

**A Rough Draft:  
A Chapter on Anger**

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# Chapter 4: Anger

“Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: but I say unto you, that every one who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; and whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of the hell of fire.” **Matthew 5:21-22 (ASV)**

"One who is slow to anger is better than the mighty; one who rules his spirit, than he who takes a city." **Proverbs 16:32**

“...They went and entered into a village of the Samaritans, so as to prepare for him. They didn't receive him [Jesus], because he was traveling with his face set toward Jerusalem. When his disciples, James and John, saw this, they said, 'Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from the sky and destroy them, just as Elijah did?' But he turned and rebuked them, 'You don't know of what kind of spirit you are.' ” **Luke 9:52-55**

Do you remember the last time you were angry? What thoughts were running through your head? Were you wanting to give the other person a hug and tell them how wonderful they were? Probably not. If anger can have such a powerful impact on our lives, if it can instantly turn our love off, then perhaps it is worth exploring. Below are a few times that people usually get angry. Picture yourself in each one and see where the questions take you. There are example answers after each question (but try to make your own answer before reading them).

## **1. Someone just cut you off in traffic.**

Why did that bother you?

Examples: Did they get a little too close? Were you worried you might crash into them? Were you wanting to get somewhere quickly and they just made your trip slower?

In that moment, what did you say about them?

Examples: “What a jerk!” ...“You only think about yourself!” ...“You could have gotten us both killed!”

What were wanting from that person?

Examples: Understanding? Space? To know that you matter to them?

What were you feeling besides angry?

Examples: Afraid? Shocked? Energized?

## **2. Your child still hasn't done the dishes after the third time of asking them.**

Why does that bother you?

Examples: *Is it because you will end up doing those dishes if the child doesn't? Is it because you want to be able to rest and to play also? Is it because you want to make sure you child values you and other people?*

In this moment, what are you saying about them?

Examples: *"That kid is so lazy!" ... "They don't ever listen!" ... "Let's see how they like no phone for a week!"*

What do you want from your child?

Examples: *To know that they hear you? To matter? To see their chances of surviving long-term as a human go up?*

What were you feeling besides angry?

Examples: *Sad? Tired? Apathetic?*

## **3. Someone you trusted lied to you.**

Why did that bother you?

Examples: *Is it because they claimed to be an honest person and then they lied? Is it because you may not be safe around them any more? Is it because society falls apart when you can't trust anything?*

In that moment (when you realized they lied), what did you say about them?

Examples: *"That snake!" ... "I can't believe they are so selfish!" ... "Not trusting you anymore!"*

What were you wanting from that person?

Examples: *Someone who added to your life without taking away from it? A person you knew you could rest around? Someone who you saw as a champion of order and truth?*

What were you feeling besides angry?

Examples: *Surprised? Numb? Upset?*

In the scenarios above, what came up for you? Did you uncover anything new about your anger? Was there ever a part of you that wanted to connect with the other person and have your relationship restored? Anger has different parts, and

even if you didn't find them in the last activity, that's okay. We're about to explore how anger works and what you can do to deal with it.

## **How Anger Works (Most of the Time)**

### **Step 1) An Event**

Something happens. Your mom says that you are stupid. Your coworker eats the last donut. Someone in your church won't stop screaming during worship. In what seems like the speed of light, something shifts in your mood.

### **Step 2) A Fear**

Most people don't notice this step, because they don't feel the fear. In the blink of an eye, our brain sees that one of our needs is at risk of not getting met and screams "Danger!" Your mom might take away some of your acceptance. Your coworker might take away some of your food. The person in your church might take away your rest. This is a problem!

### **Step 3) A Judgment**

After your mind says "Danger!", then it says "The Threat!" This is where you get angry. Your brain has found the reason your need may not get met. It's your mom, your coworker, the person in your church. Your mind quickly holds a criminal trial against the other person and finds them guilty. "My mom shouldn't have called me stupid!" "My coworker shouldn't have eaten my donut!" "Nobody should be screaming like that in church!" Your anger rises up inside of you. That person is harming someone. They need to be dealt with!

(Note: The statements you say to yourself, like "My mom shouldn't have called me stupid!" or "That person is a jerk," are the judgments. Jesus speaks about them in Matthew 5:21-22 and Luke 6:37.)

### **Step 4) An Attack**

Now that you know who the problem is, it's time to deal with them. Your brain wants you to be safe again, and one way it says that you can do that is by attacking the thing that is putting your needs at risk. If a bear is attacking you, wouldn't you fight back? Your brain tells you to do the same thing with people too. If your mom is attacking you, tell her to buzz off. Maybe she will go away. If your coworker ate the last donut, get revenge by eating the last donut next time. Maybe they will learn their lesson. Is that woman still screaming during worship? Tell everyone in the church. Maybe they will help you to stop her. Remember, if you can get rid of the threat, your needs are safe again, so attacking seems like a good idea, right?

## **Step 5) A Calm Down**

After your brain has dealt with the threat, it starts to calm down again. Your mom hangs up the phone. You say "Thank God!" Your coworker pouts because all the donuts are gone. Maybe he will think twice before being so greedy. The screamer finally gets told she is bothering people. You rejoice because she might finally stop. Life is a little better. Your needs might get filled now (or so your brain thinks). Your body relaxes. Life goes on.

(What happens the other 1% of the time anger rises up? Drugs, brain damage, stubbing our toe on a rock. There are exceptions to almost every rule in life, and anger is no different. Sometimes it just happens.)

Okay, so now you know what stirs up anger, but what do you do about it? How do you break the cycle of harming other people and yourself with your anger? How do you deal with your anger so you don't sin? Here are some steps that can help you out.

## **Dealing with Anger**

### **Step 1) See Your Anger**

You can't do anything with your anger if you don't see that you are angry. It's one thing to be angry and feel it. It is another thing to step back and go "Oh! I'm really mad right now!" Paying attention to your anger allows you to explore it. Now, it's pretty hard to point out anger if you don't know that you are angry, but there are ways to help you practice spotting it quicker. Here are three:

1) Check in on your feelings from time to time. By asking yourself "What am I feeling right now, and what does that look like in my body, in my stress level, and how I act toward other people," you start to learn what emotions are talking. The more you know what is going on inside you, the faster you will know when you start to become angry.

2. Ask other people to share when they think you are angry. This might look like them saying "Hey, it seemed like your mood shifted. Are you feeling frustrated about something?" Or it might look like "I noticed your arms are crossed. Are you mad right now?" By other people putting a light on our anger, it can help us to see it faster also.

3. Practice. During the times you do start to get angry, pause and ask yourself "What's going on right now?" Allow yourself to explore it. If you are alone or have a little more time, think about how the anger feels in your body, how it is impacting your thoughts, and if there were any warning signs before the anger

showed up. By learning the patterns you follow and the signs that happen when you get angry, you will get quicker at spotting it when it does happen.

Once you do see that you are angry, you can move on to the next step.

### **Step 2) Ask Yourself- "What Am I Afraid Of?"**

Since anger is almost always tied to fear, ask yourself "What am I afraid of?" Are you afraid your romantic partner is mad at you and might leave you? Are you afraid that the house won't get clean? Are you afraid of losing your job? By figuring out what you are afraid of, you can figure out what that fear is connected to.

If you are having trouble finding out what you are afraid of, sometimes asking "What was I saying to myself?" can help. What was the judgment you were making when you got mad? Did you think "My partner ignored me!" or perhaps "They shouldn't have put hidden charges on this bill!"? The topic of your judgments can help to show what you were fearing.

### **Step 3) Find the Need**

Once you can see what your fear is, then it is time to ask "What need is my fear connected to?" There may be more than one. In the three examples given in Step 2, the needs might look like this: A romantic partner leaving you might be connected to your needs for connection, for belonging, and knowing that you matter in the world. A house that is dirty is likely connected to needs for order, safety, and beauty. Losing a job is likely connected to safety and acceptance ("What will people think of me now that I got canned?"). Once you know what needs you were afraid of not getting met, you can do something about them.

### **Step 4) Grieve (Optional)**

Sometimes when our needs are not going to get met, it helps to say to ourselves "It's not going to happen right now, and that stinks." Allowing ourselves to feel the sadness of missing out on something allows us to hug that part of ourselves. It allows us to say to that part of ourselves "You matter too." God knows and loves every part of you that He made, including the parts that can feel pain. By giving yourself time to love on that piece of yourself, you can help to give yourself the strength to bounce back and keep moving. Grieving isn't always necessary before working to get your needs met, as sometimes the need isn't that big to you or you can see an easy solution to get your need met, but asking yourself "Would taking a moment to grieve this help me bounce back emotionally?" can make a world of difference if your mind really was wanting a moment to come to grips with the loss it just went through.

## **Step 5) Make a Plan**

Okay, so you know your need. Now it's time to do something about it! You are worried your partner will leave and that you won't matter to anyone after that? What if you asked other people what they enjoy about you? You are worried that your need for order will not get met if the house isn't clean? What if you hired a maid just this once? You don't know how you will meet your need for safety now that you don't have a job? What if you started calling relatives and asked if they have a place to stay? The point being- you can make a plan. Once you know why you are angry and what need was at risk of not getting met, you can invite other people and yourself to help you get that need met.

## **Step 6) Try It Out**

Once you have a plan that seems like it will help, test it out. Did it help to get rid of your anger? If not, look to see if you missed any needs. Also look at what you are still saying to yourself. These can give you clues on how to move forward.

Note: Sometimes anger will be around for a while. Why is that? Because many times we also want the person we are mad at to listen to us and let us know that they are sad about the impact they had on us. People aren't always going to do that though, which can leave us with unmet needs. Sometimes that can make it harder to get over our anger. In these cases, we can go to God and ask Him how He sees the situation, and then can start looking at how we can release the other person from the judgments we are saying and holding against them. Then we move forward with life the best we can.

So now you have seen how to spot your anger and what you can do to walk through it, but what does that look like in practice? Why don't we look at a few examples and see how the steps play out.

### **Example 1: Fabian and Wilma**

Fabian has a 5-year-old daughter named Wilma. Wilma doesn't like going to bed. Tonight, they got into an argument because Wilma kept getting out of bed to play with her toys after Fabian tucked her in. After the third time of catching Wilma out of bed, Fabian became angry. He wanted to scream at her to get back in bed. He finally spotted that he was angry, so he walked away from her for a minute so he could work through his anger.

Fabian: "Alright. I'm angry. Wilma clearly isn't listening. If I'm mad, there is probably something I'm afraid of, so what is it? I know I'm probably afraid I won't get enough rest, so that's probably part of it. I'm afraid for Wilma's safety, because if she is not getting enough sleep, it's going to cause problems for her health later. I might also be afraid that I don't matter to Wilma, because she clearly cares more about playing with toys than she does listening to me. What can I do about all this? I think I'll look at my different needs and try to find a way

to meet them.

If I care about rest, I either have to ignore Wilma and go to bed or I have to deal with Wilma and then go to bed. Since I also want to help Wilma, I'm going to find a plan that gets her in bed too. I'll come back to my need for rest after I get her need for rest figured out.

What can I do to help make sure that Wilma gets the rest she needs? She clearly has a strong desire to play right now. Maybe I can let her play with her toys, but only if she is in bed and tucked in? That might cause her to start getting drowsy while she is playing. Maybe I could read a book to her or have her cuddle with me while I make up a really long story about her toys? I bet she would fall asleep to that. Maybe we could make a meal together? While I will lose sleep, maybe if I get her belly full and get her to think she helped me and did "big person" stuff, maybe she will keep thinking about that in bed and will get to sleep. It might also help if I made sure to exhaust her during the day so she doesn't want to play at night, but that won't help me now. I think I'll try the option of using her toys to make a really long story to see if it slowly causes her to go to sleep. If I pull it off, I should be able to sleep for at least five hours. Why don't I look at my need to matter now?

Do I care enough about my fear of not mattering to work on it? I've already told Wilma that I want to go to bed too, but if I tried to explain that more, she would probably just tell me to go to bed and then I would get sleep (but then she would get much less). I think I'll skip focusing on my need to matter for tonight so I can get to sleep faster. She will likely show me that I matter to her later if I do well enough raising her now. What happens if I get mad again though?

What happens if I get mad again? Tonight, I'll just remind myself that my needs are screaming at me to get met, and I can always just go to bed and come up with a bigger game plan for Wilma tomorrow. Being rested will allow me to come up with a better game plan for all the other times this might happen anyway."

In the end, Fabian came up with a very long story about Wilma's toys. It took about an hour, but Wilma finally wore out and fell asleep. Fabian was lacking sleep the next day, but he started looking into how to make sure Wilma got enough play and exercise during the day so that she would be less interested in it at bedtime. The amount of times that he got frustrated at nighttime with Wilma went down. His sleep improved, how much Wilma showed she cared improved, and Fabian was happier with how things were going than he was before.

In this case, Fabian added together Step 2 and Step 3 of working out his anger, and that worked for him. There is no perfect way to do it. As long as it is working, then it is helping.

## **Example 2: Sasha and Drake**

Sasha and Drake work together. Drake likes to joke around a lot. Sasha likes to get her work done. Today, Drake thought that it would be funny to add a sour flavor into the water cooler. Since it was clear, no one would know that it was there. Drake loved standing down the hall and laughing every time he saw someone scrunch their face at how sour it was.

Sasha, tired from typing all morning, went to stretch and get a sip of water. As soon as her face puckered, she knew who the problem was, and her thoughts turned to death and vengeance. She looked down the hall and saw Drake laughing. As she felt her teeth clench, she saw that she was angry, and she knew it was probably best if she left the room and thought things through. She knew yelling at Drake did no good. Once back at her chair, she worked to calm herself down and focus on what just happened.

Sasha: “Ug! Drake put something nasty in the water. And he was so happy about it too! I'd love to... Focus, Sasha. Punching Drake isn't going to do any good. What am I mad about? Yes, the water, but also I'm so tired of Drake joking around and not getting anything done. Why does he still work here?! Ooo, I felt that. I saw my need to matter not getting met, because I can see myself saying 'If I mattered, they would force Drake to pull his fair share of work.' Let me sit with that for a second so I can mourn and let my soul know that I see the pain it's going through. It's relaxing to let myself know that it's okay to say that I'm in pain.

Okay. So what am I afraid of? I'm afraid of not getting enough rest because I'm doing more work than Drake. I'm afraid of not getting accepted because it seems like some people like Drake more and my boss seems to give him favors. I'm afraid that I don't get enough chances to make the choices I want to make in life, and I want to play more. And, of course, I'm afraid that I don't matter. I also want to be heard by Drake and know that he understands me, though I don't know if that will ever happen.

Whew. That was a lot. Now that I'm thinking about all this, my heart hurts a bit. That's a lot of unmet needs. How can I help myself? I think it would help to meet my need for space first and give myself at least a day before I talk to Drake, if I ever do. I'm still buzzing a bit from what he just did. In the meantime, maybe looking at how I could meet my needs will help?

I think two of my biggest needs are to be heard and to matter. Maybe I could write a letter to Drake sharing how I feel and how his actions impacted me and put it on his desk. Even if he makes fun of it or shares it with the rest of the office, at least I'll know that it got into his brain. Maybe I could also talk to HR. Not to punish Drake, but for them to hear that my work is getting impacted by this. At least then I would know that my world has been seen by people in the office in general.

What about my needs to do what I want to do and to play? I could try to use more of my vacation time. I could work on getting out of the house more after work. I

could even find a different job... then I wouldn't have to deal with Drake. I could goof off at work more, then maybe people would like me more like they like Drake. Maybe if I get obnoxious enough, Drake won't like the jokes and leave the company.

What about my need for rest? I could make sure I'm not taking on extra tasks at work. That would free up a little free time. Maybe I could find some ways to point out how little Drake is doing. If I do it well enough, he would get pushed to get his work done so it doesn't get dumped on me. That plan could backfire though, so maybe I shouldn't do it. What else could I do? Maybe I could take a hot bath when I get home from work some days. It wouldn't help everything, but it would help me relax.

What about my needs to matter and be accepted? What if I cooked some food and brought it in every now and then, and I could ask people how their day is going more often? If I did that, people would probably be thankful and value me more. It might even help build a bigger army against Drake, and my boss would probably appreciate it too. What else could I do? I could ask some people what they think of me as a coworker. That could tell me what parts of me they value. It could also tell me any areas where I could easily change things to make things better for them and make it so they are more likely to value me that way too. I could talk to my boss about Drake. That could go really downhill though, so I think I'll skip it. Umm... I can't think of anything else right now. So I'll work on this more later."

In the end, Sasha left a note for Drake on his desk. As she expected, he shrugged off the letter and said "I was only having fun. You got to admit it was funny! Don't be so hard about stuff! You need to have a little more fun!" He did at least give her a generic apology saying that he was sorry that she didn't like it.

Sasha also spoke to HR about the problem, which made things worse, because they talked to Drake and Drake thought Sasha was trying to get him in trouble. Drake started playing tricks on Sasha, and she regretted that she ever told HR in the first place. "Not every strategy is going to help out," she reminded herself.

A big shift happened, though, when Sasha started to bring food in and talk to people more. People started to stop by her desk just to say hi. They shared what they didn't like about Drake. They invited her over for dinner and to hang out. She could see that she mattered to them. She wasn't getting all her needs met, but this certainly helped. She knew if she could pull this off, then she could find some way to meet her other needs too. She started to think of new plans that could help her out.

What was Sasha's process? She saw her anger- "What am I mad about?" She found a need- "I saw my need to matter not getting met." She let herself grieve that her need was not getting met- "Let me sit with that for a second so I can mourn." She then went back and found what she was afraid of- "not getting enough rest, ...not getting accepted, ...not enough chances to make choices,

...etc,” looked at her needs (listed in what she was afraid of), made a plan (leave a note for Drake, go on more vacations, bring in food), and tried it out. Sasha used all of the steps, and when things didn't work out, she went back to the drawing board. She wasn't giving up on her happiness that easily.

Now that you've had a chance to see what using the steps to work through your anger can look like, let's dive even deeper into anger and see how it shows up in the Bible.

## **Anger in the Bible**

“So, then, my beloved brothers, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger; for the anger of man doesn't produce the righteousness of God.”

**James 1:19-20**

“Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, outcry, and slander be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving each other, just as God also in Christ forgave you.” **Ephesians 4:31-32**

“Cease from anger, and forsake wrath. Don't fret; it leads only to evildoing.”

**Psalms 37:8**

Anger is mentioned at least 250 times in the Bible. Over and over again, we see God telling us that unleashing our anger on people will lead to destruction (Proverbs 29:22, Proverbs 14:17, Galatians 5:19-21). If anger is this important to God, what's so special about it? The answer is in the fruit.

Your kid wakes up on the wrong side of the bed- screaming at you all morning, calling your breakfast trash, refusing to get ready for school, and slamming their bedroom door in your face. If you were the one who woke up early to help them out, what's going to happen? Your energy level to handle the issue will likely go down and your level of frustration will likely go through the roof. At some point, you might pop. What happens if you do?

Yelling, threatening, finger pointing, punishment- all of these are common fruits of anger. All of them have the same goal in mind- to change someone's behavior. If someone won't listen to your heart-felt plea, then perhaps they will listen when they hear the sound of your coming wrath. If you can't get order in the world by just talking to people, then perhaps its time for a little arm-twisting? They will thank you later anyway... right? It is this use of threats, punishments, and fear that can create havoc in your relationships. To help you see how, let's look at a system that uses these things all the time- the criminal justice system.

## **The Fruit of the Law**

From ancient Sumeria to the Roman Empire to modern day states and countries, when enough people get together, they often make a system of laws to help keep society in order. These laws usually include agreements about what people are allowed to do, what they are not allowed to do, and what will happen to those people who choose to break the law. There are many things a society could do to people who break the law, but one common path many societies take is to give out punishments. For the sake of this book, the definition of punishment that we will be using is: To give a person pain or loss in some area because that person, it is believed, caused harm to somebody in some way.

Most people can agree that they have seen a government give a punishment to someone for committing a crime, but why does the government do it? Because they want to give people a reason to not commit that crime again. Governments also want everyone else to know that the same punishment could happen to them if they break the law also. The goal is order. If using punishments has helped to keep order in the world, then what is the problem with it?

The first problem with using punishments, whether doing it as a government or doing it to teach someone a lesson because we are angry, is that it teaches people to fear us. If someone gets a ticket for speeding on the freeway, a small part of that person will likely fear or stay away from cops. If we yell at someone when they don't take out the trash, a small part of that person will likely fear or want to stay away from us. If you have a goal of closeness in your relationship, or if you want the relationship to at least be filled with laughter and mutual respect, it will be hard to do if fear is getting in the way. People have a natural desire to stay away from danger, and if your anger is that danger, many people will stay away.

The second problem with using punishments, whether from a government or out of your anger, is that punishments don't fix the reason the person committed the crime to begin with. If a woman turns to drugs to deal with the fears she has been living in, throwing her in prison won't fix her addiction. If your child has a habit of not washing their dishes, grounding them won't help them see the reason you think it is important. The point of punishment is to force people to change their outward behavior, but it doesn't deal with a person's insides- their heart, their level of understanding, or their history. Until the other areas are dealt with the way they need to be, you may never see the full healing to the problem that you were angry about.

The third problem with using punishments is that it can cut people off from the very community that could have helped to bring them healing. If someone steals from a grocery store and ends up in jail, they get cut off from their mom, their pastor, and any other potential people who would have been around (more often) to speak life into them. Yes, those people might still visit, but who are the people that are now around the jailed person more? Other people with big problems. If

you keep yelling at your spouse because they seem to hang out with their friends more than you, who is your spouse going to want to be around? You? Or their friends? And if your spouse isn't around you or your friends, who is helping to speak life into the relationship? You better hope your spouse hasn't poisoned their friends by telling them how much you "nag" all the time.

These are some of the reasons God warned us about using anger. It is why God wants us to learn to respond with grace instead (1 Peter 4:8; 1 John 4:18). But before we talk about how to open up our hearts and share with love, let's take a look at one final topic that has a big impact on our anger- judgment. Rarely does anger happen if a judgment has not taken place.

## **Judgment**

"Oh great judge, what shall be this man's punishment?" ... "He knocked out a tooth, so knock out one of his teeth." ... "And for her, my lord?" ... "She didn't clean, so give her a broom and make her sweep!"

Judgment- A court's final ruling about who is right and what each side should pay or be given.

How have people acted around you lately? Have they let the door shut in your face when you were about to go into a store? Did they eat extra food at the work meeting and now you won't get any? Have they been loudly talking on their cell phones next to you? You know what you deserve, and it isn't this. If the world were a little different, you might give those people a piece of your mind.

You make judgments all the time, but do you know how they impact you? Have you spent any time looking at how they change what value you place on people? Jesus cared about us making judgments, and he spoke about it in different parts of the Gospels. Today, we are going to look at one of the biggest parables He gave about it, Matthew 18:23-35, then we will step into what it means. Let's dive in:

### The King Who Was Owed a Debt

"Therefore the Kingdom of Heaven is like a certain king, who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. When he had begun to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. But because he couldn't pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, with his wife, his children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down and knelt before him, saying, 'Lord, have patience with me, and I will repay you all!' The lord of that servant, being moved with compassion, released him and forgave him the debt.

But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him one hundred denarii, and he grabbed him and took him by the throat, saying, 'Pay me what you owe!'

So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will repay you!' He would not, but went and cast him into prison until he should pay back that which was due. So when his fellow servants saw what was done, they were exceedingly sorry, and came and told their lord all that was done. Then his lord called him in and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. Shouldn't you also have had mercy on your fellow servant, even as I had mercy on you?' His lord was angry, and delivered him to the tormentors until he should pay all that was due to him. So my heavenly Father will also do to you, if you don't each forgive your brother from your hearts for his misdeeds." Matthew 18:23-35

What is this story about? It's about what people were owed. How do we decide what we are owed? We look at our record books! We check what people were supposed to pay us. We check how much they have paid. We then decide how much we are owed (aka how much we deserve). If we were running a business in a world where everyone had money, collecting what was due would be easy and might have no downsides, but what happens when this idea hits the real world *and* we start applying it to what people owe us in relationships? Things get really messy.

"I bought you a gift and you thought it was dumb?! Fine! I'm not going to buy you anything any more!" ... "I put the kids to bed the past three nights and you can't even do it tonight?! Good luck cooking your own dinner tomorrow!" ... "I worked two extra days so you could go on vacation and now you won't work for me?! Don't look to me the next time you want help!" When we decide that people owe us in relationships, when we make a judgment against them, we cut them off from the love of God. We put them in a prison, and they stay there until they have paid what we think we are owed. We don't treat them according to what will help them grow the most as people. We treat them according to what they haven't given us yet. If they don't have the money to give us (or time or love), they stay in prison because we are mad that we are in lack and we think that it's their fault.

Remember, almost every time you get angry, you have come up with a judgment somewhere. Anger is connected to a violation of something, a wrong, a breaking of a law. God doesn't get angry when He is happy with you. Even God's anger is connected to laws being broken and wrongs happening and to the judgments He has made because of that. God could have held us to the standard of having to treat Him as He deserves (Deuteronomy 6:5) without a chance for mercy, but if He did that, we would all be in Hell. According to the Bible, God keeps books too (Revelation 20:12,15). He knows what people owe Him. That's why Jesus was sent to die, so that the price of what we owed Him would be paid. With our debt out of the way, God was free to love us joyfully again, and He does! *(He always has, because He knew Jesus was going to pay the price at some point, but the cross made it*

*official.*) Now God asks us to learn from Him what helps people grow the most. It doesn't happen by us demanding what we deserve. It happens by us showing what love looks like, even in hard times. By showing love to people, we help them see the type of image we want them to grow into.

So if we aren't supposed to punish people when they “do us wrong,” and we aren't supposed to unleash our anger and judgments, then how do we talk to people about stuff that is bothering us?

The answer: We share impact.

## **Sharing Impact**

If you have read this far, you probably have already read the chapters on feelings and needs. We'll use that info here. In general, sharing impact is about bringing up what we saw that impacted us, sharing how we felt when it happened, sharing why it was important (what need it was affecting), and often making a request for change. Here are some examples of it:

### Jerome and Mia

Jerome is dating Mia. Mia has gotten used to using Jerome's stuff- wearing his hoodie, eating the food at his house, borrowing his sunglasses. One day Mia decided to take Jerome's water bottle without asking. Jerome had one water bottle and he used that bottle every basketball practice. When he went to grab his bottle for the next practice, it was gone. Jerome was worried when he couldn't find his bottle, because he practices outside, and there isn't a water fountain anywhere nearby.

That same night, after Jerome got home from practice, Mia came over. She walked in the door with his water bottle in hand. Jerome couldn't believe his eyes. He was mad! “You took my bottle?!” he yelled. Jerome could see the fear and sadness in Mia's face. “I was just borrowing it! I thought it was okay!” she replied. Jerome knew that if he wanted a close and happy connection with Mia, that raging at her was not going to help here. He didn't want Mia to be afraid or sad, so he thought about what they taught him in school about sharing his anger. He took a deep breath, then he said:

“When I went to get my water bottle this morning and it was gone, I was confused. I went to practice and didn't have any water the whole time because I didn't have my bottle. I was upset because it was hot and that's the one thing that helps to keep me going, ...outside of you. Anyway, I was really sad that I didn't have it. And when I saw you walk in with it, I got really mad. But I love you and I'm not mad at you right now. I just want you to know that that water bottle is

important to me and I want you to ask me before you take it.”

What did Jerome do that helped him share his pain without turning to punishments? Jerome shared what he saw: the missing water bottle and Mia holding it later. He shared how he felt: confused, upset, sad, mad. He shared why it was important: it was hot and the water would have helped to keep him hydrated and cool (going). He made a request: ask before you take it.

Sharing impact like this, without blame, without name-calling, and without punishment, allows people to see how their actions are impacting us so that they can choose how they want to treat us in the future. To say that another way- we give people information. We hope they use it help us meet our needs moving forward. Since God gave everyone free will, and He wants people to love each other because they choose to, sharing impact is about the best we can do to get someone to help us meet our needs. The opposite of sharing impact is using force- controlling someone's body or mind when they don't want us to. I bet you can imagine how God feels about that. (Though God does make some exceptions to this, as seen in Scriptures like Proverbs 29:15 and in Isaiah 37:29. There is a chapter on force later in the book.)

In order to help you go deeper in your understanding of sharing impact, why don't we look at one more example:

### Agnes and Lydia

Agnes and Lydia are friends. They moved into an apartment together for college. Things were going okay for the first month or two, but then Agnes noticed that the temperature in the house kept changing. She would get cold at night and hot during the day. She thought maybe something was wrong with the heater or AC units, until she checked the thermostat and saw that someone was changing it.

“Have you been changing the temperature?” Agnes asked Lydia. “Of course! I do that to save money. Is that a problem?” Lydia replied. Agnes let Lydia know that she wanted one temperature in the house all the time because it helped her body stay comfortable. Lydia looked slightly annoyed. She wasn't sure how well she would be able to handle something like that, but she said back to Lydia, “Well, why don't we try it out and see how it goes?” They agreed on a temperature, 72°F, and then moved on with their days.

Three days went by. It wasn't perfect for Agnes, but 72°F was at least bearable. When Agnes went to bed that night, she was just about to fall asleep when she heard the AC kick on. “The AC shouldn't be kicking on in the middle of winter,” she thought. Her mind was then awake and the room started to get colder. She had a lot of trouble sleeping that night.

In the morning, she glared at Lydia as Lydia came into the kitchen. “Did you turn the AC back on last night?” she said. “Yea, sorry if it bothered you. I was having trouble getting to sleep.” Lydia replied. Agnes was about to yell at Lydia, but she

had a moment of clarity: “Starting a fight is only going to leave both of us mad. Maybe I can try some of that stuff I learned in that book on anger I read.” Agnes opened up:

“Lydia, when I tried to go to bed last night and the AC turned on, I got cold and annoyed. I knew I was probably going to have trouble going to sleep, and I only got like three hours. We made an agreement to try a certain temperature, and I was hoping we could stick to that and talk to each other if there was a problem.”

“Sorry! I didn't mean for you to get so little sleep! Now I feel bad. I'm so sorry, Agnes!” Lydia blurted out.

“I don't hate you, Lydia. We're still friends. I just really want to find a temp that works so that we both can be happy. Do you think one temperature will work for you? Or do you think we should see if there are other things that could help us out?” Agnes replied.

“Like what?” said Lydia.

“Like maybe we can find some way to heat our individual bedrooms.” said Agnes.

“Ooooh. I didn't think of that! Yea! We could probably get those little portable heaters or AC units to keep things the way we like them. That way we would only have to find a temperature we like for the living room and kitchen.” replied Lydia.

“How about we find some temperatures that work for us for now until we get the heaters and AC units, and then we can find a good temperature for the rest of the house once we get them?” said Agnes.

“I'm okay with that.” said Lydia.

“Thanks.” said Agnes.

Agnes felt the anger leaving her body. Her needs were going to get met, and she knew now that Lydia cared for her and wanted her to be happy too. Agnes was able to share impact by sharing what she saw (the AC unit turned on), sharing how she felt (cold and annoyed), sharing what need it was impacting (her sleep), and sharing a few requests (to talk to each other in case a problem came up, to share feedback about whether Lydia still thought one temperature could work, and to try to find some temperatures that would work until they got their heaters and AC units). Agnes was able to find a solution with Lydia that ended up way better for both of them than a screaming match would have given them, and she was grateful that she had bumped into that book.

The above stories (Agnes and Lydia, Jerome and Mia) ended well. Everyone was able to get some needs met. What happens, though, when you share impact and the other person doesn't want to help you? What do you do when the other person is too angry or too focused on their own needs and they don't want to

change? One option is to work on getting your own needs met- buy a heater to keep yourself warm, wear earplugs if someone isn't willing to quiet down, make more friends if you want more connection. The other main option is to help the person you are having a conflict with get their needs met first. If you do this and then they see you care, sometimes it can give them the strength they need in order to help you get your needs met. You'll want to keep in mind, though, that no one person is meant to meet all your needs, and sometimes people have needs that have gone unmet for so long that it could take years for them to fully heal before they would be willing to help you meet your needs.

## **Human Anger vs God's Anger**

We have talked about anger, judgment, and punishment, and by now you might be wondering- How does God's anger fit into all this? Does He get held to the same standards that we do? Why can God be angry and it's okay, but we get angry and people get upset? In order to answer that, let's look at God's divine nature.

All-Knowing: God knows every detail about every person, spirit, and atom in the universe. He has thought out every path that each person can take in their entire life. He knows how each action someone takes will help or harm people. With this knowledge, He is able to base His happiness on things that lead to life for others and Himself, and He is able to base His anger on choices that He can see will harm others.

All-Powerful: God can make stars and galaxies and every form of life. He can destroy all of it in a second. If He wanted evil gone, He could snap a spiritual finger and it would cease to exist. What is holding God back? God has standards. He also has something that He cares about more than justice: relationships. He wants relationships with people and with the angels. In order to teach people how to handle relationships when things don't go the way that they hoped for, He had to hold back His anger to show what forgiveness looked like. If He didn't, you wouldn't be having relationships at all, because He would have struck you dead the first time you called someone a swear word. God chooses when to use His anger carefully.

All-Present: God is everywhere. He sees everything. He sees every pain we go through. He sees every time we jump for joy. He is connected to every moment and He could allow Himself to fully show up in every moment. Imagine having a friend who lived with you who laughed during every funny moment and who cried every time you were feeling down. Imagine a friend who was always perfectly full of emotion. That's God, and while He is in the room with you right now, while He is ever-present, He chooses to hold Himself back so that you can have some space and freedom. This includes holding back His anger, because if God showed up fully expressing His anger, even if it wasn't aimed at you, you still wouldn't be able to handle it.

All-Loving: God is love (1 John 4:8). He cares about you deeply. He is always working in your favor. He knows how to help people have the best, most fulfilling life possible. This includes how to allow anger to show up for the greatest benefit.

So here is God- knowing when to use His anger, knowing how to hold it back so we can learn about relationships, knowing when to be quiet so that He doesn't kill us with the fullness of who He is, and knowing how anger fits into the bigger picture of love. If all of this doesn't give God the green light to use His anger when He thinks it is best, what would?

It can be upsetting to see God get angry so many times in the Old Testament and somehow it is okay, yet when we get angry, it seems like people say that it is wrong. But it can help to remember that God was in a legal contract with Israel in the Old Testament: The Law, which was given on Mt. Sinai, had mandatory curses that God was supposed to give Israel when they disobeyed (Deuteronomy 28:15). Throwing around famine and plagues was not God's idea of a good time, but since Israel kept wanting to do things that were harming others (like offering their children as sacrifices to false gods), God let the punishments happen to try to get Israel to change their behavior. Thankfully, when Jesus showed up, we were given the Holy Spirit to help remind us about our behavior and God didn't have to punish us because Jesus took our punishment on the cross.

As for your anger, why do people not like it? Do you yell? Do you insult people? Do you try to say everything is all their fault? You will probably find that if you practice the skills in this chapter, people will be a lot more open to helping you work through your anger. You feeling angry isn't wrong. It is what you do with your anger that matters. What path are you going to take?

## **Growing in Your Skills**

Now that you have had a chance to explore anger in different ways, why not try your hands at some practice questions to grow your understanding of anger? Below are four areas to help you go deeper in your knowledge of anger and how it impacts your life. In the first section, you will look at how other people are sharing their anger and see if you can find ways for them to do it that help the relationship become closer. In the second section, you will be asked questions about how anger shows up in your life. In the third section, you will get a chance to look at anger in the Bible. In the last section, you get to see how your judgments impact your anger. The answers section (for those questions that have answers) is included at the end.

# **Extra Practice**

# Scenarios

In this section, read each story and then try to answer the questions that follow.

1. Noah really wants to play Bloody Gore Fighter Extreme. A lot of the guys from his high school are playing it, and it's the group *thing* to do. Yvette, his mother, has the final say about what Noah is allowed to play or not play when it comes to video games. Noah tries to convince his mom:

Noah: "Mom, there is this great game that all my friends are playing, and it looks like a lot of fun. My friend, Zach, invited me to join him so we both can play Bloody Gore Fighter Extreme! It's not as bad as it sounds! I swear! So can I get Bloody Gore Fighter Extreme, mom? Can I? It would mean a lot to me!"

Yvette: "With a name like that, you should already know what the answer is."

Noah: "So you're saying yes?!"

Yvette: "How long do you want to be grounded?"

Noah: "That's not fair, mom! You're always stopping me from doing stuff! All my friends out there are having fun, and I'm stuck in my bedroom doing nothing! All because we have to *please God*! Jake's family is Christian and they let him play whatever he wants! This isn't fair!!!"

Yvette: "Look, hun, I know you're frustrated, but those violent games get people thinking that violence is normal. I'm not going to have you jumping into that."

Noah: "You say stuff like that all the time! I haven't been able to play any of the video games my friends are playing in like the last two years! This isn't fair! You're cutting me off from all my friends!"

## **Questions to Answer**

What needs of Noah's were not getting met?

If you were Noah and just heard your mom say "no", what could you do to share impact instead of sharing your anger?

**2.** Cyrus and Hugo both work at the same factory. They both have the same job, making parts for cars. They have been working together for six months, and things haven't been going smoothly. Both Cyrus and Hugo know that if they want a promotion, they have to show that they can earn it. This has led both of them into a pattern of trying to out-do each other. One day, Hugo will get to work early and start making parts before he clocks in so he can add to his number. Another day, Cyrus will pay a coworker to help him move parts faster. Both Cyrus and Hugo really want that promotion. Today, Hugo is furious. He came back from lunch to find his machine jammed up with a piece of metal. It didn't take long to figure out who did it- Cyrus! Now Hugo is heading directly at Cyrus to "handle the situation."

Hugo: "You think you're funny, bigshot?!" (He shoves Cyrus.)

Cyrus: (Shoves Hugo back.) "What are ya talkin about?!"

Hugo: (Shoves Cyrus back.) "You know what I'm talking about, you dirty piece of scum!"

Cyrus: (Goes in for a punch, but Hugo dodges.) "I didn't do nothing!"

Hugo: (Punches Cyrus in the jaw.) "You messed up my machine!"

Cyrus: (Pushes Hugo away and gets close for a punch.) "Come on! I'm not going to let you try to cheat your way to senior machinist!"

Hugo: (Swings at Cyrus but misses and gets hit.) "You're the only cheater here! You're going down!"

### **Questions to Answer**

If you were Hugo, what thoughts and feelings would have been going through your head when you found out that Cyrus jammed your machine?

What could Hugo have said to Cyrus to share impact instead of what he chose to say?

**3.** Sharice wanted to help her church. Her church was running a bake sale. Sharice promised to make a bunch of baked goods, but she said that she would probably need a whole table to put it on, because it was going to be a lot of food. Ruth, the one who has put together the bake sale for the past ten years, said that getting Sharice a table shouldn't be a problem. Sharice baked all of Friday and all of Saturday to get food ready for the bake sale. When she arrived early Sunday morning with a van full of food, all of the tables, except a small section on one, were full. She found Ruth and asked if more tables were coming. Ruth said they had already grabbed all the tables that they could. Sharice wasn't going to settle for that.

Sharice: "Wait! You TOLD ME that there would be a table waiting for me! What do you mean there aren't going to be any more tables?!"

Ruth: "I'm sorry. I wasn't expecting this much food to come. Most people only bring a pie or two. They brought a lot more food this year."

Sharice: "Then put THEIR food on the floor! I asked for a table ahead of time! I DEMAND a table!"

Ruth: "Why don't we try moving some of the food around and seeing if we can make it all fit?"

Sharice: "Do you SEE those tables?! They're packed! I have a whole van full of food! I NEEEEED A TABLE!"

Ruth: "Let me see what I can do."

### **Questions to Answer**

What need do you think was crying out inside Sharice the most?

How could Sharice have shared her impact instead of letting her anger run the show?

**4.** Otis and Celeste have been married for three years. They thought they got most of their fighting done in the first year or two that they were married, but Celeste has found a new thing that she simply can't stand. She keeps finding toenail clippings on the bedroom floor. Otis says it is just simply easier to clip his toenails in the bedroom because using the bed makes it easier to reach his feet. He tries to use a trash can, but toenail clippings still go flying all over. Celeste has had another bad day:

Celeste: "Ow! Another toenail! Why do you KEEP CLIPPING your TOENAILS in the bedroom?!"

Otis: "Leave me alone! You take TEN HOURS in the bathroom getting ready EVERY MORNING!"

Celeste: "AAAAAH! YOU'RE NOT LISTENING TO ME! I CAN'T WALK NORMAL IN THE BEDROOM IF I KEEP STEPPING ON YOUR TOENAILS!"

Otis: "THEN WALK FUNNY! Maybe do a chicken dance or the polka or a little techno."

Celeste: "I'll techno a little beat into your HEAD! SEE IF I MAKE YOU DINNER FOR A WHILE!"

### **Questions to Answer**

Pick a side. Try to get into the head of Celeste or Otis and find out what you think the root cause of their anger is. If you were that person, what would you do to share impact instead of sharing your anger?

What are a few ideas Celeste could have shared with Otis that might have helped to solve their problem? What solutions could she offer that might help both of them to get their needs met?

# Looking at Life

**In this section, you are invited to reflect on how anger is impacting you.**

- 1.** What tends to get you angry the most often? What need do you think is underneath that? What strategies do you think you could use to help meet that need so that anger is less likely to rise up next time?
- 2.** Is there anyone in the world that you dislike or hate? What need of yours is not getting met when you're around them (or hear about them)? What strategies could you use to meet your needs so that you could still carry the love of Jesus around them if you wanted to? (Leviticus 19:18)
- 3.** Do you experience any anger or frustration about Christianity? What's that like for you? What needs aren't getting met? What steps could you take so that you could more fully embrace your faith?
- 4.** Do you trust that God will use His anger well? Are you afraid that He might use it against you? How might that be affecting your life or the life of other believers around you?
- 5.** How do you want people to help you when you get angry? Have you told them how they can help? Have you asked other people if there is a way you can help them when they get angry?
- 6.** How does anger show up in your body? Are your muscles relaxed or tight? Do you feel colder or hotter? How does it affect your breathing? Next time you are angry, take note of what is going on.

# Digging into Scripture

**In this section, you'll find various ways to explore anger in Scripture.**

**1.** The Old Covenant is known as a relationship between God and humans based on laws. Because it is based on laws, it also based on judgments and punishments (when laws are broken). We have seen in this chapter that this kind of relationship has weaknesses (Romans 8:2-4). How would your relationships look different if they were based on grace instead of on what you deserve?

**2.** In Daniel 3:8-20, King Nebuchadnezzar gets mad at some Jews when they don't do what he wants. Why do you think he got mad? What were his unmet needs? What could the Jews that he threw into the fire have done to help the king meet his needs so that they were less likely to get thrown into the fire?

**3.** In Exodus 2:11-15, Moses gets angry because he sees one his own people getting beat by an Egyptian. What did Moses do with his anger? How did Moses' choice affect him later? How could Moses have handled his anger in a way that would have helped everyone more in the long run?

**4.** In Jonah 4, we see God dealing with Jonah's anger. What lessons do you think you can learn about transforming your own anger by reading this story?

**5.** In Matthew 26:6-13, Jesus' followers are upset because a woman took a whole jar of expensive perfume and wiped it on Jesus. The jar could have been sold and helped a decent amount of people with food and clothing. Have you ever seen a Christian get angry about something that you would not get angry about? How do you know what is worth expressing more emotion over? Look through your Bible and try to find the top 5 things that God seems to get upset about.

(Note: God cares about everything that we care about, but some things are more important to Him. He would love for you to get cheap clothing, but not if it means the people making it are living in poverty.)

**6.** In Acts 19:23-41, a crowd quickly gets angry and starts shouting. Their actions could have potentially led to someone being killed. What judgments were they making? What needs were they worried about? How could they have gotten their needs met without putting the city into an uproar?

# Bonus Practice

Since many people don't realize when they are making judgments and condemning people, here you can see for yourself. First, read the statement next to letter A in Part 1, then decide if you would get angry if that happened to you. Then go to Part 2 and read the statement next to letter A there. Ask yourself if your feelings would change if you had known the info in Part 2 when you were going through what was listed in Part 1. After you finish that, see if your feelings would change in the other pairs of statements also (B, C, D, E, F, G, H).

## **Part 1**

- A) You're trying to sleep, but your dog won't stop barking.
- B) You order food from a pizza place and it's already an hour late.
- C) Your neighbor parked their car in front of your driveway, blocking you in.
- D) You see your pastor smack a woman at the front of the church. She falls to the ground.
- E) You see your spouse kissing someone of the opposite sex that is around your age.
- F) Your favorite Christian radio station has been spending most of their time the last three weeks asking for money instead of playing music.
- G) Your coworker leaves a pile of stuff near your work station.
- H) None of your friends have messaged you back today, even though someone usually says SOMETHING.

## **Part 2**

- A) The reason your dog won't stop barking is because the house is filling with smoke.
- B) You find out the reason your pizza is late when you turn on the news. On your screen, you see a video of your pizza driver dragging someone out of a cold river and saving their lives. Your driver then says to the camera-person that they are still going to deliver all the pizzas they have.
- C) The reason your neighbor parked there was to keep you from missing the birthday parade your friends and family planned for you.

D) The reason your pastor smacked the woman was because she had a gun. Your pastor helped the rest of the staff stop the woman from shooting people.

E) The reason this happened is because your spouse has a family member from another country where it is their culture to kiss everyone when they greet. They haven't seen each other since they were kids, so your spouse forgot that they were going to try to kiss them.

F) The radio station is funded by people like you, and they have not gotten enough money to make ends meet. They will have to close if they don't get fully funded by the end of the month.

G) That pile of stuff is the junk that was sitting in the hall that you almost tripped over a few times. Your coworker is getting it all together so she can get rid of it, but she can't carry it all at once, so she left some by your desk while she loads another pile into the company car. She is coming right back for the pile that is next to you.

H) You accidentally turned on the "Do Not Disturb" feature of your phone. Your friends have been trying to text you back all day.

If you found that your feelings changed in any of the scenarios after reading Part 2, you were likely making a judgment. What was happening in front of you didn't change. What changed was what you thought about it.

Note: You have the power to make yourself angry. It's in how you talk. What are you saying to yourself?

# Answers Section

## Scenarios

**1.** Noah's needs that weren't getting met the most were connection (with his friends), acceptance, belonging, play, and new things. One way Noah could have shared impact with his mother after she said no is by saying, "I'm upset. I'm afraid my friends won't want to hang out with me if I'm not playing the same game they are. They play that game every night and I don't want to be left out. I don't know what to do." This statement doesn't have to share what Noah saw, because both him and his mother both know she just told him no (which is what Noah "saw" with his ears) and that he is speaking about that. The statement talks about his feelings (upset, afraid) and it shares his main need in implied ways (by saying "friends won't want to hang out"). It does not make a request, but we don't have to use every part of sharing impact when we do share. Noah chooses to end instead with inviting his mother to see his open vulnerable heart. It's a lot easier for people to draw closer to us when they see we are letting our guard down instead of judging them.

**2.** If you were Hugo, maybe you would have been thinking "I hate him!" or "I'll make sure he never gets that job!" or "He isn't going to be working here much longer!" You might have been feeling furious, full of rage, energized (from the adrenaline pumping through your body), numb (if you were so tired of dealing with Cyrus that you didn't want to deal with it any more), warm or hot (in your body), bitter, and possibly a few other feelings.

One way Hugo could have shared impact is by saying "Cyrus, I'm really angry right now. You put that piece of metal in my machine, and now my work is going to fall behind. I know we both want that promotion, but this fighting ain't worth it. I would love to talk to you later so we can get this sorted out... without fighting." Hugo shared his feeling (angry), what he saw (the piece of metal in his machine), why it was important (his work is going to fall behind, which shares that a bunch of needs are at risk), and made a request (he asked to talk to Cyrus later).

**3.** Sharice's biggest need was most likely to be heard and understood (to be known). She had said ahead of time that she would likely need a whole table. She didn't get one. When she talked to Ruth about it, Ruth didn't spend time hearing Sharice out. Ruth defended herself and then offered a solution that she knew probably wasn't going to work. Sharice chose to judge Ruth for this and became angry.

If Sharice wanted to share impact, she could have said, "Ruth, I'm upset. When I said I would likely need a whole table, you told me it shouldn't be a problem. Now

I've gotten here and there are only a couple of spots left. Can you see how I would be frustrated about this?" This, of course, is only a small step in their conversation, because Sharice has other unmet needs that are big also, like adding to other people's lives (contribution), rest, and knowing that she matters.

If Sharice wanted to focus on her other needs, she might have brought those up right after making sure that Ruth heard her about being frustrated. She also could have brought them up first, because if she got Ruth to help her get food on the table, a lot of her anger would have went away, but it wouldn't fix her pain around thinking she wasn't heard.

If Sharice wanted to get her need for adding to other people's lives met, and get that food on the table, she could have said "Ruth, when I got here and saw that there was only a small space on one table left for people to put food on, I was shocked. I thought maybe someone had made a mistake. Now that I hear you saying there are no more tables, I'm feeling really upset. Is there a way we can use some benches or some chairs or other things that happen to be around the church in order to make more space to put food on?" In this, Sharice shares what she saw (the small spot on the table and Ruth saying they have no more tables). She shares how she felt (shocked, really upset). She skips saying why it was important, as she believes Ruth can guess some of the reasons it might be important. She then makes a request (can we use some benches or chairs).

**4.** If you picked Celeste's side, you might have said that the root cause of Celeste's anger was that her needs for safety and to be heard were not getting met. She was probably making judgments that Otis does not care about her and that he is a slob. If Celeste wanted to share impact, she might have said "Ow! Otis, I stepped on another toenail! I get really frustrated when I step on toenails because I want to know it's safe to walk across the floor without problems. It's important to me. Can we talk about some way that you could clip your toenails without them getting on the floor?"

If you picked Otis' side, you might have said that the root cause of Otis' anger was that his needs for safety, order, and ease were not getting met. He was probably making judgments against Celeste like "She doesn't need to yell like that!" or "It's not that bad!" or "She thinks I'm a dirty slob." He could have shared impact by saying something like "I can see that you're really frustrated right now. I'm open to talking about it, but I feel a little afraid because your emotions are running strong right now. Why don't we chat at the dining room table in an hour?"

A few ideas that Celeste could have shared with Otis as an answer to the problem they were dealing with: She could ask her husband to put a blanket on the floor before cutting his nails, so that it can be picked up later and the nails taken with it. She could ask him to sit close to the top and center of the bed when cutting his nails. This would make it harder for his nails to fly far enough to land on the floor. She could ask him to vacuum after every time he clips his nails, and she could even buy a separate smaller vacuum just for the bedroom to make it easier for

him. She could get a cardboard box that was big enough and ask him to put his feet in the box when he clips his nails so that the nails bounce off the sides of the walls instead of flying on the floor when he grooms himself.

## **Digging into Scripture**

**1.** What would your relationships look like if they were based on grace instead of on what you deserve? Answer that for yourself, then think about reading more of this answer.

What would your relationships look like if they were based on grace instead of on what you deserve?

One- You would keep seeking the best for other people (What's going to help them become mature, happy adults?), even if they treated you in ways that you didn't like (Luke 6:27-28).

Two- You wouldn't hit them with your anger, but you would talk to them about how they were impacting you so you could try to fix whatever conflicts you might have with them, as long as it was safe to do so (Proverbs 15:1).

Three- You would likely work harder to set boundaries with people (and yourself) to make sure that you aren't giving more than you can handle, because crossing your own boundary can easily lead to anger (I've given so much, and what have they given me in return?! Nothing!)(2 Corinthians 9:7).

Four- You wouldn't demand your family and friends live up to a certain standard, but would know that everyone is on their own journey of growth that you get the blessing of being a part of. Everything they did that added to your life in some way would be a gift (Acts 20:35).

Five- You wouldn't keep tabs on how much people owe you in relationships. It doesn't matter if you have done the dishes the past five nights in a row. If you are tired and they still say "no," then don't do them or find another strategy to get them clean (paper plates?). Demanding that the other person do them is judgment and entitlement (Yes, this one can be hard to swallow, because your mind is saying "But how will I get my needs met?" or "But what I do about their behavior?" You can find other ways to meet your needs. As for their behavior, there may be something that is getting in the way of them loving you, and finding out what that is and working on it will go much farther than demanding the dishes get done will.)(Matthew 18:21-35).

Six- You would continually celebrate people (Luke 15:22-24; Proverbs 8:30-31).

**2.** Why did King Nebuchadnezzar get mad? The king may have gotten mad for a few reasons. A) He may have been thinking “How dare you put my safety at risk!” He might have been afraid of his gods attacking him or others if people didn't worship them. He also might have been worried about his safety and acceptance when it came to his officials around him, because if a few people got away with not obeying him, how soon before even his highest officials turned against him? B) He may have been thinking “How dare you act like I don't matter!” Daniel 3:12 says that some people came forward and said the Jews were paying no attention to the king. Can you imagine holding a party and some of your guests act like you aren't there? You might feel upset also. C) King Nebuchadnezzar might also have been thinking “How dare you upset the natural order!” Having been born in a royal family where people were expected to listen to them, the king might have felt surprised because the order that people were expected to follow got ignored. King Nebuchadnezzar's kingship also depended on people following the “natural order,” because if people saw that they would be better off without a human king, he could have lost his kingship and his life.

What were King Nebuchadnezzar's unmet needs? As mentioned above- safety, acceptance, to matter, and order. Note: There were likely more needs than just this, but these were probably the more important ones.

What could the Jews have done to help the king meet his needs so that they were less likely to get thrown into the fire? A) Shadrac, Meshach, and Abednego could have talked about how people look to their gods to protect them, and how nobody wants their gods to harm them (because the king might have been afraid his gods would zap him if people didn't worship the image), and then the trio could have asked for a chance to show the king that their God could protect him more than the king's own gods could. B) Shadrac, Meshach, and Abednego could have told the king how much he mattered to them to help meet the king's needs for acceptance and to matter. C) They could have said a few important times that they did follow the king's orders and spoke about how they valued his orders, and then made a request based on their religion to honor the king and his kingship in some other way. Hopefully, it would help the king meet enough of his need for order that he would give them a different path to take going forward.

**3.** In Exodus 2:11-15, Moses chose to use his anger to get rid of the threat- he killed the Egyptian beating the Hebrew. Moses' choice stirred up Pharaoh to want to kill him, and Moses ending up having to run away from Egypt for a long time. Moses could have handled his anger better by asking the man if there was another way to get the Hebrew to do what he wanted without beating him. Moses also could have worked with the other Hebrews to push the man off of the person he was hitting. Moses also could have invited the man over for a meal. An invitation into the royal house probably would have been tempting for a lot of people.

**4.** Some lessons you can learn about transforming your anger from the story of Jonah might be:

- Looking at the bigger picture can change whether you are mad or not.
- Looking hard at why you are angry might show you values that you care about that God may value differently, or might show goals that you have that God doesn't have (or that He places a lower or greater importance on than you do).
- The story shows that God's love and compassion is great. It could encourage you to explore what it looks like to walk as a son or daughter of God in life. This could prevent anger from happening some of the time or encourage you to find the answer that most fits love during other times.
- This story might encourage you to ask God to help you process and work through your anger. God can help you find the truths that will set you free from your anger.
- You might learn from this story to ask yourself, "What impact is my anger having right now?" If Jonah had done that before he fled on the ship (earlier in the book of Jonah), he might have seen that God had a greater plan for Nineveh and Israel than Jonah had planned and that Jonah's actions could have cost people their lives.

**5.** Perspective has a very powerful impact on whether we get angry about something. Remember, anger stems from us looking at what we see and making a judgment call about whether it is good or evil. If how we are looking at something changes, it can change what judgment we make about it. This happens a lot with the news- one person will see a story on one website and get angry, while another person will see the other side of the story on a different website and not get angry. This is why it helps to do our research to try to see the whole picture.

How do you know what is worth expressing more emotion over? That's more complex. Most people hide some of their emotions in order to try to fit in to society, so only looking at what people are doing won't help. You might ask yourself how your emotions are affecting your life and the lives of people around you. Do you stub your toe and cry for an hour, refusing to go to work? That could stop you from getting your needs for food and safety met, so that's probably not helpful to you. Do you show no emotion at all and nobody ever knows that you are happy when they give you a gift? That lack of emotion could weaken your connection with your friends and family, because people want to know how they are impacting you. When it comes to big social issues, like slavery, nuclear weapons, and world hunger, you might ask yourself: "Will showing a lot of emotion help draw people to my cause or will it turn them against me and it?" This isn't to say that showing emotion is right or wrong, because emotions are just signs of what is going on inside of us, but it will help you decide how much

showing your emotions will help you meet your own and others needs around you.

What does the Bible seem to show God getting the most upset about?

**A) Injustice, Oppression, and Exploitation.** There are up to 750 verses in the Bible where God speaks against it. We see this when God uses Moses to get his people out of Egypt (book of Exodus), we see this in the prophets (like Isaiah 58), we see it in Proverbs (like Proverbs 22:22), we see it in the Gospels (like Luke 3:12-14), and we see it in the disciples' teachings (like James 5:1-6).

**B) Violence.** There are up to 650 verses in the Bible that focus on violence. We see it in Genesis (Genesis 4:6-15). We see it in the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:13). We see it in the prophets (Hosea 4:1-3). We see it in the New Testament (Matthew 26:52).

**C) Turning to Other Gods.** There are up to 500 verses that warn people against turning to other gods (Deuteronomy 6:14-15), making idols (Exodus 20:4-5), making oneself like a god (Acts 12:20-23), and practicing other religion's rituals (Leviticus 20:2). We see it in Judges (Judges 2:12). We see it in 2 Kings (2 Kings 22:17). We see it in Hosea (Hosea 8:5). We see it in Revelation (Revelation 2:14).

Note: This doesn't include simply turning away from God in general, as that covers every sin and shows up in most of the Bible.

**D) Sexual Immorality.** There are up to 450 verses warning people against being sexually immoral. Some of these verses include the laws in Leviticus 18, the warnings in Proverbs (like Proverbs 22:14), in Jesus' teachings (Matthew 5:31-32), and in the writings of Paul (like 1 Corinthians 6).

**E) Lying and Deception.** There are up to 450 verses in the Bible that speak about lying and deception. We see it in the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:16). We see it in Proverbs (like Proverbs 12:22). We see it in the prophets (like Isaiah 32:7). We see it in the New Testament (John 8:44).

**6.** Judgments that the crowd (of craftsmen) may have been making: *A) Paul is lying about our God Artemis and about hand-carved statues of gods. B) Paul is wrong for putting our jobs at risk. C) Paul is an enemy of the faith, because he says our gods aren't real.* You can also add any number of judgments along those lines.

What needs were the craftsmen worried about? Safety- both in their jobs and protection from their gods hurting them. To Matter- if their whole lives were wrapped up in their religion, if the rest of their city joined a different religion, the craftsmen likely wouldn't think they mattered as much any more. Purpose- If the craftsmen's gods weren't real, what would the craftsmen do with their lives? This new God people were turning to didn't want little metal idols made of it. Order- The craftsmen may have been making statues their whole lives, so to see that

pattern of living changing could be scary for them. There may have been other needs the craftsmen had, but these were probably the bigger ones.

How could the craftsmen gotten their needs met without putting the city into an uproar? They could gone door to door and talked more people into following Artemis. They could held new festivals and fun events to get people interested in Artemis. They could have started making cross necklaces on the side for extra income. They could have invited Paul over to prove that his God was the real God. (There are endless other ways they could have gotten their needs met.)