

# HOTHEADS

#HOTHEADSERIES



## HOTHEADS, PART 1: ANGER MYTHS

Statistics show that more than 60% of people lose their temper at least once per week. This stat should get you angry because you know the other 40% of respondents are not being honest! Everyone has buttons that if pushed correctly amp up our emotions. These triggers have the ability to set one off on a path of destructive words, thoughts and behaviors.

**BIG IDEA: If you don't take responsibility for your anger, you will be a slave to it.**

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What type of "hothead" are you? Are you explosive in your anger or do you simmer?
2. Chris began by making 2 assumptions: *You've been angry.* And *in your anger, you've probably done something dumb.* Without embarrassing your spouse, tell of the last time you got angry. What caused it? What did you do when you got angry?
3. What are the triggers that amp up your emotions? Who is often the victim of your anger?
4. *With your Bible or YouVersion, read James 4:1-2.*

*What is causing the quarrels and fights among you? Don't they come from the evil desires at war within you? You want what you don't have, so you scheme and kill to get it. You are jealous of what others have, but you can't get it, so you fight and wage war to take it away from them. Yet you don't have what you want because you don't ask God for it.* James 4:1-2 (NLT)

5. According to this passage, what is the cause of our anger?
6. *Kill* in James 4:2 seems like a pretty harsh word. But, in Matthew 5:22, Jesus placed the anger you hold towards someone on the same playing field as the sin of murder. Was Jesus just overstating this? How does anger and talking behind someone's back like 'murdering' them?

*The Bible says we shouldn't take our anger lightly. It is no wonder then that Scripture also urges to not let the sun go down on your anger (Ephesians 4:26) and to put all anger away (Colossians 3:8, Ephesians 4:31).*

*Selfishness, ungratefulness and impatience often define our anger. Yet, living in our fallen world, sometimes our anger is justified. But, we must be careful not to work to justify our anger because it places us on shaky ground. We either become a vigilante who takes matters into our own hands in hopes of seeking vengeance. Or we play the victim card for the rest of our days. Either way, if we don't master our anger, we will walk around with a chip on our shoulder feeling we are owed.*

7. The first myth is that *My anger is caused by things or other people.* Are you one who justifies their anger? Do you often say, "You make me so mad!" Remember, *if you don't take responsibility for your anger, you will just be a slave to it.*
8. C.S. Lewis said, "My anger protected me only for a short time; anger wearies itself out and truth comes in." In the heat of the moment, why does anger always seem rational?
9. The second myth is that *I just can't control my anger.* Why is this a myth?
10. *With your Bible or YouVersion, read Proverbs 29:11:*

*A rebel, shouts in anger; a wise man holds his temper and cools it.* Proverbs 29:11 (TLB)

11. Anger is not to be managed. Anger must be mastered. You must identify your anger in order to master it. You must be ruthless to identify what drives the anger underneath, but you must not use it to fuel the fire. In order to learn what is required for mastery, you must start with a question: what makes you mad? What did you not get (legit or not) that you wanted?
12. If you don't define your anger, your anger will define you. In what ways have you allowed your anger to shape your identity?
13. The third myth is that the *best way to handle your anger is to ventilate*. The idea is that when you get angry, you must be true to your feelings and act on it. Why is that a myth? Do we always act on our emotions? Should we always act on our emotions?
14. Read the following verses out of Proverbs on anger:

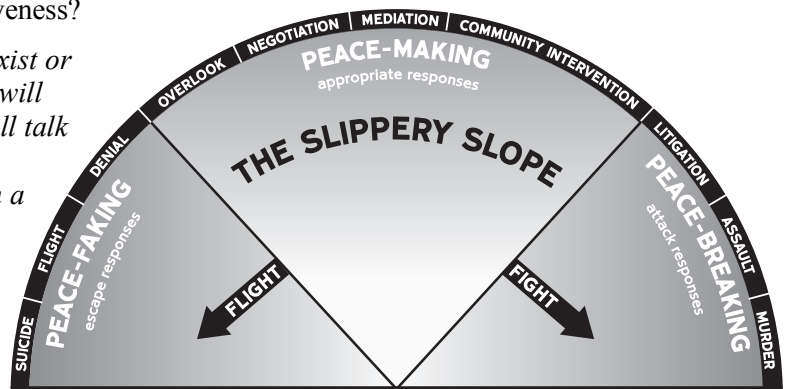
*A fool is quick-tempered, but the wise stay calm when insulted.* Proverbs 12:16 (NLT)  
*Short-tempered people do foolish things...* Proverbs 14:17 (NLT)  
*People with understanding control their anger; a hot temper shows great foolishness.* Proverbs 14:29 (NLT)

15. What are the common themes found in those verses?
16. The fourth myth is that *Talking it out with a third party makes you feel less angry*. Why is that a myth? Chris said, "Talking out the emotion does not reduce the emotion; it rehearses the emotion." Do you agree or disagree?
17. *With your Bible or YouVersion, read Matthew 18:15-17:*

*"If a fellow believer hurts you, go and tell him—work it out between the two of you. If he listens, you've made a friend. If he won't listen, take one or two others along so that the presence of witnesses will keep things honest, and try again. If he still won't listen, tell the church. If he won't listen to the church, you'll have to start over from scratch, confront him with the need for repentance, and offer again God's forgiving love.* Matthew 18:15-17 (Message)

18. How does Jesus command us to handle conflict? What's the first step? Second step? Third step? Are you one who skips steps and sows gossip and divisiveness?

*Instead of pretending that conflict doesn't exist or talking about others behind their backs, we will choose to overlook minor offenses, or we will talk directly and graciously with those whose offenses seem too serious to overlook. When a conflict with another Christian cannot be resolved in private, we will ask others in the body of Christ to help us settle the matter in a biblical manner.*



## MOVING FORWARD

When you are angry you should take notice. Why? Because anger serves as an indicator of disarray happening within your heart. Our anger is a gauge of what is taking place on the inside. Jesus confirms this point. In Luke 6:45, Jesus says, "for out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks." And don't be fooled: anger is still anger even if never gets expressed. The time has come for us quit making excuses and justifying our anger. Anger doesn't remain stagnant. It will continue to move and grow within your heart until it consumes you.

## WHAT WILL YOU DO?

A great way to mismanage anger is to not take responsibility for it. Many people blame their anger problem on their external circumstances. They think that it is something that can't be controlled. They'd rather feel the power of ventilation or suppress their anger completely than actually deal with the source of the problem. Human beings—with Gods help—do have the power to control it. Take on the challenge to become a person who gets angry with the right person, to the right degree, at the right time, and for the right purpose.

## WEEKLY READING

This week, spend some time reading and reflecting on *James 4:1-10*, *Ephesians 4:26-27*, *Proverbs 29:11*, *Matthew 18:15-17*, *Proverbs 12:16*.