

YOU'RE NOT THE BOSS OF ME

Anger

Most of us have learned to monitor our behavior enough to maintain good-standing with those around us. But it is possible to modify our visible behavior while still harboring a heart controlled by toxic emotions like anger. Jesus said that human beings are not tainted by *external* factors, but by *internal* emotions that cause us to dishonor God and others. So it's not enough to modify our behavior. We've got to go a step further and examine the condition of our hearts before we can say no to the toxic emotions that compete for control of our lives.

Start Talking

What are your "go-to" strategies when a restaurant server or customer-service worker treats you with less attention or respect than you deserve?

When was the last time somebody left an angry or passive-aggressive comment on something you posted to social media? How did you respond?

Let's keep things light: What is your *funniest* road rage story?

Looking Back

1. How did you do this past week in the fight to keep envy out of the driver's seat?
2. When did you notice yourself mentally competing with those around you? What did you do in response to this impulse?
3. Were there any times you found yourself content with what you had, rather than "striving after wind?" How did you get there? What self-talk led you to this feeling?



What About You?

1. How would you describe the strange sensation of anger welling up inside of you?
2. How do you tend to outwardly display (e.g.: behavioral symptoms) anger? By “shouting out” or “shutting down?” Something else?
3. How would you describe your relationship with anger? How would those around you describe it?
4. Who or what are your strongest “tiggers” when it comes to anger?

Look It Up

Read the Following Passages: Matthew 15:18-19, James 3:13-16, 4:1-2, Philippians 2:5-7.

5. How do you interpret what James says about the source of anger and quarrels?
6. If what James writes is true, and anger comes from our unfulfilled desires, how should we respond to situations where we aren't given something that we actually deserve? (hint: “don't deny the truth”)
7. How should our daily interactions be affected by the fact that Jesus did not count his status of equality with God as a trump card to get his way?
8. How do you distinguish between a “righteous anger” on behalf of other people, and the kind of anger James is talking about in this passage?

Putting It All Together

9. In what areas of your life are you most inclined to anger in response to unfulfilled desires? (mistreated at work, disrespected by spouse, etc)
10. Honest question: are you willing to admit that part of the problem is that *you're* not getting what you *want*?
11. How can you be sure to pause in the moments when you experience unfairness this week and take the liberating step of admitting that you have not gotten something you wanted or deserved?
12. What can you tell yourself in these moments to reassure that getting less than what you wanted is okay?
13. What are three ways you can follow Jesus' example of laying down his rights in the service of other people this week?
14. How can you keep bitterness from building within you as you do this?

