



## SEVEN • Rage

### What Do I Need to Know?

Checking the roots of rage. As in most of the studies in this series, the first section is primarily designed for starting conversation. One question asks, “How did your family express anger, and how did that effect you?” This is not an attempt to blame our family environment for sin, but to recognize that family patterns often influence our actions and our perception of normative behavior. This tends to be particularly true with anger.

This first section also explores the question: “Is anger sin?” Ephesians 4:26 says, “In your anger do not sin.” From this verse we can glean that anger and frustration are not wrong, in and of themselves. Anger clearly becomes sin, when we entertain hateful thoughts, or express our anger in hateful ways.

The cause and cure for rage: The study explores James 4:1-12 for insight on the cause and cure for rage. James says that fights and quarrels come from “desires that battle within [us].” In other words, rage is caused by a conflict of interests; we have our hearts set on what we desire, and when we don’t get it, we’re frustrated and angry. It can be extremely helpful, as anger encroaches, to ask ourselves the question: What desire of mine is being blocked? Why is this so important to me?

James says that the problem is further compounded when our desires are selfish, and not submitted to God’s direction or authority. The frustration of our worldly goals and agenda lead us to rage, or as James puts it, “to killing and coveting.” (Most likely, he means that in a state of rage, we murder and covet in our thoughts.) When people turn themselves over to rage, often the degree of hate is equivalent to mental murder.

James advances his rebuke, by saying that when we do pray, and attempt to bring God into the situation, the result is often fruitless because all we’re really asking God to do is side with us, and give us what we want. Rather than seeking to align ourselves with God’s will, we try to garner His support to get what we want. And then, when God doesn’t intervene, our anger and frustration is further heightened.

The answer to rage, going to war to get our way, is surrendering to God’s will. James says to, “Submit yourself to God,” and to “humble yourself before the Lord.” Humble submission to God’s dealings with us and His sovereignty in our circumstances is the only thing that will allow a rageful heart to find peace. One

### What’s the Big Idea?

This study will examine the sin of rage: what causes it, how it’s expressed, and how God wants us to deal with it.



choice is to shake our fist at others, God, and the universe, for not getting what we want. The other choice is to humbly receive all results from God's hand, and above all things to seek His will and His plan.

The second cure for rage is found in James 4:12 which says, "There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy." This seems to be a natural corollary to humbling ourselves: we take our role, and allow God to take His. God is our Judge, and we don't need to take matters into our own hands through rage, retaliation, or defensiveness. Rather, we are to entrust ourselves and the results to God, our judge.

### What if There's a Problem?

All foreseeable issues are dealt with in "What Do I Need to Know?"

## What Are the Answers?

1. Have the group share. (Make sure you have the group read through all of the Web quotes and Bible passages that are on the study. Their content is essential to the flow of the study.)
2. Allow the group to share. You might break the ice.
3. Allow people to share what they think is their primary way of dealing with anger.
4. This can be difficult to gauge. Clearly, when feelings of anger get paired or attached to hateful thoughts or speech, it has become sin.
5. Have the group share.
6. Allow for discussion.
7. Open discussion. You might share what prompts rage in you.
8. Often what's going on around us is in conflict with our will and agenda – our plans are being frustrated.
9. Allow the group to share. Be vulnerable.
10. Try to think of a story before the study that you might share here.
11. Discuss.
12. To submit to God's dealings with us, and His sovereign control in our circumstances. To humbly receive all results from God's hand. And above all things, to seek His will and His plan for our lives.
13. James 4:12 seems to be a natural corollary to humbling ourselves: we take our role, and allow God to take His. God is our Judge and we don't need to take matters into our own hands through rage, retaliation, or defensiveness, but rather, entrust ourselves and the results to God, our judge.

## What's Our Response?

James' solution leads to the application of the study: a decision to allow Christ to rule over our hearts and lives. This is really a Lordship commitment, saying to God, "I want to live in all ways for Your kingdom, not my own." It's a call to submit every area of our life to His control and Lordship.

Hand out the article "My Heart, Christ's Home," and encourage people to read it.