Strength Under Control

Scripture Set on Anger, Rage, Violence & Provocation

“Better to have self-control than to conquer a city” (Proverbs 16:32) • Shorthand: SC.1 – SC.18

ID	Topic	Scripture Passage
Part 1: Understanding Anger		
SC.1	God Is Slow to Anger	Exodus 34:5-7; Psalm 103:8-14
SC.2	Angry Without Sinning: Jesus' Anger	Mark 3:1-6; Ephesians 4:26-27
SC.3	Sin Is Crouching at the Door: Cain	Genesis 4:1-16
SC.4	Where Fights Come From	James 4:1-10
Part 2: Rage, Revenge, and Violence		
SC.5	Moses: The Anger That Followed Him	Exodus 2:11-15; Numbers 20:1-13
SC.6	Samson: The Revenge Cycle	Judges 15:1-15
SC.7	Put Away Your Sword	Matthew 26:47-56; John 18:10-11
SC.8	Leave Room for God: Don't Take Revenge	Romans 12:17-21; Proverbs 20:22; 24:29
Part 3: When Someone Is Trying to Start Something		
SC.9	“Now's Your Chance”: When Friends Push You	1 Samuel 24:1-12
SC.10	Abigail Talks David Down	1 Samuel 25:2-35
SC.11	“I Can't Come Down”: Refusing the Setup	Nehemiah 6:1-9
SC.12	Don't Take the Bait	Proverbs 12:16; 20:3; 26:17-21; 16:7
SC.13	Jesus Walked Through the Crowd	Luke 4:16-30; 1 Peter 2:21-23
Part 4: Strength Under Control		
SC.14	The Other Cheek: Strength, Not Weakness	Matthew 5:38-48
SC.15	Better Than a Warrior	Proverbs 16:32; 25:28; 29:11; Titus 2:11-12
SC.16	Power, Love, and Self-Control from the Spirit	Galatians 5:16-26; 2 Timothy 1:6-7
SC.17	Take Off Rage, Put On Christ	Colossians 3:5-15
SC.18	Blessed Are the Peacemakers	Matthew 5:5, 9; James 3:13-18

Level 1 (this page) is the set itself. **Level 2** gives a key verse, background, and questions for each passage. **Level 3** is a deep dive for leaders and coaches, with a cool-down process and worksheets. This set goes deeper than Challenge: Anger (ChA.1–ChA.8) and pairs well with Repentance (RP) and One New Family (NF).

Level 2: Study Helps

Each session uses the same pattern. **Look Back:** How are you? Did you obey and share last time? **Look Up:** Read the passage aloud, have someone retell it, then use the questions below. **Look Forward:** What will I obey? Who will I share this with? Pray for each other by name.

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PART 1: UNDERSTANDING ANGER

SC.1 God Is Slow to Anger

Read: Exodus 34:5-7; Psalm 103:8-14

> *"The LORD is compassionate and merciful, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love."*
> **Psalm 103:8 (NLT)**

What's happening

God does get angry, at evil, injustice, and sin. But He describes Himself as slow to anger and full of mercy. His anger is never out of control, never petty, and never about protecting His ego. We were made in His image, so the problem isn't that we feel anger. The problem is how fast it comes, what it's about, and what we do with it.

Discover

1. How does God describe Himself in Exodus 34:6-7?
2. What does Psalm 103 say God does with our sins?
3. How is God's anger different from the anger you see inside?

Obey this week

Each time you feel anger rising this week, pray Psalm 103:8 and ask God to make you more like Him.

SC.2 Angry Without Sinning: Jesus' Anger

Read: Mark 3:1-6; Ephesians 4:26-27

> *"And 'don't sin by letting anger control you.' Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, for anger gives a foothold to the devil."*
> **Ephesians 4:26-27 (NLT)**

What's happening

Jesus looked around at the religious leaders with anger because their hard hearts cared more about rules than about a hurting man. Then He did good: He healed the man. His anger was about others, not Himself, and it led to healing, not harm. Paul says anger itself isn't always sin, but it must not take control, and it must not be carried overnight, because it gives the devil a foothold.

Discover

1. What made Jesus angry in Mark 3? What did He do with His anger?
2. What does it mean to let anger "control" you?
3. What is a "foothold"? How does held anger give the devil one?

Obey this week

Don't go to sleep angry this week. Each night, give God whatever anger you're carrying, and settle anything you need to with others.

SC.3 Sin Is Crouching at the Door: Cain

Read: Genesis 4:1-16

> *"You will be accepted if you do what is right. But if you refuse to do what is right, then watch out!" Sin is waiting at the door to control you, but you must master it.*
>
> **Genesis 4:7 (NLT, then paraphrase)**

What's happening

Cain was angry and jealous after God accepted his brother's offering and not his. God came to him before anything happened and warned him: sin is crouching at the door like an animal ready to pounce, but you can rule over it. Cain ignored the warning and killed his brother. The first murder in the Bible started as anger that wasn't dealt with.

Discover

1. What was Cain angry about?
2. What did God tell Cain before he acted? Why does that matter?
3. When is your "door" moment, the moment before anger becomes action?

Obey this week

Learn your "door moment." This week, notice the first signs of anger in your body and thoughts, and stop there to pray.

SC.4 Where Fights Come From

Read: James 4:1-10

> *"What is causing the quarrels and fights among you? Don't they come from the evil desires at war within you?"*
>
> **James 4:1 (NLT)**

What's happening

James says fights don't start with the other person. They start with desires warring inside us: wanting what we don't have, wanting respect, control, or our way. When we can't get it, we fight. The way out is humility: submit to God, resist the devil, come close to God, and He comes close to you.

Discover

1. Where does James say fights come from?
2. What desires were behind the last fight or argument you were in?
3. What does James tell us to do instead (vv7-10)?

Obey this week

After any conflict this week, ask yourself: "What did I want that I wasn't getting?" Then take that desire to God.

PART 2: RAGE, REVENGE, AND VIOLENCE

SC.5 Moses: The Anger That Followed Him

Read: Exodus 2:11-15; Numbers 20:1-13

> *In our words: Moses struck the rock in anger instead of speaking to it as God commanded, and because of it he could not lead Israel into the Promised Land.*
>
> **Numbers 20:10-12 (paraphrase)**

What's happening

As a young man, Moses saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, looked around, killed the Egyptian, and hid the body. He spent forty years as a fugitive. God still called him and used him. But decades later, angry at the people's complaining, Moses lashed out, struck the rock, and called them rebels. That one outburst cost him the Promised Land. Unhealed anger follows us until we deal with it.

Discover

1. What did Moses do in Exodus 2? Was his anger about something real?
2. What happened at the rock in Numbers 20? What did it cost him?
3. Is there an anger pattern in your life that keeps showing up years later?

Obey this week

Name your anger pattern, the one that keeps coming back, and share it with one trusted brother or sister this week.

SC.6 Samson: The Revenge Cycle

Read: Judges 15:1-15

> *In our words: When the men of Judah asked Samson what he had done, he said, "I only did to them what they did to me."*
> **Judges 15:11 (paraphrase)**

What's happening

Samson's wife was given to another man, so he burned the Philistines' fields. They burned his wife and her father, so he slaughtered them. They came after him, and he killed a thousand. Every act of revenge brought a bigger one back. "I only did to them what they did to me" is the motto of every revenge cycle, inside and out.

Discover

1. List each step of the revenge cycle in this chapter.
2. Who got hurt along the way?
3. Where have you seen revenge cycles inside? How do they end?

Obey this week

If you're in a revenge cycle with someone, be the one who stops it this week. Ask God how.

SC.7 Put Away Your Sword

Read: Matthew 26:47-56; John 18:10-11

> *"'Put away your sword,' Jesus told him. 'Those who use the sword will die by the sword.'"*
> **Matthew 26:52 (NLT)**

What's happening

When the mob came to arrest Jesus, Peter pulled a sword and cut off a man's ear. He thought he was defending Jesus, a good cause. Jesus stopped him, healed the man's ear, and said violence breeds violence. Jesus had all the power of heaven available and chose not to use force. Even "right" causes don't make violence the way of His kingdom.

Discover

1. Why do you think Peter grabbed his sword?
2. What did Jesus do for the man Peter hurt (Luke 22:51)?
3. What does "those who use the sword will die by the sword" mean inside?

Obey this week

Think of a situation where you feel justified to use force. Ask Jesus what He would do instead, and talk it through with your group.

SC.8 Leave Room for God: Don't Take Revenge

Read: Romans 12:17-21; Proverbs 20:22; 24:29

> *"Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God." … "Don't let evil conquer you, but conquer evil by doing good."*
> **Romans 12:19, 21 (NLT)**

What's happening

Paul doesn't say wrongs don't matter. He says God will deal with them, so we don't have to. Taking revenge means taking God's job. Instead, we do the unexpected: we feed our enemy, give him something to drink, and overcome evil with good. Proverbs agrees: don't say "I'll pay him back." Wait for the LORD.

Discover

1. Why can we leave revenge to God?
2. What does Paul tell us to do for our enemies?
3. What does it look like to "conquer evil by doing good" inside?

Obey this week

Do one good thing this week for someone who has wronged you.

PART 3: WHEN SOMEONE IS TRYING TO START SOMETHING

SC.9 "Now's Your Chance": When Friends Push You

Read: 1 Samuel 24:1-12

> *"'Now's your opportunity!' David's men whispered to him." … "The LORD forbid that I should do this to my lord the king. I shouldn't attack the LORD's anointed one, for the LORD himself has chosen him."*
> **1 Samuel 24:4, 6 (NLT)**

What's happening

King Saul was hunting David to kill him. Saul walked alone into the cave where David and his men were hiding. David's men whispered, "Now's your chance! God has handed him to you." They even used God's name to push him. David cut off a corner of Saul's robe, then felt guilty even for that, and he stopped his men from attacking. He trusted God to judge between them.

Discover

1. What did David's men say to push him? Why would that be hard to resist?
2. Why did David refuse, even though Saul was wrong?
3. Who pushes you toward a fight? What do they say?

Obey this week

Decide ahead of time what you'll say when someone pushes you to fight. Write it down and practice it with your group.

SC.10 Abigail Talks David Down

Read: 1 Samuel 25:2-35

> *“Thank God for your good sense! Bless you for keeping me from murder and from carrying out vengeance with my own hands.”*
> **1 Samuel 25:33 (NLT)**

What's happening

Nabal insulted David and his men. David strapped on his sword and headed out with 400 men to kill every male in Nabal's house. Abigail, Nabal's wife, moved fast. She met David on the road, humbled herself, brought gifts, and reminded him of his future: when God made him king, he wouldn't want murder on his conscience. David stopped and thanked God for her. Sometimes God sends a person to talk us down. Sometimes He makes us that person.

Discover

1. What did Nabal do that made David so angry?
2. What did Abigail do and say? List each step.
3. How did David respond? What did he thank God for?
4. Who is your Abigail? Whose Abigail can you be?

Obey this week

Be an Abigail this week: when you see someone heating up, go to them, calm things down, and remind them of their future.

SC.11 “I Can't Come Down”: Refusing the Setup

Read: Nehemiah 6:1-9

> *“I am engaged in a great work, so I can’t come. Why should I stop working to come and meet with you?”*
> **Nehemiah 6:3 (NLT)**

What's happening

Nehemiah was rebuilding Jerusalem's walls. His enemies kept inviting him to meet them on the plain, really a trap to harm him. Four times he gave the same answer: I'm doing a great work, I can't come down. Then they spread lies about him. He didn't take the bait. He prayed for strength and kept working.

Discover

1. What were Nehemiah's enemies really trying to do?
2. How did Nehemiah answer every time?
3. What “great work” is God doing in you that a fight would interrupt?

Obey this week

Memorize Nehemiah 6:3. When someone tries to pull you into conflict, say it to yourself and walk away.

SC.12 Don't Take the Bait

Read: Proverbs 12:16; 20:3; 26:17-21; 16:7

> *“Avoiding a fight is a mark of honor; only fools insist on quarreling.”*
> **Proverbs 20:3 (NLT)**

What's happening

Proverbs flips the yard's idea of respect upside down. Walking away from a fight is honor, not weakness. Getting into someone else's quarrel is like grabbing a dog by the ears. A fire goes out when you stop adding wood, and a

fight dies when people stop feeding it. When our lives please the LORD, He can even make our enemies be at peace with us.

Discover

1. What does Proverbs 20:3 call honor? What does the yard call honor?
2. What happens to a fire with no wood (26:20-21)? What is the “wood” in a fight?
3. What would change if you believed walking away was strength?

Obey this week

Stop adding wood: this week, don't repeat, react to, or pass on anything that keeps a conflict burning.

SC.13 Jesus Walked Through the Crowd

Read: Luke 4:16-30; 1 Peter 2:21-23

> *“He did not retaliate when he was insulted, nor threaten revenge when he suffered. He left his case in the hands of God, who always judges fairly.”*
> **1 Peter 2:23 (NLT)**

What's happening

In His hometown, a furious crowd dragged Jesus to a cliff to throw Him off. He didn't fight them, and He didn't run in fear. He walked right through the crowd and went on His way. Later, when He was insulted, beaten, and crucified, He didn't threaten revenge. He trusted His case to the Father. Peter says this is the example we follow.

Discover

1. How did Jesus respond to the angry crowd in Luke 4?
2. What did Jesus do with His case when He suffered (1 Peter 2:23)?
3. What does it look like to “walk through the crowd” inside?

Obey this week

The next time you're insulted, picture Jesus walking through the crowd, and walk away calm.

PART 4: STRENGTH UNDER CONTROL

SC.14 The Other Cheek: Strength, Not Weakness

Read: Matthew 5:38-48

> *“But I say, do not resist an evil person! If someone slaps you on the right cheek, offer the other cheek also.”*
> **Matthew 5:39 (NLT)**

What's happening

A slap on the right cheek was an insult, a backhand meant to shame. Jesus says don't hit back. Refuse to play the game of honor and revenge. This isn't weakness. It takes more strength to absorb an insult than to return it. Jesus also tells us to love and pray for our enemies, because that's what our Father does.

Discover

1. Why do you think Jesus chose a slap on the cheek as His example?
2. What does Jesus tell us to do for enemies (vv44-45)?
3. Which takes more strength: hitting back or not hitting back? Why?

Obey this week

Pray by name every day this week for someone who has insulted or wronged you.

SC.15 Better Than a Warrior

Read: Proverbs 16:32; 25:28; 29:11; Titus 2:11-12

> *"Better to be patient than powerful; better to have self-control than to conquer a city."*
> **Proverbs 16:32 (NLT)**

What's happening

In God's eyes, the strongest person in the room is the one who controls himself. A person without self-control is like a city with broken-down walls: anyone can walk in and take over. Fools vent all their anger; the wise hold it back. And God's grace doesn't just forgive us. It trains us to live with self-control right now.

Discover

1. Who does Proverbs 16:32 say is stronger than a warrior?
2. What happens to a city without walls (25:28)? How is that like a person without self-control?
3. What does God's grace teach us (Titus 2:11-12)?

Obey this week

Pick one trigger this week and practice holding back: no words and no action until you've prayed.

SC.16 Power, Love, and Self-Control from the Spirit

Read: Galatians 5:16-26; 2 Timothy 1:6-7

> *"For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline."*
> **2 Timothy 1:7 (NLT)**

What's happening

Paul lists "outbursts of anger" among the works of the flesh, and "self-control" as fruit of the Spirit. Self-control is not just gritting your teeth. It is something the Holy Spirit grows in us as we walk with Him. God's Spirit gives power, love, and a sound, disciplined mind, not fear and not rage.

Discover

1. Which works of the flesh in Galatians 5:19-21 are about anger?
2. Where does self-control come from, according to Galatians 5:22-23?
3. What three things does God's Spirit give us (2 Timothy 1:7)?

Obey this week

Start each day with the S in S.W.A.P.: surrender your temper to God by name, and ask the Spirit for self-control.

SC.17 Take Off Rage, Put On Christ

Read: Colossians 3:5-15

> *"But now is the time to get rid of anger, rage, malicious behavior, slander, and dirty language."*
> **Colossians 3:8 (NLT)**

What's happening

Paul talks about changing clothes. Take off the old: anger, rage, malice, slander, and dirty language. Put on the new: compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, forgiveness, and love. You don't just stop being angry. You put something better on in its place, and let the peace of Christ rule in your heart.

Discover

1. What does Paul say to take off (v8)?
2. What does he say to put on (vv12-14)?

3. What does it mean to let the peace of Christ “rule” in your heart (v15)?

Obey this week

Each morning this week, read Colossians 3:12-14 and “put on” one quality on purpose. Watch for chances to wear it.

SC.18 Blessed Are the Peacemakers

Read: Matthew 5:5, 9; James 3:13-18

> *“And those who are peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of righteousness.”*
> **James 3:18 (NLT)**

What's happening

Jesus blesses the gentle and the peacemakers. Gentleness is not weakness. The Greek word was used of a strong horse that had been trained: power under control. Peacemakers don't just avoid fights; they make peace. James contrasts worldly wisdom, which brings jealousy, disorder, and evil, with God's wisdom, which is peace-loving, gentle, and full of mercy.

Discover

1. What does Jesus promise the gentle and the peacemakers?
2. How does James describe wisdom from above (v17)?
3. Where could you plant seeds of peace inside this week?

Obey this week

Make peace in one broken relationship or tense situation this week, wisely and safely.

Level 3: Deep Dive

For leaders and coaches. Read this before leading the set, and share what helps.

Why Anger Matters So Much Inside

Inside, anger is often treated as survival. Respect is everything, and backing down can feel like an invitation to be targeted. Some people deliberately goad others to fight: for entertainment, to settle a score, to test someone, or to set them up to lose good time. A single fight can mean the hole, new charges, lost good time, a transfer away from family, a longer sentence, a revenge cycle, and someone seriously hurt.

Scripture takes anger seriously. Jesus traced murder back to anger in the heart (Matthew 5:21-22). But Scripture also offers a different kind of strength: power under control, which the yard rarely sees and quietly respects.

How Anger Works: The Door Moment

God told Cain that sin was crouching at the door (Genesis 4:7). Anger usually moves through the same steps every time. The goal is to catch it at the door, before it becomes action.

Step	What happens	Cain (Genesis 4)	On the yard
1. Trigger	Something happens	God accepts Abel's offering, not his	Someone bumps you, mouths off, disrespects your family
2. Thought	What you tell yourself about it	Resentment and jealousy toward his brother	“If I let this go, I'm weak and I'll be a target”
3. Body	Heat, racing heart, clenched fists, tunnel vision	His face fell; he was very angry (v5)	Chest tight, jaw set, voice rising
4. Door moment	The space where you still choose	God warns him: you can master it (v7)	Stop, step out, pray, and look under it
5. Action	What you do	He kills Abel (v8)	A fight, or walking away
6. Consequences	What follows	A wanderer, cut off (vv11-14)	Hole, charges, lost time, retaliation, or peace

Anger is often a cover for something underneath: **hurt, fear, shame, humiliation, or a sense of injustice.** Finding what's under it is often the key to getting free. Once the body is flooded, it can take a while to calm down, often twenty minutes or more, which is why walking away early matters so much.

Key Words

Word	What it means	Where
***'aph* / *erek appayim* (Hebrew)**	*'Aph* means nose or nostrils: anger pictured as flaring nostrils. God is *erek appayim*, “long of nostrils,” slow to burn.	Exodus 34:6; Psalm 103:8
***orgē* (Greek)**	Settled anger or wrath. It can be righteous (God's) or sinful (ours).	Ephesians 4:31; James 1:20
***thumos* (Greek)**	Rage that flares up: outbursts of anger.	Galatians 5:20; Colossians 3:8
***parorgismos* (Greek)**	Provocation, the irritation you carry; don't let the sun go down on it.	Ephesians 4:26
***makrothumia* (Greek)**	Patience; literally “long-tempered,” the opposite of short-tempered.	Galatians 5:22; Colossians 3:12
***egkrateia* (Greek)**	Self-control: inner strength that holds desire and impulse in check.	Galatians 5:23; 2 Peter 1:6
***praÿtēs* (Greek)**	Gentleness or meekness. Used of a trained, strong animal: power under control.	Matthew 5:5; Galatians 5:23

Word	What it means	Where
***sōphronismos* (Greek)**	A sound, disciplined mind.	2 Timothy 1:7
***eirēnopoios* (Greek)**	Peacemaker: one who actively makes peace.	Matthew 5:9

The Hard Questions

If I don't fight back, won't I look weak and become a target?

That fear is real, and it shouldn't be brushed off. But Scripture calls walking away from a fight “a mark of honor” (Proverbs 20:3) and says the self-controlled person is stronger than a warrior (Proverbs 16:32). Over time, a person known for peace, steadiness, and quiet strength often earns more respect than the one who fights. When our lives please the LORD, He can even make our enemies be at peace with us (Proverbs 16:7). Practically: avoid known setups, don't feed conflicts, stay near people who will stand with you, and tell staff or a chaplain when a threat is real.

Is it ever right to defend myself?

Scripture distinguishes between personal revenge, which is forbidden (Romans 12:19), and protecting life. Many Christians, including Catholic teaching (Catechism §§2263–2265) and many Protestants, hold that legitimate defense of yourself or someone vulnerable from immediate harm is not the same as retaliating. Orthodox tradition allows defense but still treats taking a life as something that needs healing, and some traditions, like the Anabaptists, practice full nonresistance. Inside, the line is clear enough: protecting life from immediate danger is very different from settling scores, “handling business,” or fighting for respect. Facility rules and the law also apply, and getting help from staff is not weakness.

What about when they disrespect my family?

This is one of the most common ways people are goaded into fights, because it goes straight to love and honor. Remember Nehemiah: they want you to come down off the wall. Your family needs you home more than they need you to defend their name with your fists. Honor them by walking away and getting home sooner.

My anger comes from what was done to me.

Some anger is a right response to real injustice and abuse. God hears it. The Psalms are full of honest rage poured out to God, not acted out on people (Psalm 4:4; Psalm 62:8). Bring that anger to God, find a counselor or chaplain if one is available, and work toward forgiveness over time. Forgiveness does not mean what happened was okay, and it does not mean trusting someone who is still dangerous.

I've done violent things. Can God really change me?

Yes. Moses killed a man and became the leader of God's people. Paul describes himself as once violent (1 Timothy 1:13) and became an apostle. Abba Moses the Black, a 4th-century gang leader and robber, became a gentle desert father known for refusing to judge others. The same Spirit who changed them lives in every believer.

Where the Traditions Agree

- **Sinful anger is serious.** Jesus linked anger to murder (Matthew 5:21-22). The Catholic Catechism calls anger a desire for revenge and names deliberately wanting to harm someone a grave sin (§2302). The Westminster Larger Catechism (Protestant) lists sinful anger, desire for revenge, provoking words, quarreling, and striking among the sins forbidden by the sixth commandment. Orthodox and early monastic teaching treats anger as one of the main passions that darkens the mind.
- **Anger is fought early**, at the level of thoughts, before it becomes words and actions. The desert fathers called this watchfulness.
- **Gentleness is strength.** Meekness is power under control, not weakness.
- **Revenge belongs to God.** All three traditions teach non-retaliation in personal relationships.

> **VOICES FROM THE WHOLE CHURCH**
>
> **Abba Agathon** (4th-century desert father) is said to have carried a stone in his mouth for three years until he learned to keep silent.
>
> **St. John Climacus**, in *The Ladder of Divine Ascent* (Step 8, on freedom from anger and on meekness), taught that the first step to freedom from anger is keeping your lips silent when your heart is stirred.
>
> **St. John Cassian** (5th century), who carried the desert fathers' wisdom to the West, taught that anger, even when we think it is justified, clouds the eye of the heart so we can't see clearly.
>
> **Martin Luther** (Protestant), in his *Large Catechism*, taught that the commandment against killing forbids not only violence but also anger in the heart, and calls us to protect and help our neighbor.

Staying C.O.O.L.: A Cool-Down Process

A simple process to use in the moment. Practice it when you're calm so it's ready when you're not. Each step is easy to remember and teach.

C — Catch It at the Door

Read: Genesis 4:6-7; Proverbs 25:28

Learn your early warning signs so you can stop before anger takes over.

- Know your body signals: heat, racing heart, tight jaw or fists, raised voice, tunnel vision.
- Know your triggers: people, places, times, words, and situations (fill out the Anger Map below).
- Name it to yourself: “This is anger. I'm at the door.”

O — Out: Step Away

Read: Proverbs 17:14; 20:3; Nehemiah 6:3; Luke 4:30

Get out of the moment before it gets out of hand.

- Stop talking. Lower your voice.
- Walk away if you can: change rooms, go to your bunk, step back. Like Nehemiah: “I can't come down.”
- Don't make decisions or send messages while you're flooded.

O — Open Up to God

Read: Psalm 4:4; Philippians 4:6-7

Bring the anger to God instead of to the other person.

- Breathe slowly. Pray the Jesus Prayer: “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me.”
- Pray Psalm 4:4: “Don't sin by letting anger control you. Think about it overnight and remain silent.”
- Tell God exactly what you feel. He can handle it.

L — Look Under It

Read: James 4:1-3; Proverbs 16:32

When you've calmed down, find out what's really going on.

- What's under the anger: hurt, fear, shame, humiliation, injustice?
- What did I want that I wasn't getting (James 4:1-2)? Respect, control, my way?
- What lie am I believing? (“If I let this go, I'm nothing.”) What's the truth? (“Self-control is stronger than a warrior.”)

Then Respond, and Repair

- **Respond:** a gentle answer, silence, walking away, or getting help from staff or a leader.
- **Repair:** if you blew it, own it quickly. Confess to God, apologize, and make it right where it's safe (Matthew 5:23-24).
- **Every day:** walk in the Spirit with S.W.A.P. Surrender your temper by name each morning, wait on God in prayer and the Word, avoid even a hint of sin, and say yes to the Spirit's prompting.

When Someone Is Trying to Start Something

- **Recognize the setup.** Goaders want a reaction. Sometimes it's entertainment, sometimes revenge, sometimes a way to get you written up.
- **Don't come down off the wall.** Your great work matters more than their game (Nehemiah 6:3).
- **Use few words.** A calm, short answer, then leave (Proverbs 15:1; 17:27).
- **Don't add wood.** Don't repeat it, plot about it, or let others stir it up (Proverbs 26:20-21).
- **Tell someone.** A trusted brother or sister, a leader, or staff if there's real danger.
- **Pray for them.** It changes your heart, and sometimes theirs (Matthew 5:44).

Be an Abigail: Helping Someone Who Is Heating Up

1. **Move fast.** Abigail didn't wait (1 Samuel 25:18).
2. **Go to them** with humility and a calm voice. Don't add heat.
3. **Listen first.** Let them say what happened.
4. **Remind them of their future:** their family, their release, who God is making them (25:28-31).
5. **Help them step away**, and walk with them if you can.
6. **Pray with them**, and check on them later.

> **Care note**
> If you are being threatened, extorted, or are in danger, tell staff, medical, or the chaplain. If you are having thoughts of seriously hurting someone else or yourself, tell staff or mental health right away. Asking for help is not snitching or weakness. It is protecting life.

Daily Practices That Lower the Temperature

- **H.A.L.T. check:** anger spikes when you're Hungry, Angry, Lonely, or Tired. Notice these and take care of them.
- **Move your body:** exercise burns off the stress that feeds anger. Physical training has some value (1 Timothy 4:8).
- **Memorize** Proverbs 16:32, Psalm 4:4, and Nehemiah 6:3.
- **Evening review:** before sleep, give God any anger from the day (Ephesians 4:26). See the “Search Me” prayer in the Repentance deep dive.
- **Fasting:** saying no to food for a time trains the body to say no to other impulses too.

My Anger Map

Fill this out when you're calm, then share it with someone you trust.

Question	My answer
My biggest triggers (people, places, words)	
My body's warning signs	
What is usually under my anger	
The lie I tell myself in the moment	
The truth (a Bible verse)	
Where I will go and what I'll do to step away	
Who my Abigail is (someone I'll go to)	
What I'll say when someone tries to start something	

Anger Log

Use this after any time anger rose, whether you handled it well or not. Look for patterns over a few weeks.

Date	What happened	What was under it	What I did	Next time I will

Peacemaker Commitments (for your group)

In our group, we will:

- Not goad, provoke, or cheer on a fight.

- Walk away together when someone is trying to start something.
- Be an Abigail for each other.
- Settle conflicts privately, quickly, and before the sun goes down when possible.
- Not carry revenge, and pray for those who wrong us.
- Celebrate every time someone chooses peace.

Sources

- Holy Bible, New Living Translation. Key verses are quoted from the NLT. Lines marked “paraphrase” or “in our words” are summaries, not quotations.
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- *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, §2263–2265, §2302.
- *Westminster Larger Catechism*, Questions 135–136.
- Martin Luther, *Large Catechism*, on the commandment “You shall not kill.”
- St. John Climacus, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, Step 8.
- St. John Cassian, *The Institutes*, Book 8 (on anger).
- *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers* (Abba Agathon; Abba Moses).
- No Place Left Academy, *4 Fields Level 1 Training Manual* (v5), Lesson 2: S.W.A.P.