

Weekly Study Guide

The week of April 10, 2016

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SOUL TRAINING EXERCISES

Option 1

This week, in your prayer time, get out a piece of paper or a prayer journal and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you the things that trigger your reactive anger. List them as they come to mind. Pray about each one asking the Lord to show you why you get so angry about these things. Do they hit a question of your value or worth? Surrender those things to the Lord in prayer. Then turn the page to a fresh sheet of paper, and ask the Holy Spirit to bring to mind those things, people, and/or situations that trigger meditative anger. What things do you stew over? Write them down as they come to mind. **Read Luke 17:3-4**. Ask the Lord to help you take a Christ-like step in dealing with your anger. Give each of these to the Lord in prayer.

Option 1 & 2

Regular habits of private Bible reading strengthen our relationship with God and teach us how to follow Jesus. In addition to the thematic exercise above, you can use this guide each week to lead you through relevant sections of the Bible.

Daily Readings

MONDAY

Matthew 5:13-16

TUESDAY

Matthew 5:17-20

WEDNESDAY

Matthew 5:21-26

THURSDAY

Matthew 5:27-37

FRIDAY

Matthew 5:38-48

SATURDAY

Matthew 6:1-4

Group Discussion

CONNECT

Have you ever been in a situation where you acted out of anger and it damaged a relationship? Looking back on that situation, what do you wish you would have done instead? Why do you think you reacted the way you did?

THIS WEEK'S LEARNING GOAL

This week we are learning about the emotion of anger, how it is useful to show us something is wrong in a situation, and how we can unplug it from the engine of fear to instead allow it to motivate us to act in honesty and love as Jesus instructs us to do.

LEARNING FROM THE BIBLE TOGETHER

Anger is a human emotion that God gave us to fulfill a certain purpose. Anger can be a good diagnostic tool to help us see that we perceive something we value as being threatened. How do we, as followers of Jesus, use anger in the way God designed it to be used instead of using it as a weapon?

Anger can fall into one of two traps: we can express it the moment we feel it (explosive, reactive anger) in a way that often hurts others, or we can stuff it (meditative, suppressed anger) in a way that festers and often becomes self destructive or undermines relationships.

- Of those two traps, which one do you fall into most often? Why do you think that is?

Jesus felt and expressed anger. **Read Mark 3:5 and Matthew 21:12-13.**

- What, in both of these circumstances, would you identify as the value that was being threatened?
- Why do you think Jesus felt angry? What was 'wrong'?
- It is not wrong to feel anger. However, some ways are better to deal with it than others.

Read Ephesians 4: 26-27.

- In what ways do we sometimes sin out of anger?
- What do you think Paul meant when he said we are not to 'let the sun go down' while we are still angry?
- How do we 'give the devil a foothold' in our hearts through anger?

Read Matthew 5:21-24. What is the connection between murder and anger?

In Luke 18 a man often called the "Rich Young Ruler" tells Jesus that he has kept all the commandments of God since his youth. I believe he had not murdered anyone, but as Jesus redefines the commandments by the lens of what is happening in the heart, could he still say he'd never broken a commandment?

- Why do you think Jesus chose to draw out this connection for us?
- Can anyone say they've never broken the commandments, as they are defined by Jesus?
- Why is that important to our understanding of the need for grace and mercy for others?

In **Matthew 5:22**, Jesus focuses in on the role of name calling—of insulting the worth and value of others. When a person calls another 'worthless' who are they contradicting?

Read Genesis 1:27 and Luke 12:6-7. The person doing the name calling might be reacting in anger over something wrong the other person has done— but by calling them “without worth” or “sub-human,” they begin to see the other not as God sees, but as Satan sees.

- Can you see why Jesus said, it is the one who name calls who is putting their own soul on a dangerous path?
- What helps us grow closer to the heart of God?
- What forms our heart away from the heart of God?

What then, should we do with our anger? **Read Luke 17: 3-4.**

- Why do you think Jesus commands this?
- What things make this hard to do?

SOUL TRAINING EXERCISES

As a group, talk about last week's soul training exercise and how you experienced it. Then talk about the upcoming exercise for the week. When will you find time this week to practice these things?

PRAY

Share your prayer concerns with one another. Pray for the work of God's Holy Spirit in you around the subject of anger—both reactive and meditative. Ask the Lord to conform your spirit to the image of Jesus as you seek to grow in your relationships with others and to better understand your own heart.



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