



Living with integrity

Discovering ways to live with integrity, being the same person on the inside and outside.

REVIEW

Recap on your experience of the challenge. Ask the following questions:

How did it go? Was it helpful?

If you weren't able to try the challenge, explore the question:

Where and how did you experience God last week?

REAL LYFE RED MIST

Anger is the first issue that Jesus addresses in the Sermon on the Mount and he implies that we can actually learn to live without anger. However God gave us the capacity to get angry – because it is the correct response to injustice. It is possible, to be like Jesus and get angry over injustice and not sin.

READ

† Mark 11. 12 – 25 Jesus Puts a Curse on a Fig Tree

¹² When Jesus and his disciples left Bethany the next morning, he was hungry. ¹³ From a distance Jesus saw a fig tree covered with leaves, and he went to see if there were any figs on the tree. But there were not any, because it wasn't the season for figs. ¹⁴ So Jesus said to the tree, "Never again will anyone eat fruit from this tree!" The disciples heard him say this.

Jesus in the Temple

¹⁵ After Jesus and his disciples reached Jerusalem, he went into the temple and began chasing

out everyone who was selling and buying. He turned over the tables of the moneychangers and the benches of those who were selling doves. ¹⁶ Jesus would not let anyone carry things through the temple.

¹⁷ Then he taught the people and said, "The Scriptures say, 'My house should be called a place of worship for all nations.' But you have made it a place where robbers hide!"

¹⁸ The chief priests and the teachers of the Law of Moses heard what Jesus said, and they started looking for a way to kill him. They were afraid of him, because the crowds were completely amazed at his teaching.

¹⁹ That evening, Jesus and the disciples went outside the city.

A Lesson from the Fig Tree

²⁰ As the disciples walked past the fig tree the next morning, they noticed that it was completely dried up, roots and all. ²¹ Peter remembered what Jesus had said to the tree. Then Peter said, "Teacher, look! The tree you put a curse on has dried up."

²² Jesus told his disciples:

²³ Have faith in God! If you have faith in God and don't doubt, you can tell this mountain to get up and jump into the sea, and it will. ²⁴ Everything you ask for in prayer will be yours, if you only have faith. Whenever you stand up to pray, you must forgive what others have done to you. Then your Father in heaven will forgive your sins.

Contemporary English Verse - CEV

REFLECT

Setting the scene:

- ▶ Less than a week before Jesus would be crucified, he and the disciples are in Jerusalem for the Passover festival. Initially it looks like Jesus was simply in a bad mood - hungry and irritated with a fig tree! But this is symbolic - Jesus knew it wasn't the season for fruit - this is about the coming destruction of the Temple because God's people were all 'show' (leaves) and no substance (fruit).
- ▶ Some lessons are better illustrated. The account of

Jesus clearing the Temple is sandwiched between the two parts of the story of the fig tree. Jesus is angry because the Temple was meant to be a place of worship for all people - the Gentile (non Jews) area for worship had been rendered inoperative because of all the petty cheating, haggling and money-changing in the place of God's presence. Jesus quotes from Isaiah 56 - reminding the people that this is meant to be a place of worship for Gentiles as well as the Jews.

- ▶ The fig tree (sometimes used as a picture of Israel) is a perfect illustration of a people

who should have been fruitful but lacked authenticity. Outwardly they worshipped God - but inwardly they lacked compassion, love and were spiritually empty.

- ▶ What are the 'shockers' and 'blockers' for you in this passage?
- ▶ When did you last get really angry? What were the circumstances surrounding this?
- ▶ Is it okay to be angry sometimes? When might anger be justified?

RESPOND

Red Mist Challenge: This session leads us to explore the topic of anger and frustration. As a group, create a challenge to help you reflect and respond appropriately to these emotions.

Challenge ideas:
If you struggle to come up with your own challenge then why not try one of the following...

01 Justice – not just-us

Ephesians 4. 26 -27 raises the issue of appropriate anger - holy anger. God gave us the emotion of anger to use constructively to defend the poor, to work towards justice. Consider a bigger injustice in the world to get angry about. Jesus got angry at injustice and

unfairness. He used his anger to bring peace and to restore a greater cause. Sometimes we get angry about the small things - but what are the bigger issues or bigger injustices you can channel, focus and direct your energy into? What is the bigger fight for you to stand up to? Where can you make a difference and get involved?

02 Looking back at Anger

Take some time this week to reflect on the times you got angry, frustrated, irritated. Reflect on what happened - did you say something you now wish you hadn't? Did you break something? Where did your anger lead? Try to work out the root of your anger or frustration - are there other factors

involved - lack of sleep? Stress? Pride or ego damaged? Your will being blocked? Take some time to be with God and bring these issues before him.

03 Sabbath

Anger can be about unmet expectations and fear. Sabbath is about trusting God. Anger can be about control. Sabbath teaches us to allow God to take care of things and to relax. Pick a day when you will rest from the worries and concerns of life and just eat, sleep, play and enjoy the day with God and others.

'Anger is one letter short of Danger.' *Anon*

'A quick-tempered man does foolish things.' *Proverbs 14.17*

Don't Forget

1. To record your experience of the challenge so that you can accurately share it with your lyfe group when you next meet. You might like to text/tweet each other throughout the experience!
2. Consider posting your created challenge on the lyfe facebook site for others to view.

More resources on 'Real Lyfe'

- Listen to video interview with James Catford
- Read article by Antony Billington on Holiness
- Read 'lyfe story' biographies on Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Desmond Tutu
- Recommended reading – *The Rest of God: Restoring Your Soul* by Restoring Sabbath by Mark Buchanan

GROUP PRAYER:

You might like to commit to praying for each person in the group this week as you look to develop and maintain a life of transparency, honesty, humility and integrity.