

Parenting took an angry turn on Sunday! Okay, we didn't break out in a fight or anything but we did learn about what causes tense situations with our kids and what causes us to become angry, as well as how we could respond better.

This lesson was jam-packed with information and I made a lot of notes to share and pass along, as we had several absent on Sunday. (This info is also attached in a word doc. if it's easier for you to print it).

Out of the gate, Dr. Leman makes sure to establish that anger in and of itself is not bad. We all have angry feelings at times. It's the way we handle them that causes us problems.

James 1:19 says *"Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry. For man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires."*

As adults we hold the accountability for anger. Why? Because we are the adult! We have an ability to think things through and "unleashing" anger on our children is never fair!

Step One... STOP and RESPOND, rather than *react*, when your child is testing you.

Dr. Leman mentioned four ways we deal with anger: Suppress It, Express It, Repress It or Confess It (two of the ways are good, two are bad... you decide!).

Ephesians 4:26 says: *"Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger."* In other words, it's okay to be angry but don't let your anger get out of control against your children (or anyone). As Dr. Leman said, as an adult you have the vocabulary to hand out guilt and words that are hurtful. Don't use "cheap shots" against your kids when you're angry at them or their behavior. Kids aren't perfect and neither are we. Always, always be angry at the situation, not at the child.

TRIGGERS... Recognizing situations that make you angry (what causes the volcano, or triggers that set you off?)

A few possibilities...

- When kids ask over and over for things
- Unreasonable expectations – Wanting our kids to be perfect or burdening them with seeking them to do things exactly how we want them done.
- Kids who challenge authority – having a healthy authority over your kids means you don't run over them. You don't claim the power of "almighty God" (I'm the parent and that's why!).

Instead of being a volcano, find ways to communicate that get the point across – YOUR WORDS MAKE A DIFFERENCE in getting a positive response from your kids and it's different for every kid.

Dr. Leman shared six points on "Practical Steps Parents Can Take To Deal With Anger."

1. **Stop!** Get control of yourself and the situation. Issue a "thought prayer" for God's guidance.
2. **Ask yourself: What is really going on here?** Is there another issue that is fueling the situation.
3. **Express Your Anger** – Voice your feelings honestly. Use a reasonable tone and monitor your facial expressions.
4. **Address the behavior – not the child** - Use "I" statements. I am upset because... I am angry because... Help the child take responsibility for their actions.
5. **Problem-solve with your kids.** Ask your child for input on how the situation could be done differently in the future; how to avoid it.
6. **Express pleasure** when the child changes his/her behavior. (Statements like "I know we have been working on things and it's not easy but your progress is making me happy.").

The next section focused on "Why Kids Get Angry." Three areas were highlighted including:

1. Frustration – We push our kids until they become irritated or frustrated with us and the situation.
2. Fear of Failure – We want our kids to measure up or be "as good as" everyone else's kids.
3. Modeling – We say things to them that we told ourselves "we would NEVER say to our kids" because we heard it from our parents. We say it with the same tone, inflection and facial expressions.

In closing Dr. Leman made these remarks...

- Stop. Think it through. Take a timeout for yourself. Stop and pray – “help me say something that will be helpful to my child, not hurtful.”
- Detour – think about what old-self would normally do and consider how new-self should respond.

Isaiah 1:18 says *“Come now, let us argue it out, says the Lord: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be like snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.”*

- Make the most of your anger – then replace it with an act of love.
- Express anger at the act, not the actor.
- LISTEN to what your child is saying, then respond. Don’t be formulating a response instead of listening to them.
- Ask *your child* how things could be done differently next time. Ask *yourself* how things could be done differently.
- Finally, RESOLVE the situation before you leave the room. NOBODY leaves until the situation is resolved.

That’s a lot of information on “anger” issues but the DVD lesson had a lot to share and tons of points. Dr. Leman also quickly went through a behavior chart and I know some of you were trying to draw that out on Sunday and possibly had trouble keeping up. I made one and it is attached.

Next week’s lesson is another hot topics- electronics and internet! The lesson is called “The Goliath!” It is aptly named “Goliath” because it seems to be an ever-growing giant that is hard to get a grasp on. We will explore how to be more aware of what children are looking at and how to be “in the mix.”

We look forward to seeing you on Sunday at 9:30 a.m.