



# COMMUNICATOR GUIDE

## MOODS / Week 2

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### SERIES SUMMARY

A 4-week series about emotions.

WEEK 1: Emotions don't have to be the boss of you.

WEEK 2: Anger doesn't have to be the boss of you.

WEEK 3: Fear doesn't have to be the boss of you.

WEEK 4: Guilt doesn't have to be the boss of you.

### SCRIPTURE

*Who is wise and understanding among you? Let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice (James 3:13-16 NIV).*

*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).*

### TEACHING OUTLINE

#### INTRODUCTION

- Tell a personal story about a time when you got so angry about something that it caused you to react.

## TENSION

- Anger is something we all feel.
- The reasons for our anger may differ, but we can all fall into the trap of letting it take over and affect how we think, respond to others, talk, and act.
- Our response in anger can be:
  - Outward anger – Our feelings come out in outward, obvious ways.
  - Inward anger – Our feelings come out in quiet, inward ways.
- Some of us may even feel protective anger; when our feelings are about something wrong, bad, evil, or unfair in the world.
- Anger isn't wrong, but it has the potential to harm. If we let anger control us and be the boss of us, that's when it's a problem.

## TRUTH

- In the book of James, James said that we can show others our faith by the way we live, and that the things we do in wisdom, faith, and love are reflections of what's coming from our hearts. But when we let things like envy, bitterness, jealousy, and selfishness take up space in our hearts, they will come out as anger. (James 3:13-16)
- Anger itself isn't bad, but what we do with it could be. When faced with anger, we can control how we handle and respond to it.
- If we want to keep our anger from being the boss of us and avoid fighting and destruction, we have to understand where it comes from inside of us. Our anger is usually about not getting what we want. It's about selfish, or jealous, or bitter feelings that are fighting for space in our hearts. (James 4:1)
- Anger is often about life not happening the way we think it should. We want to be in control of the way life happens to be sure our expectations and desires are met. When things don't happen our way, we get angry and can let it damage ourselves and our relationships.
- Anger doesn't have to be the boss of you.

## APPLICATION

- We can take control of our anger by . . .
  - Taking a step back and choosing to not let it be the boss of us.
  - Being honest with ourselves and with God about where the anger is coming from.
  - Owning our part and taking responsibility for our actions.
- When we take responsibility for how our anger makes us react, we choose to be wise with our feelings. When we do that, anger loses its power over us.

## LANDING

- Anger doesn't have to be the boss of you.
  - What's one thing that really makes me angry?
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## THINK ABOUT THIS

It's much easier for a middle schooler to talk about feelings and emotions when they're not talking directly about themselves. Typically, it's not something they can always verbalize or even see in themselves. That's why asking them to think outside of themselves first helps the conversation. Encourage them to think about anger and how it motivates behaviors and responses in someone else—a character in a TV show or movie, someone on YouTube, a person on social media, or even a family member. Get them talking about how anger plays out in those people's lives first and then turn the conversation back to them. This will help them flex the muscle of self-awareness in this phase. And remember, any conversation should be underscored with this fact: Anger isn't a bad thing. It's important to reiterate that it's not the emotion itself that's unhealthy, but the responses and behaviors that it leads to that can be negative.

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## INTERACTIVE 1: ANGRY GIFS

### OVERVIEW

For this Interactive, you'll show gifs of people who are angry to help illustrate how it feels to be so mad that you can't help but react.

### WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- Three gifs depicting people reacting to their anger (These work best if they're funny and ridiculous!)
- A computer and screen large enough for everyone to view the gifs

## INTERACTIVE 2: OUTWARD/INWARD

### OVERVIEW

For this Interactive, you'll write descriptive words inside and outside of an outline of a person to help explain outward and inward anger.

### WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- A large poster board, white board, or piece of butcher paper
- Something to write with
- A way to display the poster board, white board, or butcher paper (tape, an easel, etc.)

### PREP

- Draw a large outline of a body on the poster board, white board, or piece of butcher paper.
  - Display the outline on stage and have your writing utensil nearby during your talk.
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# TEACHING SCRIPT

MOODS / Week 2

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

WORSHIP

STORY

GROUPS

HOME

## BOTTOM LINE

ANGER DOESN'T HAVE TO BE THE BOSS OF YOU.

## INTRODUCTION

5 MINUTES

Before we get into our talk today, let me ask you a question: Have you ever been so mad, so frustrated, and so upset that you couldn't help but respond? You couldn't help but react?

### **INTERACTIVE: Angry Gifs**

*This is where you'll show gifs of people who are angry to help illustrate how it feels to be so mad that you can't help but react.*

Maybe you studied so hard for that big math test and thought you knew all the material. But when you got your test back, there was a big "F." You felt just like this. *[Show an "angry gif" and add some context/commentary.]* Or maybe the bully at your school keeps picking on your best friend, and no matter what you do or say to the bully, they keep being awful. That makes you so upset that you want to do this. *[Show an "angry gif" and add some context/commentary.]* Or maybe you want to go to that big party the popular kid is having this weekend. All of your friends are going, but your parents won't let you go because you have to go to Grandma's house instead. You're so frustrated and mad that you feel just like this. *[Show an "angry gif" and add some context/commentary.]*

Let's be honest, I think we've all felt the type of anger we just saw in these gifs! I know I have!

### **TELL A PERSONAL STORY**

*Tell a story from your own life that illustrates the following thoughts or ideas . . .*

- Tell a story about a time (preferably in middle school) that you got really angry about something and it caused you to react.
- Be sure to keep the subject matter age appropriate and even funny if possible.
- The goal here is to set up for your students the way our anger can cause us to act.

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# TENSION

5 MINUTES

So maybe you can't relate to my exact situation because you wouldn't get as mad as I did about what I just shared. After all, we all have unique things that make each of us that mad! But the one thing I think we can all relate to is the feeling, or the mood, behind it all. It's anger, and that's something we all feel.

Maybe you get angry when your parents punish you for something, but let your sibling get away with it. Or maybe you get angry when you just can't seem to learn that new TikTok dance. Or you get angry when you lose the big game because of a bad call. Or maybe you get angry when you find out your friend is talking about you behind your back. Maybe for you, your anger comes from not getting something you want or from somebody else not getting what you think they deserve.

**Whatever the reason is behind our anger, it can be easy to fall into the trap of letting it take over.** Of letting it affect how we think, how we respond to others, and how we talk or act.

## INTERACTIVE: Outward/Inward

*This is where you'll write descriptive words inside and outside of an outline of a person to help explain outward and inward anger.*

When we feel anger like this, we usually respond in one of a few ways.

- Some of us experience something called **outward anger**. *[Write "Outward Anger" in the area outside of the person's outline.]* That kind of anger comes out in really outward, obvious ways. You lose your temper *[write "temper" in the area outside of the person's outline]*, you scream *[write "scream"]*, you yell *[write "yell"]*, you get loud *[write "loud"]*, you punch something or get physical *[write "get physical"]*. When you're angry, everybody around you knows it. You show what you're feeling to everyone around you.
- Others of us have more **inward anger**. *[Write "Inward Anger" in the area inside of the person's outline.]* You don't necessarily raise your voice or explode, but the people around you still know just how angry you are because of the way you shut down. *[Write "shut down" in the area inside of the person's outline.]* You go silent *[write "silent"]*, you close off *[write "close off"]*, you cut people out quietly but intentionally *[write "cut people out"]*. Your anger may not be as loud, but your silence is still screaming the way you feel to the people around you.

Some of us may even have what's called **protective anger**. This one is tricky because it's anger for the right reasons. It can be outward *[motion to the words surrounding the person's outline]* or it can be inward *[motion to the words inside the person's outline]*. It's anger about something wrong, or bad, or evil, or unfair in the world. You see those things happening, and anger stirs up inside of you. You want someone to do something or say something to make it right.

Lots of great things have happened in history because of people who experienced protective anger. Take for example Greta Thunberg. She's a teenager who was angry about what's happening to our environment, so she became an activist for climate change. *[Feel free to insert any example of a teenage activist here who will resonate with your students.]* Maybe you've even experienced protective anger yourself when you saw someone being teased on social media. That anger got you to act and stand up for the person being picked on. The anger itself comes from the right place, but it's still about the same thing as most of our other anger. The idea that somebody or something isn't getting what they deserve.

Here's what I think is so important for us to understand in this conversation: **Anger isn't wrong.** The mood, the feeling, the emotion? That isn't a bad thing. **It's when it starts to control us or begins to be the boss of us that it has the potential to do more harm than good.**

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# TRUTH

5 MINUTES

So what do we do to manage this mood? This anger that threatens to control us? To hurt us? To hurt our relationships with others?

Well, we're going to take a look at some answers from a guy named **James**. Now James was actually the brother of Jesus, so I think it's safe to say he had a pretty up close and personal look at the way Jesus lived His life. Here, James was writing to some of the Christians in his time who were spread out all over the region. He was encouraging them to live out what they learned about following Jesus from Jesus Himself. And in this particular passage, he addressed something I think can help us understand how to handle our anger. Take a look:

***Who is wise and understanding among you? Let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice (James 3:13-16 NIV).***

Okay, so let's break this down for a second. James started with a question: "*Who is wise and understanding among you?*" You may have heard that word, "wise," before. To be wise is different from being smart. You earn wisdom from experience. If you're wise, you take what you've experienced and you learn from it. James asked his audience to consider which of them was wise. Which one of them was going to learn from the things they've experienced and be different going forward?

James started by saying that we can show we are wise in the way that we live. The way we treat other people, the way we view other people, and the things we do that demonstrate our faith in God. Those things will be a sign of the wisdom that's living in our hearts. But if we have things like bitterness, envy, selfishness, or anger in our hearts? Then our actions, our words, and our responses will show that instead. Any place in our hearts that's filled with those things? Well, that's where James said we'll find disorder and evil. And if we allow those things to exist in our hearts, they will come out in our lives in the form of anger. That can have the potential to cause a lot of hurt, both to us and others.

**Anger itself isn't bad, but what we do with it could be.** See, when it comes to anger, we all have a choice. We're always going to have reasons to get angry. But when we're faced with anger, we can control how we handle and respond to it. We get to decide if we'll let it be the boss of us.

And I don't know about you, but I don't want to be ruled by my anger. If you feel that way too, then take a look at one more thing James had to say.

***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)***

James wanted us to know that if we want to keep anger from being the boss of us, we have to understand where it comes from. We have to get to the source. And according to him, that source is inside of us. In James' words, the anger starts with the "evil desires at war" within us. Now that's some dramatic language, but I think what James was saying is this: **Our anger is about not getting what we want.** It's about selfish, or jealous, or bitter feelings that are fighting for space in our hearts. And often, it's about life not happening the way we thought it should.

Maybe we think we should've been the one to get the lead in the play. We think our friend should've treated us better. We think our parents should've tried harder to stay together because that's what our family deserves. Or maybe we feel someone else didn't get what we thought they deserved. We think our sibling should've been punished for what they did to us. We think our boyfriend or girlfriend should be more upset about the breakup. We think our dad should apologize for the way he treats our family or our mom should feel bad for leaving us.

And all those feelings? Those desires and feelings of anger James said are battling within us? Well, they're about one thing: **control**. We have this idea of how life is supposed to be. We want to be in control of the way people act and the way life happens so we can be sure our expectations and desires are met. But as you and I both know, that just isn't the way it goes. Our desires aren't always going to be met. People aren't always going to act the way we think they should act. Life isn't always going to happen the way we want it to happen. And when it doesn't, that can make us feel super angry. Angry at the people around us, angry at our circumstances, angry at ourselves, and maybe even angry at God. And as James said, those feelings can damage our relationships. They can lead to fights and quarrels, and let's be honest . . . a lot of other negative things!

Because when we let our anger control what we do, what we say, and how we act, it becomes the boss of us. But remember what we said last week? Jesus offers us a better way. He offers us the freedom from letting our feelings control us. He offers a way to manage all of our big feelings.

See, **anger doesn't have to be the boss of you.**

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## APPLICATION

3 MINUTES

You may be thinking, "Well, that's easy for you to say! But when I feel angry, that's all I feel! And it feels good to let it out." Listen, I get that! We all fall into the trap of letting our anger control us. But I do think that there are ways we can manage all of these big feelings and not let them be the boss of us. Here's where I think we can start:

- **Take a step back.** When we're angry, we usually feel that we have to react or respond to every single thing that makes us mad. But the reality is, we don't! We can choose to take a step back. We can decide not to yell, not to text, not to cut someone out. We can take control and not let anger be the boss of us. And that's a big step!
- **Be honest.** In order to understand our anger, we have to be honest about where it's coming from. Like where it's REALLY coming from. What is it in us that's setting us off? Making us angry? Maybe it's jealousy, or fear, or disappointment. Maybe it's grief, or pain, or frustration. Those not-so-great desires and expectations that James talked about? Try to name them. The next time you find yourself angry, pause and try to think about why you're angry. What got you to this point?

Then, talk to God about the reasons for your anger. Invite Him into what you're feeling. We don't need to keep our anger from God. He can handle all of our feelings, and He wants us to bring them to Him.

If you're struggling to understand or recognize the source of your anger, talking to someone else about it is another great place to begin. Today, maybe your Small Group is a good place to start. There you can open up to a Leader you can trust who loves you and wants to see you live free from the control of anger in your life. Because sometimes talking honestly to someone else can help you see or understand things in a different way. At least that's been my experience!

- **Own your part.** This one is hard! Because honestly, we all want to be angry at someone else or something else. We're mad because we're out of control, but there's one thing we can control: ourselves. Maybe someone hurt us, but then we said something to hurt them back. Maybe something bad happened, but then we did something bad in response. Those things done or said in anger? We have to own them. We have to take responsibility for those things too in order to deal with our anger.

When we take a step back, are honest with our feelings, and take responsibility for how our anger makes us react, we're choosing to be wise with our anger. We're choosing to look at what's going on inside of us and make changes going forward. And as we do that, our anger loses its power to control us. It loses its ability to cause us to react or respond in a way that isn't healthy. It loses the chance to be the boss of us.

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## LANDING

1 MINUTE

Remember, **anger doesn't have to be the boss of you.**

So as you go to Small Group and talk a little more about this, I want you to think about this question: **What's one thing that really makes me angry?**



TRANSITION INTO SMALL GROUPS

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