



Boiling Point: Anger

Adapted from “Boiling Points” series by Stephen Blandino

Anger is a volatile emotion that can create violent outcomes. A phrase often associated with anger is “Because I said so.” Leeland Beaumont gives a great descriptor for anger. He says:

Anger is a strong emotion designed to send the clear message “something has got to change.” It is an urgent plea for justice and action. If we exercise enough self-control to overcome our immediate impulse to lash out and do harm, we can calm down, reflect, and analyze the causes of our anger. Careful analysis can identify what change is needed and can lead us toward constructive and lasting change that fulfills our needs. When cooler heads prevail anger's energy is channeled in a positive direction, and the anger motivates constructive changes. When we act on our impulses in the heat of passion, the results are too often destructive and tragic. There are many myths and misconceptions about anger and how to cope with it. The most destructive misconception is that it is healthy or effective to display anger violently and “vent”. Contrary to this popular misunderstanding, the most healthy way to deal with anger is to stay in control, analyze the message it is sending, and harness the energy it provides for positive change. Another misconception is that revenge can lead to positive change. Unfortunately revenge usually leads only to a cycle of destructive escalation. Expressing anger with violence breeds more anger. I hope the information presented here helps channel anger into positive change.¹

¹ Leeland Beaumont. “Anger: An Urgent Plea for Justice and Action,” <http://www.emotionalcompetency.com/anger.htm> (accessed July 6, 2017).

COURAGE

C1: When you were a kid and did something you shouldn't and your mom or dad told you to stop, you might have responded with, "But why?". Write out a typical dialogue that would transpire between your parents and you in this scenario. How did they respond? How do you remember this made you feel?

C2: Mark Twain said, "Anger is an acid that can do more harm to the vessel in which it is stored than to anything on which it is poured." What are your thoughts about this statement?

C3: What does the scripture teach about anger?

STRENGTH

S1: The apostle Paul writes a letter to Christians living in the city of Ephesus, and in his letter, he tackles the issue of anger. Read and answer the following.

Ephesians 4:26–27 (NLT)

- From these verses, what do you glean?
- Paul writes, “In your anger do not sin.” Is that even possible? How?

S2: When we look at Paul’s words, “In your anger do not sin,” it is hard for us to imagine. Jesus gives us an example. Read and answer the following.

Mark 3:3–6 (NLT)

- From this verse, why was Jesus angry and why was he deeply saddened?
- What do the words “hard heart” mean to you?

S3: To the Hebrews, “hard hearts” mean a defiant, prideful resistance to God’s purpose.

- How did Jesus express his anger?
- When anger comes to your doorstep, how can you redirect it toward good?

ENDURANCE

E1: Anger tends to grow and fester. Read and answer the following.

Ephesians 4:26–27 (NLT)

- From these verses, what do you glean about anger?

- Look up the word “foothold”. What does this mean regarding anger?

E2: Maybe you think you don’t have an anger problem. Before you write off anger issues too quickly, read and answer the following.

Ephesians 4:31 (NLT)

Proverbs 29:11 (NLT)

Proverbs 14:17 (NLT)

- From these verses, what are the five faces of anger? Look up and write down each definition.

E3: How do we keep anger from getting the best of us? Read and answer the following.

Ephesians 4:32 (NLT)

- From this verse, what are three ways to deal with your anger?

- Has your heart opened its door to anger? If so, what do you need to do about it today?