Getting angry may seem to be a tradition and yelling at others can become a ritual. These responses might get us what we want, but they damage relationships. Develop a personal ritual or tradition to help you handle your anger and find a constructive way to express your feelings. There are a few suggestions on the Anger Reflection worksheet. If possible, talk about this new ritual or tradition with a trusted friend. When you have opportunity to use it, go back to this friend to debrief and help you talk about what you experienced and how you might improve the way you respond to anger.

Anger Reflection

As you use this process, pray for the wisdom and strength to welcome the Holy Spirit's work in your life.

1. What or who led you to realize you were angry?
 - a. My feelings
 - b. My language
 - c. My body's reaction
 - d. Friend or loved one's observation
 - e. Other: _____

2. What responses to anger have you used in the past?
 - a. Verbal expressions
 - b. Physical expressions
 - c. Hold it in
 - d. Controlled conversation
 - e. Other: _____

3. What options do you think you have at this point in this situation?

4. Consider these Scriptures:
 - James 1:19-21
 - Ephesians 4:25-27
 - Romans 12:19-21
 - Psalm 4:4

5. Try one or more of the following ways to calm your anger:
 - *Relax.* Repeat calming words to yourself.
 - *Think differently.* Describe the situation in two other ways—each way from a different perspective.
 - *Problem solve.* What steps can you take to work with the other person or to take care of whatever has angered you?
 - *Plan your communication.* Describe your feelings and name the words or behavior by the other person that upset you. Don't blame or criticize. Suggest a different way to interact. Listen to the other person, but remember your perspective is valid, too.
 - *Pray.* Talk to God about your anger. Ask God to bless the other person. Keep him or her on your prayer list for at least two weeks. During this time, you might want to write down the thoughts you have about this person in a private journal.

6. If your anger continues, consider talking to a counselor or your pastor. Life is too short to dwell on anger.

