

IT Happens Small Group Conversation - Angry and Bitter?

Try keep this conversation no longer than 45 minutes - it is no good sending people home exhausted from just talking for too long. Keep the conversation moving and upbeat. Don't let people take the group off the topic. Do your best to draw out the contributions of quieter people. Land the time in prayer, but remember to gently coach people who haven't prayed in a group before. There is no pressure to pray aloud.

Get to know each other

Option 1: When was the last time you got really angry? What did you get angry about? Share with each other.
OR: Do you consider yourself a person with a 'short fuse' or with a 'long fuse'? Why?

Option 2: Tasting competition: Organize a bunch of different tasting things (ie. apple slices, salt, yoghurt, bread, lemon peel etc) for your small group to taste blindfolded. Let them order them according to bitterness (from the least to the most bitter tasting item).

IT Happens: Angry

Anger is a dominant emotion in our culture, breaking up families and communities and hurting us personally - why do you think there is so much anger around and what are people angry about?

The bible gives us examples of God and Jesus being angry - does that mean it is ok to be angry? What do you think the difference is between God's righteous anger and our personal anger?

Read the following bible verses and discuss what God says about anger:

Proverbs 14 vs29 ; Col.3 vs8 ; Eph 4 vs31 ; Matt. 5 vs21-22

How can we deal with anger?

Here are some points that will help to guide the discussion:

- We get angry because we are so totally self-obsessed; when our will is undermined.
- We can't beat anger by justifying it, medicating it, using will power or by just giving in to it.
- Read 2 Peter 3, 18. What is God telling us in this verse about beating anger?
We need:
Vision - Jesus Christ
Intension - to grow
Means - grace & knowledge
- God brought absolute anger and absolute love together at the Cross.
- God's true character: Exodus 34,6 'God is slow to anger and abounding in love.'

IT Happens: Bitter

Key scripture taught from: Exodus 15: 22-27

The dictionary defines bitterness as 'A state of extreme impiety or enmity to God' (intense feelings of dislike). How would you describe bitterness?

What can lead to feeling bitter?

- Difficult circumstances
- Feelings of injustice
- Feelings of rejection or that we have been wronged
- Disappointment with leaders / people in authority

How do we deal with bitterness? Discuss.

- We need to FORGIVE (Ephesians 4: 31-32)
- Acknowledge the bitterness
- Admit it's a sin against God;
- Put it away (Hebrews 12:15)
- Let Jesus Soothe Your Wounds
- Let Jesus Satisfy Your Needs

We will only stop being bitter, when we confess it, repent of it, and forgive those who have wronged us or those at whom our bitterness is directed. God knows who hurt you - He saw it, He cares. He will settle the score Forgiveness means giving your hurt to God and letting Him handle it. You've been forgiven and now you need to forgive

Pray together

We learned that God can take us from a place of *Marah* (bitterness) and bring us to *Elim* (a place of abundance). Pray in groups of two where possible with your own gender. Share with each other what your area of 'Marah' is and ask God for healing, wholeness or forgiveness where he is prompting you.