



SINGLE-PARENT FAMILY
PARENTS' GROUP & HOME BIBLE STUDY



THE UNWELCOME **ANGER**

SESSION 4

8:00 - 8:05 p.m.

I. OBJECTIVE

- ☞ To highlight some of the reasons for the anger that results from being single again.
- ☞ To explore some of the sources of this anger.
- ☞ To begin to examine how to deal with anger constructively.

8:05 - 8:45 p.m.

II. EXAMINING THE ISSUE

At the time, anger is anything but funny. But once it's over, and you can look back from a calmer vantage point, some aspects of the way we let off steam might look a bit amusing.

1. Which of the following fires typifies your anger? (In 1 minute or less)
 - match** - small and quickly over
 - candle** - steady but unspectacular
 - campfire** - just right for marshmallows
 - slow coals** - blow on them a little and they ignite again
 - welding torch** - white hot and melts steel
 - furnace** - very hot, but contained
 - Roman candle** - spectacular outbursts, but soon over
 - forest fire** - consuming anything in its path

2. In your childhood, what was the silliest or funniest thing you ever did to express your anger? (2 minutes or less)
 - ran away from home
 - threw a sneaker through a window
 - threatened to hold my breath forever
 - locked my mother out of the house
 - broke my favorite toy
 - other: _____

3. **People from broken relationships are angry**
Except for some football linemen and professional wrestlers, few people want the image of being an angry person. The label does not wear well for most normal people. Yet many

factors have conspired to leave the single-again person in a state where a rage-like anger visits them too often.

a. Reasons for anger:

REJECTION
PERCEIVED REJECTION

b. Characteristics of anger:

- It is like an intruding stranger
- It sits close to the surface -- ready to spring out from us with an unexpected blast of power.
- To some only minor incidents unleashes it.
- To others, our reaction seems way out of proportion to the situation.
- **It is a normal human response to hurt, frustration, or fear.**
- *“Anger is a physical state of readiness. When we are angry, we are prepared to act”* - Dr. Neil Clark Warren
- The Bible affirms anger within limits (Ephesians 4:26). So, the issue is not whether or not we have anger...The issue is what we do with the that anger. **WE HAVE A CHOICE IN HOW WE EXPRESS ANGER -- WE HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY IN HOW WE EXPRESS ANGER**

c. **THREE WAYS HOW NOT TO EXPRESS ANGER**

1. **Displacement: Firing at the wrong target**

- Displacement occurs when there is deep down anger at a person who is no longer present (i.e. an ex-spouse or absent parent).
- Feeling trapped can cause displaced anger.
- We are expressing displaced anger when someone else or something else catches the brunt of our anger (the cat, the car door, even our children).
- **IT IS NOT OUR FEELINGS THAT ARE RIGHT OR WRONG: IT'S THE ACTIONS WE USE TO EXPRESS THEM.**
- **Remember Ecclesiastes 7:9**_____

2. **Repression: Storing up anger in a bottle**

- Occurs when we don't express our anger at all; we put it in a bottle.
- Repression results in two negative consequences: Depression & poor health.
- Persons who repress anger can hide their anger in the beginning, but gradually (sometimes over a period of several weeks) the anger manifests itself.
- When we are trying not to bother anyone with our anger, we can become victims of our own anger. Depression many times the result of anger turned inward.
- Bottled up anger can also cause or contribute to physical problems: Stomachaches, indigestion, colitis, and all sorts of disturbances to the digestive and alimentary tracts. People who harbor hostility and anger toward others are five times more likely to die from heart disease.
- **Remember Proverbs 16:32**_____

3. **Rage: Uncorking the bottle**

- There is a limit to how long we can repress our anger before we lose control.
At some point we can no longer keep the lid on the bottle or hold back the dam that holds our reservoir of anger.
- Results when feelings of frustration and anger built up inside us until we explode.
- People possess dams of differing heights, but eventually every dam spills over.
- Rage is often followed by waves of guilt.
- **Remember Galatians 5:20**_____

d. **ANGER CAN GROW INTO HATE**

1. Anger must be dealt with constructively:

- If anger is not expressed it can develop into hostility and rage.
- Anger in itself is a neutral state. Hostility is an ongoing attitude. Rage is hardened hostility. Let's track the progression of how anger grows into hate:
- **FIRST** The feeling of hurt, frustration, or fear
- As a result, we become aroused in order to deal with the threat. This is anger.
- If we fail to respond appropriately to this incident, we are left with a residue of resentment. A collection of resentment leads to a negative and pessimistic attitude toward life. This attitude is called hostility.
- As hostility hardens it becomes hate. Hate is usually felt toward the person who caused us pain. If we hate that person, we probably have lost hope of being able to affect any resolution.

e. **HOW TO HANDLE ANGER**

Learning to manage anger is not easy -- especially if we grew up in a family which did not allow anger to be expressed! Handling anger involves serious reflection on matters ranging from the way we handle feelings in general and anger in specific situations to how we feel about ourselves and the way others view us. A plan to handle anger should include the following steps:

- **Get in touch with your feelings.**

Ask yourself, "Why am I angry? Am I feeling hurt, frustrated, or threatened?" Usually anger can be traced to one of these three emotions. To help you get in touch with your feelings, keep a journal to list all your feelings each day for 3 months.

⇒ **Remember John 16:13**_____

- **Identify the sources and expression of your anger.**

When we feel hurt, frustrated, or threatened, we must ask, "What is triggering my anger?" Review incidents of anger to determine: when and where it took place, who was involved; what happened; your response, why you were angry; what you wanted your anger to accomplish.

- **Recognize the signs of approaching anger.**

The more we are aware of our feelings and sources of anger, the better we will be at seeing anger coming and making a plan for the way we will handle such incidents.

- **Delay your response.**

Count to 10. Bite your lip. We must do everything we can to keep ourselves from expressing anger in an unhealthy way. We need time to think about what we are going to do.

⇒ **Remember James 1:19**_____

- **Know what you want.**

If we want to use our anger effectively, we must have a constructive goal for each time we encounter a difficult situation. Our goal may be to work through our frustration, situation. Our goal may be to work through our frustration, or to leave this encounter without feeling guilty, or to restore our relationship with a particular person, etc. This requires an honest look at ourselves. If we are honest, we may have to admit that we want to hurt the other person as badly as we have been hurt, or to pretend that we are not hurt. These are immediately available options but they are destructive.

⇒ **Remember Proverbs 4:29**_____

⇒ **Remember 1 Peter 3:9**_____

- **Develop a strategy and follow it.**

If you know what you want out of each encounter, you can plan steps to reach those goals (assuming they are healthy and constructive). Your strategy will vary according to each situation, but it should involve several important factors: the personality of those involved, our relationship to them, how much time you have, other constraints, and how much it matters to you in the long run if this turns out well.

⇒ **Remember Psalm 18:36**_____

⇒ **Remember Psalm 37:23**_____

- **PSALM 37:8 - “Cease from anger...”**

8:45 - 9:15 p.m.

GROUP STUDY DISCUSSION

JUDY=====

It was three months after the divorce was finalized when Judy invited her younger brother, Phil, to visit her in the Midwestern city where she lived. The trip was a present to celebrate Phil's graduation from high school.

On one morning, after several days of sightseeing together, Judy needed to go back to work. She left Phil to entertain himself at her apartment, but made arrangements to meet him for a swim during her lunch hour. Somehow, there was a mix up as to who would pick up whom. As a result, she found herself waiting thirty minutes before her brother showed up. Phil, the happy-go-lucky baby of the family, was somewhat amused about the misunderstanding until he saw Judy's face. She was utterly furious and angrier when Phil laughed. Judy exploded in a way Phil had never seen her act. She was normally such a

rational, composed, and controlled person. On this day, the magnitude of her rage shocked them both.

Judy was going through a difficult time after her divorce. Money was so much tighter than it had been at the time she had invited Phil. She wanted to be with but, in truth, she didn't have the motional energy for the visit. Her work, which wasn't all that interesting, seemed like the only thing she had left to focus on. And there in the middle of a busy day, her brother was acting like a spoiled child who only thought about himself. Looking back, however, Judy had to admit that the guilt she felt about the way she acted was far worse than the thirty-minute wait.

A. Groups Discuss the Following Among Themselves:

1. What factors do you think contributed to Judy's angry reaction to her brother's lateness?

2. "Rejectors reject because they fear or feel rejected." If this is true, what insight does it offer a single-again person about...
 - feeling rejected and rejecting other?
 - feeling accepted and accepting others?

3. Which of the three ways not to express anger do you have a tendency to use?
 - Displacement: I tend to fire at the wrong target.
 - Repression: I tend to store up anger in a bottle
 - Rage: It end to uncork the bottle and explode.

4. Which of the anger management steps is the hardest for you to use?
 - getting in touch with my feelings when I'm hurt, frustrated, or threatened
 - identifying the source of my anger
 - knowing the ways I tend to express my anger
 - recognizing when I am becoming angry
 - delaying my response to anger
 - understanding what I want in a situation
 - developing a strategy and sticking to it

5. Who bears the brunt of your displaced anger?
 - rude drivers
 - my children
 - the cat/dog
 - department store clerks
 - my therapist
 - God
 - the garbage disposal
 - the guys at the gym
 - fellow workers
 - other: _____

SESSION WRAP-UP CLASS DISCUSSION

9:15 - 9:30 p.m. (Please disband the group and rejoin the class)

Note: Refer to the "Slippery Slope" Handout

III. INTRODUCTION TO STRESS: EXPLORING THE STAGES OF GRIEF EXPERIENCED BY SINGLE PARENTS AND CHILDREN

A. *The Grief Process is a Slippery Slope*

1. Stages of Grief In a nut shell:

- ⇒ **Denial** - Pretending that *Everything is going to be all right*. A normal defense mechanism to keep pain out. Denial acts as a SHIELD.
- ⇒ **Anger** - Occurs when denial wears out.
- ⇒ **Bargaining** - When the grieving person commits themselves to positive actions, hoping to avert the problems.
- ⇒ **Depression** - Becoming so sad as to not want to do anything with friends or family. Depression is profound sadness.
- ⇒ **Acceptance** - The point where the grieving person is able to deal with the world around them in healthy ways. They are willing to risk again.
- ⇒ **Hope** - Faith in God. He is the ultimate source of hope.

B. *It takes Time to Grieve*

- Divorce usually takes 3 to 5 years to heal. It is important to allow a person to fully experience the loss of his/her marriage
 - ⇒ They must develop a strong network of friends
 - ⇒ Time heals the initial loss of marriage. But they must heal from the inside out (As a physical wound)
 - ⇒ As we permit ourselves time to grieve each loss by "*owning*" our emotions (recognizing that at times we will become angry, scared, or sad; while at the same time applying the Word of God to each negative emotion), our emotional pain will not last as long. It will also not go down as deeply.
 - ⇒ As you give yourself time to heal, and permission to grieve each loss, the "scabs" of life begin to heal and confidence will grow. **Read Romans 8:28.**

LET US PRAY

