

MODULE 5 ANGER

SESSION 2: IMPLOSIVE ANGER

Key Ideas for This Session:

- Implosive anger can show up in many forms.
- Walking away to control your anger in the moment is a good strategy; however, not dealing with it at all, is not healthy.
- Identifying and dealing with the primary emotion is a healthy way to manage and reduce anger episodes.
- Key verse: Galatians 5:22-23

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

Is It Good to Be The “Strong, Silent Type”?

Just because someone doesn't punch walls, punch others, or go on swearing tirades when they get angry, doesn't mean that they don't have an anger problem. When we keep anger and rage bottled up inside, we do great harm to ourselves and, whether we see it or not, great harm to others as well. This type of anger—implosive anger—can show up in many forms.

Implosive or internalized anger can be any of the ways in which we suppress or hold in feelings of anger. Implosive anger may include the following:

- Giving others the silent treatment.
- Using passive/aggressive tactics to get back at others by frustrating them.
- Constantly brooding or “stewing” over a situation that makes you “mad.”
- Withdrawing from other people.
- Hostility and depression.

Although implosive anger is destructive, there are times when we need to control our anger until we can get a hold of ourselves and resolve a situation appropriately. If you and a friend are discussing something you disagree about and then get angry at each other in the process, it might be best for you to

walk away from the situation (for a period of time). This will prevent your anger from escalating to the point where someone may be emotionally, physically, or relationally harmed.

After you take a break from the situation, you can begin to think about your primary emotion or feelings that gave rise to the anger you were experiencing. Our relationship with another person can often be broken when we are unable or refuse to get in touch with and work through our primary feelings in order to resolve the anger. If you are not willing to do this, then either you or your friend may internalize the anger and as a result give out the silent treatment, the “cold shoulder” withdrawal, or show passive aggression toward the other person.

The story in Luke 10:38-42 in the Bible, recounts a situation which appears to be causing frustration from one sister to another:

As Jesus and His disciples were on their way, He came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to Him. ³⁹ She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet listening to what He said. ⁴⁰ But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to Him and asked, “Lord, don’t You care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!” ⁴¹ “Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered, “You are worried and upset about many things, ⁴² but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.”

What was Martha’s issue with Mary, and what do you think her primary emotion was?

If Martha had not raised her concern, what might have happened between her and Mary?

How might the “fruits of the spirit” (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control) help guard against angry episodes? For Martha? For you?

In writing to the Ephesians, Paul said: In your anger do not sin: *Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry (Ephesians 4:26-27).*

Is Paul saying anger is okay?

What is the main point Paul is trying to make?

What are some things you have done in the past to deal with your anger?

Think about the following statements and circle “T” if you agree with the statement and “F” if you disagree.

People who don't get angry easily, or who know how to resolve their anger, are usually more successful in life.	T F
Being incarcerated has made me an angrier person.	T F
There are people in prison because they had problems with anger.	T F

If I can learn how to manage and resolve anger, I will be less likely to come back to prison in the future.	T F
Anger is a “sin” issue.	T F
If I was better at forgiving others, I would have fewer problems with anger.	T F
I have healthy strategies that I use regularly to resolve anger before it becomes destructive to myself or others.	T F
I think that learning to deal with anger in a healthy way is a realistic goal to set.	T F

Discuss the above questionnaire with at least one other person and then answer the following:

The most meaningful or helpful thing I understand from discussing anger is:

Read Ephesians 4:31

Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.

Do you think bitterness is a form of impulsive anger? Yes/No (Explain.)

In David Jeremiah’s book *Slaying the Giants in Your Life*, he describes bitterness as follows: Psychologists tell us that the weed of bitterness is cultivated at a great price. When we choose to hold on to our resentment, we relinquish control of our future. We trade the freshness of the new day and all its possibilities for the pain of the past. Quite often we eat away our hearts, one bite at a time, over someone who may be far away and totally unaware of our thoughts, totally forgetful of what happened, and—certainly—totally unaffected by anything we’re thinking or doing. Resentment, someone said, is swallowing poison and waiting for the other person to die...when we opt to cling to bitterness, it’s as if we’ve placed ourselves under an evil spell. Only the ancient and godly remedy of forgiveness will remove that spell.

Do you agree that forgiveness is key in managing the effects of resentment? Why or why not:

Read 2 Corinthians 10:5:
We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

Do you see a relationship between self-control in our thoughts and managing bitterness and resentment? (Explain.)

Break into small groups and discuss the following if there is time, or consider these topics this week:

- *Resentment and passive aggression are examples of implosive anger. Can you identify other examples of “bottled up” anger? Why is it important to identify these?*
- *Consider different ways you can take your thoughts captive and make them obedient to Christ. What might this include?*

- *Consider the freedom described in Ephesians 4:1-30 and how it might relate to managing implosive anger.*