

# Small Groups

## SERMON-BASED STUDY GUIDE

Sermon on the Mount – Week #6 – *Bitterness and Contempt*

October 15, 2023

### DIGGING IN:

1. In his last two sermons, Alex has said that “Religion asks us to play a part; Jesus offers us a transformed heart! In that context, he shared a Ruth Barton quote: “The best gift you can give is your transformed self.” Why do you think she calls the transformed self your best gift? (What might be the impact of allowing Jesus to transform you and bringing that self to the people around you?)
2. Respond to the statement “Anger creates a deep imbalance in us and in the world.” (Agree, disagree? What do you think this means?)

### MAKING IT REAL:

3. Read Matthew 5:21-26 out loud.
4. In his sermon, Alex made the connection between anger and contempt (seeing someone as lower than you). In his commentary on this passage, RT France said, “Ordinary insults may betray an attitude of contempt which God takes extremely seriously.” How does contempt show up in your relationships or in those around you? (words, body language, etc.)
5. Personal Reflection time
  - a. Write a list of things that typically make you angry, including people and situations you may be angry with right now. (You won’t be sharing this with the group). Underline those that cause an ongoing, “settled state” of anger.
  - b. Think for a minute about what underlying emotions fuel your anger (fear, insecurity, violation, etc. – If you need ideas, see the graphic at the end of this study guide). (We will come back to this later in the study). Write down the emotions that stand out to you the most as sources of anger for you.
  - c. Jesus treats the healing of relationships as the central part of life – the thing worth going back for.” How valuable is healing relationships to you? Mark the spot on the continuum that most accurately reflects

your engagement with healing hurt and conflict in the relationships in your life.

←  
Let it slide/  
it's in the past

→  
Make things right  
every time

6. So what should we do with our anger?

a. Read these scriptures aloud. What do they tell us about how to handle our anger?

- BE ANGRY, AND *yet* DO NOT SIN; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity. (Eph 4:26-27)
- But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, *and* abusive speech from your mouth. (Col 3:8)
- But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak *and* slow to anger; for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.

b. Personal reflection:

**A suggested process for dealing with anger:**

Choose one thing from your earlier reflection list about what makes you angry. If you have one that causes ongoing anger, pick that one. Write it down and then write your responses to the following questions:

- Ask, What untransformed part of me is this moment revealing?
- What emotion is underneath this anger? (Use the graphic if you need help identifying it). Take a minute in the quiet to accept this emotion and acknowledge that you feel it.
- In silent prayer, invite Jesus to be present with you in that emotion. What does He say to you? Are there any scriptures that come to mind? Ask Jesus, "What do you want me to know about this emotion, this situation? Then be quiet and listen for thoughts that He might give you. Write them down.
- Release the emotion to Jesus. Some find it helpful to imagine it wrapped up in a cloth and handing it to him.
- Ask, "Jesus, what do you want me to *do* in the relationship where this feeling was present? Again, listen. Write down what you hear.

7. Is there anything from your personal reflection time that you would like to share with the group? Or any further thoughts about anger and how it affects our relationships?

## PRAYER IDEAS

Pray (generally) that God will bring healing to relationships for everyone in the group.

Share specific prayer requests.

## WANT TO DIG A LITTLE DEEPER?

(Extra Bible study ideas)

1. What kind of anger does not lead to sin? Look at these scriptures and make note of what makes *God* angry. What is God's anger like? (Ex 4:14, Ex 34:6, Num 11:33, Deut 9:18, Psalm 30:5, Psalm 78:38, Mark 3:5)
2. Proverbs teaches us a lot about anger and how we need to deal with it. Read these verses and make note of what you learn. (Proverbs 12:16, 14:29, 15:1, 15:18, 16:32, 19:11, 19:19, 22:24).
3. These scriptures are only a *few* of the mentions of anger in the Bible. Use [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com) to look up "anger" and "angry" to find a more comprehensive list.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

*Red Couch Theology Podcast*

If you or group members have questions around parts of the sermon that are not included in the discussion guide, it's always helpful to listen to *Red Couch Theology*, where Alex and Aaron talk about the sermon and answer questions that come in from people in the congregation. <https://guysdrinkingtea.podbean.com/>

*Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*, by Peter Scazzero.

# Anger Iceberg

## A Great Tool To Use.

Icebergs are large pieces of ice found floating in the open ocean. What you can see from the surface can be misleading. Most of the iceberg is hidden below the water.

What emotions might be hiding underneath the surface?

This is how anger works. Often when we are angry there are other emotions hidden under the surface

