

# SIDEXSIDE

People in Need of Change **Helping**



People in Need of Change

# RECAP . . .

- **What is Anger?**
  - The Difficulty of Definition
  - An Emotion of Againstness: I am *against* X. I *strongly oppose* X.
    - Active displeasure towards something that's important enough to care about
  - Anger itself is not sinful.
- Three Elements of The Emergence of Anger (2 Sam. 12)
  - I *identify* some perceived wrong
  - I take a *stance of disapproval* and feel displeasure
  - I *desire to act* to right the perceived wrong (even if I don't actually act)



# HOW DOES ANGER GO WRONG?

- Anger is sinful whenever we respond to perceived wrongs in God-mode—"my Kingdom come, my will be done—hallowed be my name."
  - Our mind operates in judicial mode
    - Perceived wrongs must be identified and punishing reactions determined
  - Our actions operate in military mode
    - It's about winning and losing, enemies and allies, attacking and defending. (Gal. 5:15)
  - Our motives pretend sovereign authority
    - Our words and actions are in the name of justice and truth—sin against us or our kingdom comes with discipline to help people know how live rightly before us. (Rom. 12:19)

*In anger "we reach for the crown, and plot for the throne." – Sproul*



# QUESTION

*Why does it sometimes feel good to be angry? What do we make of this strange phenomenon?*



# WHAT ABOUT BITTERNESS & IRRITABILITY?

- While less volatile, bitterness, irritability, brooding and harbored resentment all share DNA with anger—nothing about being introverted or quiet-natured exempts one from these struggles.
  - **How Do I Identify Bitterness Over a (Perceived?) Offense?**
    - Do you hope the best for the person who offended you? Do you hope they prosper and that the Lord blesses the work of their hands?
    - Do you find yourself frequently returning to this offense in your mind and marinating in it? Does this become particularly acute when you see this person?
    - Do you tend to summarize this person in your head as, “the person who did X?”
    - Do you continue to bring the offense up in conversation with the offender or others as a “reminder” long after the offense?
    - Do you feel a strong aversion to restoring the relationship to what it was (or better) before the offense?



# ADDRESSING ANGER: THE MOMENT

- Anger: the “moral emotion”—anger always shows what we care about and what deeply matters to us. Our anger always broadcasts our value judgments.
- **Addressing Anger (Rage) in the Moment**
  - The heat of anger is not the time for helping anyone—and likely not the time to reason with anyone, either. Pause and return to the conversation later when at all possible—this goes for when we are angry, too.
    - Counting to 10, taking deep breathes or walking away are often wise ways to prevent the negative effects of anger; but they do not truly address the core problem of anger at all—as path-shaping efforts, they only prevent anger from turning into wrath (Prov. 12:18; 15:18).



# ADDRESSING ANGER AS A PATTERN—8 A'S OF COMING ALONGSIDE ANGRY PEOPLE

- Help People *Acknowledge* Their Anger (Job 13:23; Prov. 28:13; Lam. 3:40)
  - People are quick to acknowledge that they “get angry,” but very slow to acknowledge that they struggle with being an angry or bitter *person*.
  - Patterns of anger aren't fixed in singular conversations.
- Help People *Ascertain* Their Style (Eph. 4:31)
  - Does this person yell and scream? Icy silence? Low grade bitterness? Cynical/biting comments or jokes? What does their expression of anger look like?
  - Are there patterns in this person's anger? When they drink? When they're tired? When they're stressed?



# 8 A'S CONT...

- Help People *Assess* the Trigger of their Anger (2 Sam. 12:5-6; Lk. 6:11; Eccl 7:9)
  - Hurt?
  - Perceived injustice?
  - Fear?
  - Frustration?
- Help People *Appraise* Their Thinking (Job 38; Jas. 1:19-20)
  - Who am I? Who is God? What has been promised to me in this life? Where is my thinking distorted? What are the consequences?
  - Angry with God?
    - Anger at God = “Againstness”/Opposition toward God
    - Anger vs. Grief and Disappointment





# 8 A'S CONT...

- Help People *Access* Their Heart (Jas. 4:1; Matt. 12:33-35; Jn. 2:14-15)
  - Why does X make me so angry?
  - What does that show me about my deepest desires and what I value? How does this anger broadcast my value judgments?
- Help People *Abandon* Their Demands (Rom. 9:20)
  - How am I encroaching on the role of God in my anger? What laws have I created in my Kingdom whose violation necessitates my wrath?



# 8 A'S CONT...

- Help People *Apply* the Gospel (Matt 18:23-34; Acts 7:60; Ps. 144:4)
  - Have I repented to God for my anger? How does the forgiveness I've been shown in Christ affect my actions and thoughts—do I have ***attitudinal*** forgiveness? How does an eternal hope affect my thinking?
- Help People *Apologize* to the Victims of Their Anger (Jas. 5:16; Matt. 5:23-24)
  - Helping someone address their anger is incomplete without encouraging them to confess and repent to those against whom they have sinned in anger. This confession and repentance before others should regularly accompany their actions done in sinful anger.



# CLOSING THOUGHTS . . .

- Understanding anger fundamentally as “againstness” or a disposition of opposition will go a long way in helping you examine yourself and others.
- Anger broadcasts value judgments.
- Anger is something everyone “experiences” but is few people’s “problem.” Identifying as someone who struggles mightily with anger often carries along with it, shame.
- Bitterness and irritability share the same root as anger—againstness. Often many people who are bitter have no idea they are bitter—they are instead “sad,” “indefinitely frustrated,” or subtly condescending.
- Consistent repentance is key in transformation, no matter how “small” the sinful anger.

