

Go in peace [5 minutes]

Conclude by having one person in your group read the serenity prayer aloud.

*God grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot change;
courage to change the things I can;
and wisdom to know the difference.
Living one day at a time;
Enjoying one moment at a time;
Accepting hardships as the pathway to peace;
Taking, as He did, this sinful world
as it is, not as I would have it;
Trusting that He will make all things right
if I surrender to His Will;
That I may be reasonably happy in this life
and supremely happy with Him
Forever in the next.
Amen. —Reinhold Niebuhr and William Spence*

For the Coming week

Read chapter 6, which explores how living in the kingdom is the cure for lying.

The soul-training practice for the week will be a day without words.

The Good and Beautiful LIFE

4

Learning to live without anger

WELCOME – Breaking the ice

OPENING TO GOD – Opening to God (5 minutes)

Read *Colossians 3:1-17* together

5 minutes of silence

Prayer to end the silence

Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
and where there is sadness, joy.
O, Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand;
to be loved as to love;
for it is in giving that we receive;
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

—*The Prayer of St. Francis*

Soul training [10 minutes]

If you are in a group of six or more people, divide into small groups of three or four. Use the questions below to help you process your experience of the soul-shaping exercise of Sabbath keeping.

1. Were you able to observe a Sabbath this week? If so, describe what you did and how you felt about it. Remember it is acceptable to start small!
2. Were you able to experience a connection between Sabbath and anger? If so, how are they related for you?
3. What did you learn about God or yourself from your Sabbath rest?

Engaging the Chapter [25 minutes]

The main idea of this chapter is that anger is caused by unmet expectations mixed with fear.

Read through the following questions before you begin your discussion. Note any questions you especially want to discuss. Depending on your group size and the conversation, you may not have time to discuss all of these questions.

1. This chapter opens with the author's honest account of getting angry during a trip. What aspects of the author's story can you relate to?
2. The author gives us multiple "false imperative narratives" (FINs) (p. 73). Which FIN is most common in your life? How does it lead you to anger?
3. "Jesus' narrative is that God permits nothing to happen to us that he cannot redeem and use for good. In the kingdom of heaven God is always near. We are never alone and never need to be afraid. When I live with this reality deep in my mind and heart, anger cannot get a grip on me" (p. 77). Do you have any evidence in your own life of anger diminishing as you come to know that God is near to us and working for our good? If so and you are comfortable doing so, describe your experience to the group.
4. In the chapter we read this definition for righteous anger: "Righteous anger consists in getting angry at the things that anger God, and then seeking a proper remedy to correct the wrong" (p. 78). Give examples of righteous anger in today's world.

Experiencing transformation [40 minutes]

The goal of this week's "Experiencing Transformation" segment is to help everyone in the group take ownership of their anger, where it comes from, and what can be done about it. To simplify this process we have created the handout "Exploring Anger."

As the leader, monitor the time, allowing 15 minutes for journaling and 15 minutes for discussion in groups of three or four, followed by 10 minutes of reflection in the overall group.

Distribute a photocopy of the handout to each person, explaining to the group that they have 15 minutes to work through the four steps.

After 15 minutes of silent reflection, invite everyone into groups of three or four. Ask everyone to share what they learned from this process. They do not have to share what caused their anger unless they want to. Encourage each group to end their time with prayer for one another as they work through this difficult emotion.

End this experience by having the groups come together as one group and discuss any highlights from the exercise and the conversation that followed.

Conclude the activity by reminding the group that earlier in this study they looked closely at the nature of God and used specific spiritual practices to help see God the way Jesus saw God. From *The Good and Beautiful God*, the author's understanding of *The Lord's Prayer* in chapter 2, "God is Good," as well as "living and breathing" Psalm 23 from chapter 3, "God is Generous," are two excellent practices that help change our narratives.