CLASS LEADER GUIDE

Anger and the Heart

It's almost never about me

25 sessions · Hollis McGehee · Aiming For Jesus

How to lead this study

Each session follows the matching question or lesson in the book and runs about 45–60 minutes. Ask everyone to bring the book and a pen; the “Your turn” pages are meant to be written in.

The pattern: Open (5 min) · Read the passage aloud (5) · Teach and show the drawing (10) · Talk (15–20) · Practice one exercise (5–10) · Close with the memory verse and prayer (5).

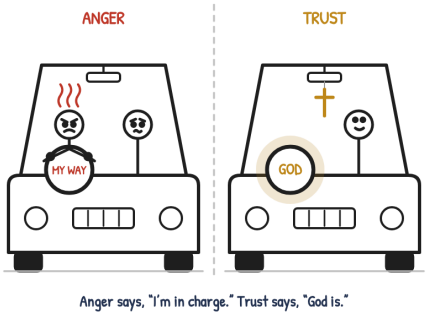
Keep it about my heart. No stories about spouses, family or church members who are not in the room. Model honesty by going first with something small from your own life.

Safety. If anyone shares that they are being threatened or harmed, follow up privately and help them get to safety and appropriate help.

Shorter series. Questions 1–4 can be two sessions; Lessons 16–20 can be taught as a three-week “where I live” mini-series.

SESSION · QUESTION 1

Who Is God?



Anger says, "I'm in charge." Trust says, "God is."

Read: Romans 12:9–21 · **Memory verse:** Romans 8:28

Goal: Help each person see that trusting a sovereign, good God is the foundation for dealing with anger — especially in circumstances they don't like.

Open	Ask: "What is one thing this week that did not go the way you planned?" Keep it light — traffic, weather, a broken appliance. No stories about other people.
Teach	Read Psalm 115:3 and Isaiah 55:8–9: God is sovereign and His ways are higher. Then Romans 8:28: God doesn't call all things good, but He works all things for good. Show the steering-wheel drawing and make the point: anger grabs the wheel; trust hands it back.
Talk	1. Why is it easier to trust God in good circumstances than in hard ones? 2. What is the difference between "all things are good" and "God works all things together for good"? 3. Which mark of a true Christian in Romans 12:9–21 depends most on trusting God? Why? 4. When I get angry, what am I usually saying about God, even if I don't say it out loud?
Practice	Do the "Trusting God / Taking control" sort together. Then each person quietly fills in the blank: the circumstance I most need to trust God with this week.
Close	Read Romans 12:9–21 aloud, each person taking a verse. Say Romans 8:28 together and pray the lesson prayer.

This week: Each time something doesn't go your way, say quietly, "God is sovereign. God is good. I can trust Him." Practice one mark from Romans 12 on purpose.

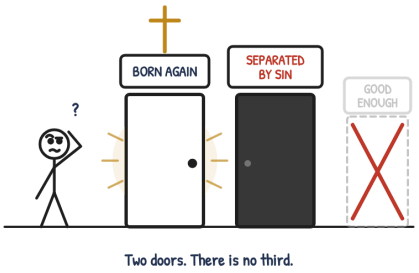
God is sovereign and good — especially in the circumstances I don't like.

SESSION · QUESTION 2

Who Am I?

Read: Ephesians 2:1–10 · **Memory verse:** Ephesians 2:4–5

Goal: Help each person honestly face that they are a sinner and ask where they personally stand with God.



Two doors. There is no third.

Open	Ask: “When you were a child, what was your favorite excuse when you got in trouble?” Keep it light and about yourselves.
Teach	Romans 3:23: all have sinned — no curve. Isaiah 59:2: sin separates. Ephesians 2:1–5: we were dead, but God made us alive. Show the two-doors drawing: either born again or separated, and “good enough” is not a door.
Talk	1. Why do we compare ourselves to other people instead of to God? 2. What is the difference between seeing sin as “bad things I do” and as “me on the throne”? 3. Why does Paul say “dead” instead of “sick”? What does that change? 4. How does seeing myself as a sinner change the way I respond when someone wrongs me?
Practice	Do the “Excuse / Confession” sort together. Then each person quietly tries the “Say it better” rewrite. Share only if willing.
Close	Read Ephesians 2:4–5 together slowly. Pray the lesson prayer. Let people know you’re available to talk privately about where they stand.

This week: When you catch yourself judging someone, stop and say, “I am a sinner too, and God has been merciful to me.”

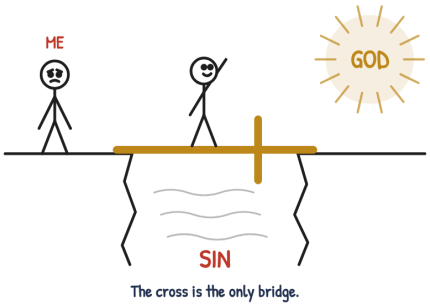
I am a sinner — so I am not anyone else's judge.

SESSION · QUESTION 3

Am I Born Again?

Read: John 3:1–21 · **Memory verse:** Ephesians 2:8–9

Goal: Help each person answer Jesus' question for themselves and understand clearly how a person is born again.



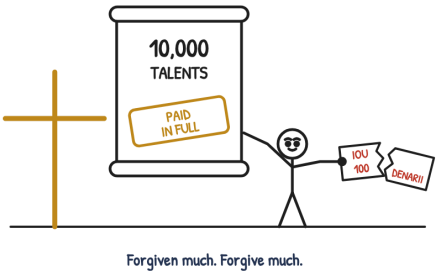
Open	Ask: "What is the best gift you ever received that you did nothing to earn?"
Teach	Start with Matthew 16:13–17: Jesus asks, "Who do you say that I am?" Then walk the gospel simply: Romans 3:23, 6:23, 5:8, Ephesians 2:8–9, Romans 10:9–10, and John 3:3. Show the bridge drawing: the cross is the only way across the gap.
Talk	1. Why do you think Jesus asked what people were saying before He asked what the disciples said? 2. Nicodemus was a good, religious man. Why did he still need to be born again? 3. Why is it so hard for us to receive something we didn't earn? 4. How does being born again change the root of anger, not just the behavior?
Practice	Do the "Trying to earn it / Receiving it as a gift" sort together. Then give quiet time to write, "Who do I say Jesus is?"
Close	Read the lesson prayer slowly. Invite anyone who wants to pray it to pray silently along. Do not ask for raised hands. Stay afterward for anyone who wants to talk.

This week: Fill in "My response to Jesus." If you have trusted Him, tell one person what Jesus means to you.

Who do I say Jesus is? Everything turns on my answer.

SESSION · QUESTION 4

What Does Jesus Require of Me?



Forgiven much. Forgive much.

Read: Matthew 18:21–35 · **Memory verse:** Psalm 19:14

Goal: Help each person see themselves as a follower who trusts, obeys, forgives without measure and aims to glorify God in thoughts, words and actions.

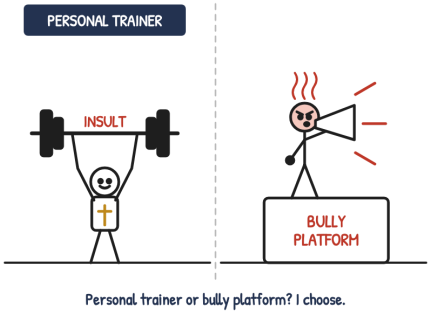
Open	Ask: “Who taught you to do something by letting you follow them — a parent, a coach, a boss?”
Teach	Luke 9:23 and John 14:15: a follower trusts and obeys. Matthew 18:21–35: we are the servant with the ten-thousand-talent debt; forgiveness without measure. Then 1 Corinthians 10:31, Colossians 3:17 and Psalm 19:14: glorify God in thoughts, words and actions. Show the PAID IN FULL drawing.
Talk	1. Why does Jesus say “daily” in Luke 9:23? What does that mean for anger? 2. Why does forgiving someone the second or tenth time feel harder than the first? 3. What is the difference between forgiving someone and trusting them again? 4. Which is hardest for me to surrender to God: my thoughts, my words or my actions?
Practice	Do the Thoughts / Words / Actions sort together. Then each person quietly fills in the “Debt cancelled” box. No sharing of names.
Close	Read Colossians 3:17 aloud. Say Psalm 19:14 together and pray the lesson prayer.

This week: Each evening, ask: “Did I glorify God today in my thoughts, my words and my actions?” Thank Him for one, and confess one.

My job is to glorify God in my thoughts, words and actions.

SESSION · LESSON 1

Anger Is a Choice



Read: James 1:19–20; James 4:1–10 · **Memory verse:** James 1:19–20

Goal: Help each person own anger as a choice and begin asking, “God, what do You want me to learn from this?”

Open	Ask: “Finish this sentence about yourself: ‘It really gets to me when…’” Keep it light; no stories about other people.
Teach	Read James 1:19–20: if I choose anger, I have first chosen my way over God’s. Read James 4:1: I want, I don’t get, I fight. Teach “No one can ever make me mad” and the better question, “God, what do You want me to learn from this?” Show the personal-trainer / bully-platform drawing.
Talk	1. “No one can ever make me mad.” Do you agree? Why does that feel hard to accept? 2. How can an insult become a personal trainer instead of a bully platform? 3. Jesus was angry in Mark 3:5. How was His anger different from mine? 4. Which pair on the fruit chart do I see most often in myself?
Practice	Walk through the fruit-of-the-Spirit chart together. Then each person quietly checks what grew in them this week and tries the “You made me so mad!” rewrite.
Close	Say James 1:19–20 together. Pray the lesson prayer.

This week: Each time anger rises, stop and ask, “God, what do You want me to learn from this?” Fill in the Personal trainer box once this week.

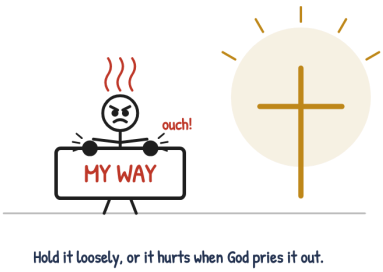
No one can make me mad. Anger is a choice — and so is trust.

SESSION · LESSON 2

The Demand to Have My Way

Read: Philippians 2:3–8; Matthew 26:36–42 · **Memory verse:** Philippians 2:3–4

Goal: Help each person see the demand under their anger, tell a preference from a command, and pray, “Not as I will, but as You will.”



Hold it loosely, or it hurts when God pries it out.

Open	What’s one small thing you like done a certain way — loading the dishwasher, where you sit, how the towels are folded?
Teach	Lesson 1: if I choose anger, I have first chosen my way. A preference becomes a demand when someone has to pay if I don’t get it. Christ, who had every right to His way, let it go (Philippians 2:3–7) and prayed, “Not as I will, but as You will” (Matthew 26:39). Show the “MY WAY” drawing and ask: does it flow from my hand, or must it be pried out?
Talk	1. What is the difference between a preference and a demand? How can I tell when one has become the other? 2. Why is it so hard to hear correction without hearing an attack? 3. What did it cost Jesus to pray “Not as I will”? What might it cost me? 4. Is it easy or hard for people to disagree with you? (Answer about yourself, not them.)
Practice	Do the “God’s command / My preference” sort together. Then each person quietly fills in “Lord, about ____, not as I will, but as You will.”
Close	Read Philippians 2:3–4 together and pray the lesson prayer.

This week: When the steam starts, ask, “Is this a command or a preference?” Then pray, “Not as I will, but as You will.” Open your hands on one preference this week.

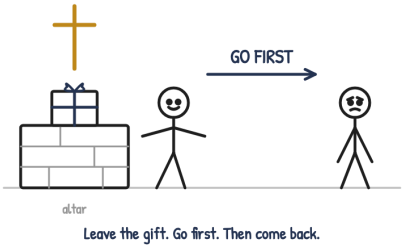
My way or God’s way? Lord, not as I will, but as You will.

SESSION · LESSON 3

Anger Before a Word Is Spoken

Read: Matthew 5:21–26 · **Memory verse:** Matthew 5:23–24

Goal: Help each person see that anger is chosen in the thoughts before it is spoken, and take one real step to go first.



Open	What's a small thing that got bigger because you waited — a car noise, a toothache, a leaky faucet?
Teach	Anger is a choice, and I make it first in my thoughts. Jesus takes "You shall not murder" into the heart: kept anger and contempt are already serious before God (5:21–22). Then two pictures: the altar — go first, even when they hold the grievance (5:23–24) — and the road to court — settle quickly, because time hardens hearts (5:25–26). Show the "small things grow teeth" drawing.
Talk	1. Why do you think Jesus put anger and murder in the same breath? 2. What does it look like to glorify God in my thoughts, not just my words? 3. Why does Jesus say "your brother has something against you" and not the other way around? 4. How does God going first with us (Romans 5:8) change the way we approach others?
Practice	Each person fills in the "Before the altar" box privately. Invite volunteers to share only the first step they plan to take — no names.
Close	Read Matthew 5:23–24 together. Pray the lesson prayer, pausing in silence so each person can name someone before God.

This week: Take the first step from your "Before the altar" box on the day you wrote down — a call, a note, or an apology with no excuses attached.

Anger starts in my thoughts. So does obedience. Go first.

SESSION · LESSON 4

God Is Slow to Anger — and I Should Be Too



Read: Exodus 34:6–7; Proverbs 16:32; James 1:19–20 ·
Memory verse: Exodus 34:6

Goal: Help each person slow down — hearing and checking facts before speaking — by remembering who God is and how patient He has been with them.

Open	What sound makes you jump fastest — a smoke alarm, a car horn, or the phone ringing at night?
Teach	Who is God? Merciful, gracious, slow to anger (Exodus 34:6–7); His anger is holy, mine is mixed. Recall James 1:19–20 from Lesson 1: quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger. Slowing down makes room to ask, "God, what do You want me to learn from this?" Show the smoke-alarm drawing: loudness doesn't prove size. Close with Proverbs 16:32: ruling my spirit is real strength.
Talk	1. Why do you think "slow to anger" is one of the first things God says about Himself? 2. When have you mistaken the strength of a feeling for the truth of a situation? 3. What is the difference between being slow to anger and not caring about wrong? 4. How does remembering God's patience with you change your patience with others?
Practice	Do the Fact / Assumption sort together. Then each person fills in "My slow-down plan" and shares the sentence they will use.
Close	Say Exodus 34:6 together. Pray the lesson prayer.

This week: Before you reply, forward or post anything while upset, wait ten minutes and ask, "God, what do You want me to learn from this? What do I actually know?"

God is slow to anger with me. I can choose to be slow with others.

SESSION · LESSON 5

When Anger Is Right



Right anger grieves the wrong and reaches out to help.

Read: Mark 3:1–6; Nehemiah 5:1–13 · **Memory verse:** Ephesians 4:26–27

Goal: Help each person see that even right anger is a choice — grieved by what grieves God, aimed at wrongs not people, and moving toward good.

Open	What's a wrong in the world you think should stir Christians to act?
Teach	Even right anger is a choice: to be grieved by what grieves God and respond His way, without sin. Jesus was angry and grieved — and then He healed (Mark 3:5). Nehemiah was angry, took counsel with himself, confronted, and called for repair (Nehemiah 5:6–13). Jesus alone had anger that was always right, and on the cross He took God's anger for us. Show the two-targets drawing.
Talk	1. What do Jesus and Nehemiah have in common in the way they handled anger? 2. Why does Jesus' anger come with grief? What does that tell us? 3. Which of the honest questions is hardest for you to answer truthfully? 4. How can someone be right about a wrong and still respond wrongly?
Practice	Do the sort together. Expect some disagreement, and talk about what would move an item from one column to the other.
Close	Say Ephesians 4:26–27 together. Pray the lesson prayer.

This week: Pick one real wrong you care about and do one good thing about it — protect, help, or speak up — with no insult and no revenge.

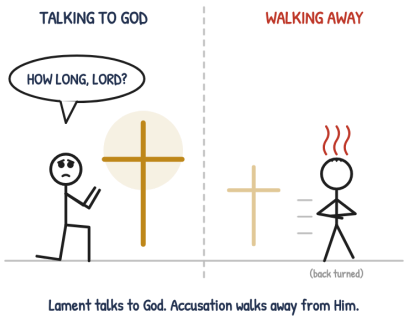
Even right anger is a choice: grieve what grieves God, and respond His way.

SESSION · LESSON 6

When I Am Angry at God

Read: Psalm 13; Jonah 4; Psalm 73; Job 38–42 · **Memory verse:** Psalm 13:5–6

Goal: Give permission for honest lament, and help each person move from accusing God to trusting that He is sovereign and good.



Lament talks to God. Accusation walks away from Him.

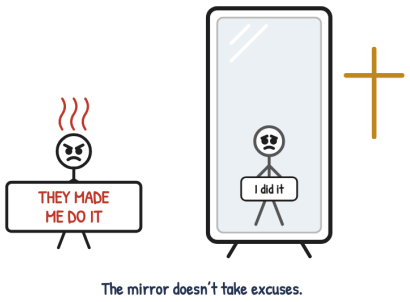
Open	As a child, what was something you asked “Why?” about over and over?
Teach	Recall the first question: God is sovereign and good, and I can trust Him in the circumstances I don’t like. Psalm 13: lament talks to God and ends in trust. Jonah 4: anger at God’s mercy is really anger about me. Psalm 73 and Job 38–42: in God’s presence the view changes — He gives Himself, not always explanations. Trade “Why me?” for “God, what do You want me to learn from this?” Show the “talking to God / walking away” drawing.
Talk	1. Why do you think God put angry and confused prayers in the Bible? 2. What is the difference between bringing my anger to God and holding it against Him? 3. What was Jonah really angry about? Where do I see myself in him? 4. How does the cross help us trust God when we don’t understand what He is doing?
Practice	Do the Lament / Accusation sort together. Then give five quiet minutes to write a personal “How long?” prayer. No one shares unless they want to.
Close	Read all of Psalm 13 aloud, slowly. Pray the lesson prayer. Be ready to follow up privately with anyone carrying fresh grief.

This week: Read Psalm 73 once this week. Each day, write down one “Ruth” — one grace God has placed beside you that you had overlooked.

I may not understand His ways, but I have seen His heart at the cross.

SESSION · LESSON 7

The Excuses I Make



The mirror doesn't take excuses.

Read: James 1:19–27 · **Memory verse:** James 1:22

Goal: Help each person see that every excuse denies the choice, name the excuse they reach for most, and practice a confession with no "but" in it.

Open	What's the most creative excuse you ever gave as a child? Keep it light.
Teach	Recall Lesson 1: no one can make me mad, so an excuse is an attempt to hand my choice to someone else. James's mirror (James 1:22–24): hearing without doing is walking away from what I saw. Walk through the five excuses and the trash-out-the-window picture. I am a sinner saved by grace: I don't need a defense, I need mercy (1 John 1:9). Show the "The mirror doesn't take excuses" drawing.
Talk	1. If no one can make me mad, what is really going on when I say "They made me angry"? 2. Which excuse sounds the most reasonable to you, and why is that one dangerous? 3. What is the difference between explaining what happened and excusing what I did? 4. Why can't an apology demand that trust come back right away?
Practice	In pairs, do the "Excuse or confession" sort, then each person reads their rewrite of the harsh apology aloud.
Close	Say James 1:22 together. Pray the lesson prayer.

This week: Make one apology this week with no "but" in it, and don't ask the other person to hurry up and feel better.

An excuse defends me. A confession sets me free.

SESSION · LESSON 8

Quiet Anger and Stored Resentment



Today's problem, buried under yesterday's stones.

Read: Ephesians 4:25–32; Romans 12:17–21 · **Memory verse:** Ephesians 4:31–32

Goal: Help each person see quiet anger and resentment as choices made deep inside, and take one step to trust God with an old hurt.

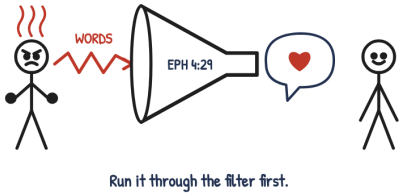
Open	What's something you held onto far too long, like an old car, a shirt or a gadget, and why?
Teach	Quiet anger is still a choice; God wants my thoughts, not just my words. Paul's two fences (Ephesians 4:26–27). Resentment is anger I decided to keep; a root works underground and springs up (Hebrews 12:15). The real reason I keep stones: I don't trust God to judge (Romans 12:19, back to F1). Naomi and the Ruth beside her. Show the sack-of-stones drawing.
Talk	1. Why can quiet anger do as much damage as loud anger? 2. How can I tell a pause for peace from a punishing silence in myself? 3. How is holding a grudge really a failure to trust God? 4. What grace might God have placed beside you that bitterness could hide?
Practice	Do the "Pause or punishment?" sort together. Then each person quietly fills out the "Hand over the scorecard" box. No names shared aloud.
Close	Say Ephesians 4:31–32 together. Pray the lesson prayer.

This week: Each time the old grievance comes back, say, "Lord, I trust You with this," pray a blessing for that person and do one kind act.

Resentment is anger I decided to keep, and I can decide to give it to God.

SESSION · LESSON 9

Before a Word Becomes a Wound



Run it through the filter first.

Read: James 3:1–12; Proverbs 18:21; Ephesians 4:29; Proverbs 15:1 · **Memory verse:** Ephesians 4:29

Goal: Help each person glorify God with their words by catching angry words while they are still thoughts and running them through Ephesians 4:29.

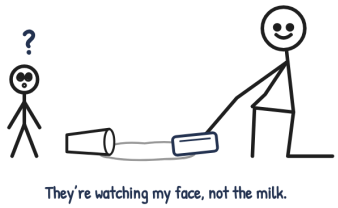
Open	What's a kind word someone said to you years ago that you still remember?
Teach	Recall F4: glorify God in thoughts, words and actions; this lesson is the words. James 3: the bit, the rudder, the spark, one mouth with two kinds of words. Proverbs 18:21: life and death. The stinging text as personal trainer, not bully platform. Ephesians 4:29 as a four-question filter, and Proverbs 15:1 as the soft answer. Show the funnel drawing.
Talk	1. Why are words so hard to take back, even after an apology? 2. Which of the four filter questions would catch the most of your angry words? 3. How can a soft answer still be clear and firm? 4. What would it look like to ask, "God, what do You want me to say?" before replying to a hard message?
Practice	Everyone writes one harsh sentence they have said (not one said to them) on a card, unsigned. Pass cards around and run each through "The 4:29 filter" box together, then rewrite it.
Close	Say Ephesians 4:29 together. Pray the lesson prayer.

This week: Before sending any message written while upset, wait at least an hour, ask God what He wants you to say, and run it through the 4:29 filter.

If it can't get through the filter, it doesn't get out of my mouth.

SESSION · LESSON 10

What My Anger Teaches Others



Read: Proverbs 15:1–4; 2 Timothy 2:22–26 · **Memory verse:** Proverbs 15:4

Goal: Help each person consider what their anger teaches others, including what it teaches about Jesus, and take the brave step of asking someone they trust.

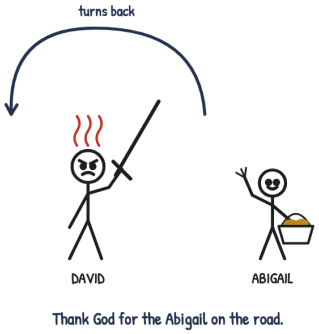
Open	Who was a teacher or coach who made it safe to make mistakes? What did they do?
Teach	The child looking at the parent's face. Explosions teach people to hide; the quiet I create is not peace. What makes me angry shows what is on the throne. Glorifying God (F4) means making Jesus look good; my temper can misrepresent Him. Proverbs 15:4 and 2 Timothy 2:24. Show the spilled-milk drawing.
Talk	1. What do you think people learn about mistakes when they are around you? 2. What might my anger be teaching people about Jesus? 3. How can defending a true teaching with mockery teach something false about Him? 4. What makes it hard to ask someone how your anger affects you?
Practice	Do the spilled-milk sort together. Then in pairs, practice "The brave question": one asks, the other gives a gentle made-up answer, and the asker may only say "Thank you."
Close	Say Proverbs 15:4 together. Pray the lesson prayer.

This week: Ask one trusted person, "How does my anger affect you?" Listen, don't defend, say thank you, and ask God what He wants you to learn from it.

My anger is always teaching someone something, including what Jesus is like.

SESSION · LESSON 11

Lessons from People in Scripture



Read: 1 Samuel 25:2–35; Genesis 4:3–8; Jonah 4; Numbers 20:1–13; Nehemiah 5 · **Memory verse:** Proverbs 16:32

Goal: Help each person find their own danger in these five stories and see that the difference was the choice: my way or God's way.

Open	Which Bible character have you always felt you'd get along with, and why?
Teach	Five quick portraits, each a choice: David listened, Cain refused ("you must rule over it"), Jonah was angry at God's mercy and wanted his comfort, Moses' anger was a failure to trust (Numbers 20:12), Nehemiah chose to be grieved by what grieves God. Jesus trusted and obeyed all the way to the cross. Show the "Which one looks most like me?" drawing.
Talk	1. Which of the five stories is hardest for you to read, and why? 2. God told Cain, "You must rule over it." What does that say about whether anger is a choice? 3. Why does God call Moses' angry outburst a failure to believe Him? 4. How does Jesus on the cross answer every one of these stories?
Practice	Assign one story to each small group. Each group reads its passage, does that row of the "My way / God's way" sort, and reports back in one sentence.
Close	Say Proverbs 16:32 together. Pray the lesson prayer.

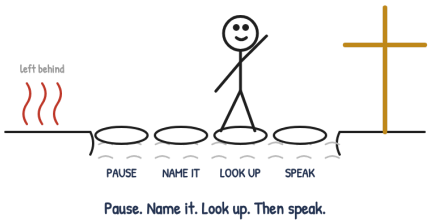
This week: Tell your "Abigail" that they have your permission to stop you on the road, and thank them when they do.

The difference was never how angry they felt. It was what they chose, and who their anger was about.

SESSION · LESSON 12

What to Do When Anger Rises

Read: Proverbs 15:28; Proverbs 29:11 · **Memory verse:** Proverbs 29:11



Goal: Give each person a simple, rehearsed plan for the first seconds of anger, so the choice is made God's way, and make the safety word plain.

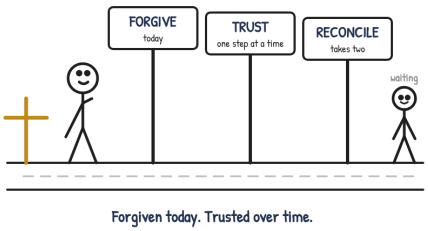
Open	What helps you calm down fastest: a walk, music, a cup of coffee, something else?
Teach	Anger is a choice, and it comes fast (Lesson 1). Read Proverbs 15:28 and 29:11: one person thinks before answering; the other vents everything. Walk the four steps, Pause, Name it, Look up, Speak, using the email scene. Show that the steps cover thoughts, words and actions. Show the stepping-stones drawing (L12-a), then say the safety paragraph plainly.
Talk	1. Why is it so hard to pause when I feel I am right? 2. What is the difference between a pause that promises to return and silence that punishes? 3. Look at the fact / assumption / demand sort. Which column fills up fastest for me? 4. What does "God, what do You want me to learn from this?" sound like in a real moment, in the car, at work, at home?
Practice	In pairs, do the "Say it better" rewrite out loud: one reads the harsh line, the other reads a rewrite, then switch. Finish by saying your pause sentence aloud together.
Close	Say Proverbs 29:11 together. Pray the lesson prayer. Remind the group that anyone who is in danger, or whose anger has become frightening, can talk with the leader privately after class.

This week: Write your pause sentence on a card or in your phone. Use it at least once this week, and follow it with the question, "God, what do You want me to learn from this?"

Let God have the first word.

SESSION · LESSON 13

Repentance, Forgiveness and Trust



Forgiven today. Trusted over time.

Read: Colossians 3:12–17 · **Memory verse:** Colossians 3:13

Goal: Help each person tell repentance, forgiveness and trust apart, own their choices, and take one honest step of confession.

Open	When you were growing up, how did your family usually say “I’m sorry”?
Teach	Pull apart the three words. Repentance is my part: if anger is a choice, I own it (1 John 1:9). Forgiveness is a choice too: it releases the debt (Colossians 3:13; recall the ten-thousand-talent servant from Question 4). Trust is rebuilt over time, and reconciliation takes two (Romans 12:18). Show the three-signpost drawing (L13-a).
Talk	1. What is the difference between “I’m sorry you were upset” and a real confession? 2. Mark 11:25 says to forgive when we stand praying; Luke 17:3–4 speaks of a brother who repents. How do the two fit together? 3. If anger is a choice and forgiveness is a choice, what does that say about who is responsible for my heart? 4. Why does remembering my own debt make forgiving others easier?
Practice	Do the “Forgiveness is / is not” sort together as a group. Then each person quietly works on the “Cancel the debt” box. No names are shared.
Close	Pray the Lord’s Prayer slowly together, pausing after “forgive us our debts.” Then pray the lesson prayer.

This week: Go first. Make one honest confession, to God and, where it is safe and wise, to the person, with no “but.”

Forgiven much, I choose to forgive much.

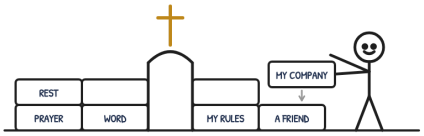
SESSION · LESSON 14

Building Walls Before the Storm



Read: Proverbs 25:28; Proverbs 16:32 · **Memory verse:** Proverbs 16:32

Goal: Help each person make God-honoring choices ahead of time by building specific protections against anger before it rises.



Build the wall before the storm.

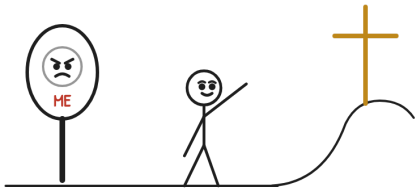
Open	What is one daily habit that makes your day go better: coffee, a walk, an early start, something else?
Teach	Anger is a choice, and most choices are made before the moment. Proverbs 25:28: a city without walls. Walls are built in peacetime, not during the attack. Walk through the six stones, using Proverbs 22:24–25 for stone five. Show how the wall guards thoughts, words and actions. Show the wall-building drawing (L14-a).
Talk	1. Which of my pressure points are most predictable? 2. What would it change to start the day by asking, “Lord, what do You want me to learn today?” 3. Why is it hard to give a friend permission to correct me, and what makes it easier? 4. What company (people, media, habits) puts up billboards in my brain?
Practice	Each person fills in the “My wall” box, then tells a partner one stone they will set this week.
Close	Say Proverbs 16:32 together. Pray the lesson prayer.

This week: Set one new stone: a morning surrender prayer, a verse card in your pocket, or asking a friend for permission to call you out.

The choice is made in peacetime, not when the enemy is at the gate.

SESSION · LESSON 15

How God Can Bring Good



Look in the mirror — or look to the cross.

Read: Romans 12:17–21; Genesis 50:15–21 · **Memory verse:** Romans 12:21

Goal: Help each person trust the sovereign, good God to use even exposed anger to make them more like Jesus, and choose one good to pursue.

Open	What is something that looked like a setback at first but turned out well: a flat tire, a canceled plan, a rainy day?
Teach	Return to Question 1: God is sovereign and good. Romans 8:28–29: the good He promises is becoming like Jesus. Joseph (Genesis 50:20) named the evil but refused to play judge. Walk the four places God brings good, each one a personal trainer. Close with Romans 12:17–21, the end of the marks of a true Christian. Show the mirror-or-cross drawing (L15-a).
Talk	1. Why does it matter to say that sinful anger is never good, even when God brings good from it? 2. What did Joseph do with his power, and what does that say about trusting God with justice? 3. Which of the four “places to look” have I seen in my own life? 4. What would overcoming evil with good look like with someone I find hard to love, while still staying wise and safe?
Practice	Do the mirror / cross sort aloud as a group. Then each person quietly fills in the “Overcome evil with good” box.
Close	Say Romans 12:21 together. Invite each person to name one step from Lessons 12–15 they plan to keep. Pray the lesson prayer.

This week: Each time an old grievance comes back, pray a blessing over that person and do one small, safe kindness.

God wastes nothing, not even the moment my anger was exposed.

SESSION · LESSON 16

Parents and Children

Read: Ephesians 6:1–4; Colossians 3:20–21 · **Memory verse:** Ephesians 6:4

Goal: Help parents, grandparents and grown children own their anger as a choice, tell correction from humiliation, and practice owning their part.



The spill is small. The fear may be bigger.

Open	Ask: “What is one household rule you remember from growing up?” Keep it light and fond.
Teach	“No child can make me mad” (Lesson 1 applied at home). Read Ephesians 6:4 and Colossians 3:21: correction is necessary, humiliation is not. Tell the spilled-milk scene and show the “spill and the fear” drawing (L16-a). Close with the parent’s apology as a picture of authority living under God.
Talk	1. “No child can make me mad.” Where is that hardest to believe for me? 2. Why can a child’s misbehavior feel like a verdict on me? 3. What is the difference between a consequence and humiliation? 4. For those with grown children: what does honoring look like now, on both sides?
Practice	In pairs, do the “Say it better” rewrite and read the new version aloud. Then each person quietly works the “Before I correct” box with a recent moment in mind.
Close	Say Ephesians 6:4 together. Pray the lesson prayer.

This week: Before one correction this week, pause and ask, “Is this about my child’s heart or my frustration?” If you get it wrong, apologize the same day.

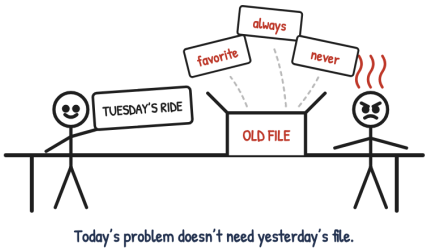
A child’s mistake is not a verdict on me.

SESSION · LESSON 17

Brothers, Sisters and Old Rivalries

Read: James 3:13–18; Romans 12:15; Genesis 50:15–21 ·
Memory verse: James 3:17

Goal: Help each person own family anger as a choice, separate today's issue from old rivalries, and trust a sovereign God with the family story.



Today's problem doesn't need yesterday's file.

Open	Ask: "Were you the oldest, youngest, middle or only child, and what is one thing you liked about that spot?"
Teach	Start with Lesson 1: no one can make me mad, not even family. Read James 3:13–18: wisdom from below keeps score; wisdom from above makes peace. Tell the two-sisters scene and show the "OLD FILE" drawing. Then Genesis 50:20: Joseph trusted a sovereign God and forgave. Close with Romans 12:15 as the cure for envy.
Talk	1. "No one can make me mad — not even family." Why is that hardest to believe about the people we grew up with? 2. What does "open to reason" (James 3:17) look like in a family disagreement? 3. How did trusting God's sovereignty set Joseph free to forgive his brothers? 4. Why is it hard to rejoice with someone who has what we wanted?
Practice	In pairs, work the "Today's issue / Old file" sort, then rewrite the harsh sentence together.
Close	Say James 3:17 together. Pray the lesson prayer.

This week: Fill in the "Rejoice and weep" box, then send one message that celebrates a family member's good news or shares a burden.

Today's problem doesn't need yesterday's verdict.

SESSION · LESSON 18

Husbands, Wives and Daily Frustrations



Ask first. You may not need to accuse at all.

Read: Colossians 3:12–19 · **Memory verse:** Colossians 3:12–13

Goal: Help each person own anger at home as a choice, trade quick accusations for honest questions, forgive as the Lord forgave, and know that safety comes first.

Open	Ask: “What is one small habit of yours that your family has learned to live with?” Keep it light and about yourself.
Teach	Start with Lesson 1: my spouse cannot make me mad; have I made anyone responsible for my calm? Read Colossians 3:12–19: what we put on, forgiving as the Lord forgave us, and loving without harshness. Tell the homecoming scene and show the “Ask first” drawing. State the safety line plainly: no coercion or violence, and protection comes first.
Talk	1. Why do we often speak more harshly to family than to strangers? 2. What changes when I stop making my spouse responsible for my peace? 3. What is the difference between a healthy pause and a punishing silence? 4. How does “as the Lord has forgiven you” set the measure for forgiving at home?
Practice	Do the “A question / An accusation” sort together. Then each person fills in the “Calm-day agreement” box alone. Couples may compare notes later at home if both agree. No one shares about a spouse in class.
Close	Say Colossians 3:12–13 together. Pray the lesson prayer. Let the group know you are available afterward, privately, to anyone who needs help or feels unsafe.

This week: Before reacting to one frustration at home, ask one honest question first, and ask God, “What do You want me to learn from this?”

Love becomes visible in what happens after "I'm sorry."

SESSION · LESSON 19

Other Christians and Church Disagreements



Don't glue God's name on my preference.

Read: Galatians 6:1–5; Romans 14; Matthew 18:15–35; 2 Timothy 2:24–26 · **Memory verse:** Galatians 6:1

Goal: Help each person remember whose church it is, tell biblical issues from preferences, and follow Jesus' path of gentle restoration and forgiveness instead of gossip.

Open	Ask: "What is one church tradition you love, something that would be hard for you to see change?"
Teach	Recall Question 3: "Who do you say that I am?" If Jesus is Lord, the church is His. Read Romans 14 (disputable matters) and Matthew 18:15–17 (go privately first), noting that verses 21–35 follow with forgiveness without measure. Tell the Wednesday-supper scene and show the "MY PREFERENCE" drawing. Close with Galatians 6:1 and 2 Timothy 2:24–26: firm and gentle together, trusting God with the outcome. Mention the safety line.
Talk	1. How can we tell whether a church disagreement is about Scripture or about my preference? 2. What changes when I remember that the church belongs to Jesus, not to me? 3. What does Galatians 6:1 warn me about when I'm the one who sees the problem? 4. Why do you think Jesus put "go privately" and "forgive seventy-seven times" in the same chapter?
Practice	Work the command-or-preference sort together as a group. Where people place an item differently, practice disagreeing graciously; that is the lesson.
Close	Say Galatians 6:1 together. Pray the lesson prayer, adding thanks for your church family.

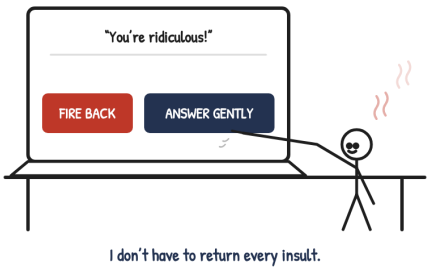
This week: If you have talked about someone at church instead of to them, stop. Either

go to them gently, or let it go before God.

The goal is a brother restored, not an argument won.

SESSION · LESSON 20

Neighbors, Strangers and Public Encounters



I don't have to return every insult.

Read: Titus 3:1–7; 1 Peter 3:15–16; Matthew 5:43–48 ·
Memory verse: 1 Peter 3:15

Goal: Help each person answer provocation from strangers with gentleness, truth and love, trusting that God placed the moment and remembering the mercy they have received.

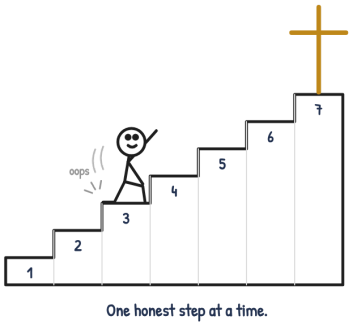
Open	Ask: "What is the kindest thing a total stranger ever did for you?"
Teach	Recall the pharmacy line from Question 1: God is sovereign over the stranger in my lane. Read Titus 3:1–7: remembering our own rescue (Question 2) cools our contempt. Walk through the online-mocker and flat-tire scenes and show the "FIRE BACK / ANSWER GENTLY" drawing. Close with Matthew 5:43–48: love enemies without calling evil good.
Talk	1. Why does anger at strangers feel "free"? 2. How does believing God is sovereign change the way I see the driver who cuts me off? 3. How does remembering my own past (Titus 3:3) change how I see people who don't share my faith? 4. What is the difference between loving an enemy and approving of what he does?
Practice	In pairs, work the Fact / Assumption / Demand sort. Then each person does the "Say it better" online reply and reads it aloud.
Close	Say 1 Peter 3:15 together. Pray the lesson prayer.

This week: Pray every day for one person who provokes you (a neighbor, a driver, a commenter), and do one small kindness for a stranger.

No one should have to endure my anger to hear about my Savior.

SESSION · LESSON 21

A Week of Honest Practice



Read: Psalm 139:23–24 · **Memory verse:** Psalm 139:23–24

Goal: Final session: look back over the whole study (the four questions and Lessons 1–20), celebrate what God has done, and send each person out with a seven-day plan, a partner and a signed commitment.

Open	Ask: “In one word, how would you describe your heart at the start of this study? And now?” Bring food and keep the mood celebratory.
Teach	Walk the road quickly: the four questions (Who is God? Who am I? Am I born again? What does Jesus require of me?), then Lesson 1, “Anger is a choice,” and the groups of Lessons 2–20. Read Psalm 139:23–24: it asks God to search me, not them. Explain that the seven days retrace the book: God, me and Jesus; the choice; thoughts, words and actions; then look back and look up. Show the seven-steps drawing.
Talk	1. Which of the four big questions changed the way you see your anger most? 2. Which truth, line or drawing from the book has stayed with you? 3. Where have you seen change, even small change, in your thoughts, words or actions? 4. What will help you keep going after the class ends?
Practice	Do the “Me-centered / Christ-centered” sort together as a recap. Then each person fills in the “My commitment” page, chooses a Day 7 partner from the group (or names someone outside it) and writes that name in the blank.
Close	Testimony and celebration time: invite anyone willing to share briefly what God has done. Say Psalm 139:23–24 together. Pray over the group, then pray the closing prayer together. Show the mirror-and-cross drawing as people sign.

This week: Start Day 1 tomorrow. Meet or call your partner on Day 7. Then start the week again.

Whatever comes at me, I can look in the mirror, or look to the cross.