

## ANGER

### CONNECT

Here are some questions to get your group started:

- What's the best thing you've watched on TV this week?
- What's the most random (unusual) thing that happened this week?
- How can we be praying for you at the moment?

### DISCUSS

The aim in this discussion time is to look at the issue of anger – especially from the perspective of our relationships with other people.

You might want to set the scene with some anger-related video clips. Scenes from some Adam Sandler movies like *The Waterboy*, *Happy Gilmore* or *Anger Management* could be good ideas, or you could do a YouTube search. Before you show anything, make sure you've watched the entire clip to make sure it's suitable for your group.

Start the discussion by asking everyone to give themselves a score from 1-10 on whether they think they struggle with anger (1 being not an issue, 10 being a constant challenge). Go around the circle and ask everyone to share their score. As you go, you might also want to ask each person to share a story of a time when they lost their temper.

Then have your group read James 1:19-21. Create some space afterwards for people to share their thoughts on the verses. Maybe you could ask everyone to share what that verse means to them – if they're not sure, encourage them to repeat the verse using their own words (paraphrase).

### NEW CHRISTIANS

As people are sharing, you might find it helpful to steer the conversation using questions such as:

- What kinds of things make you angry?
- What reason does this verse give for being 'slow to become angry'?
- How can an out-of-control temper have a bad effect on our growth as a Christian?
- What effect does our anger have on the people around us? / What effect does other people's anger have on you?
- Do you think all anger is sinful and bad? (See Ephesians 4:26-27)
- What kinds of things do you think we can we do to help control our temper?

Try to aim for a few concrete ideas for how we can better manage our anger at the end of the conversation. Don't be afraid to lead your group if you feel they're missing something important, but remember to try and lead them by asking questions and allowing them to talk it out.



### WHY CAN'T WE JUST GET ALONG?

## ANGER

### ESTABLISHED CHRISTIANS

Use the above discussion guide as a starting point. Place a stronger emphasis on honest sharing by pushing your group to think deeply about specific causes and triggers for their anger/frustration.

Challenge them to identify their own personal weakness(es) around the issue of anger.

Finish by getting your group to decide on a method of holding each other accountable to growth in this area.

(You might also want to give your group opportunities to share thoughts on other passages from within James 1.)

### INVOLVE

Patience and self-control are fruit of the Holy Spirit. While we need to take responsibility for our own actions, it's the Holy Spirit within us that does the best job of growing and developing these traits. (You might want to say this in your own words as a way of introducing what comes next).

Invite your group to spend some time praying for each other – specifically by asking God for a fresh baptism of the Holy Spirit. Make sure everyone is individually prayed for. If your group is comfortable praying like this then breaking up into pairs is a good idea, otherwise going around the circle with everyone praying for someone else is probably the best way to teach how to do this.

### APPLY

Challenge your group to keep track of what makes them angry this week. Take note of the who, what, when, and where – write it down if necessary! Ask your group for feedback on whether the ideas you've discussed were helpful or not.

If your group is up for something random, come up with a 'keyword' that you can SMS to each other as a way of redirecting anger rather than reacting angrily. (Like 'Goosfraba' from *Anger Management*).

*(Disclaimer: The last idea is more for the sake of having fun than any attempt at serious anger management.)*



## ANGER

### LEADER'S NOTES

- This 5-week series steps through the 5 chapters of the book of James, 1 chapter per week. Try challenging your group to read the relevant chapter before your group time each week. Ask your group to come up with a system for how they'll keep each other accountable to this – encourage them to be creative!
- In Ephesians 4:26 Paul says: "be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger". And here in James the instruction is not "do not get angry" but "be slow to anger". This suggests that the authors are saying that anger itself is not necessarily always sinful, but that anger and sin are never too far apart.
- Verse 21 of this excerpt does suggest that James believes that an 'anger problem' is usually the result of sin in our lives, whether it be selfishness, arrogance, pride, lack of tolerance for others or stubbornness.



## FAVOURITISM

### CONNECT

Here are some questions to get your group started:

- Do you have a friend or family member we could pray for? Who/how?
- Who do you miss the most? (Someone who used to be part of your life but isn't anymore.)
- Tell us something from your week that no one else here knows yet.

### DISCUSS

Today's discussion focuses on the topic of favouritism. We'll try to unpack the way that 'status' impacts our relationships with others.

If you want to use a video clip to introduce the discussion, try to get a copy of the film *Mean Girls*. The scene early in the movie when Kady first meets the Plastics in the cafeteria is a good one to use. (You may be able to find some useful clips on the internet too.)

Start off by asking people to share who's in their group at school and how big their group is. Ask them to share whether there's a reason that they're all in that particular group rather than a different one. (If your group has finished school, ask them to think back.)

Use the following questions to spark some discussion.

- Is there a 'popular' group at your school? What do you have to do/have/look like to be in that group? Who decides who is in/out?
- What things cause people to divide into separate groups at school/uni? Is this a good thing or not?
- Do people get treated differently based on the group they are in? By who, and how? Does anyone get treated differently by teachers because of their group?

Read James 2:1-9. Ask whether everyone feels like the verse makes sense to them. If anyone says no, ask someone else in the group to explain what it means. Make sure your group understands that while the passage talks about discrimination between rich & poor, God is against discrimination based on race, gender, fashion sense, appearance, and intelligence as well.

### QUESTIONS FOR NEW CHRISTIANS

Use the following questions to help steer the conversation.

- Ask your group what would be different about their school if everyone lived according to what the Bible said in this passage.
- Do you think your youth group would treat a new person who, for example, was really well-dressed, good looking and athletic the same as a new person who was wearing cheap, unfashionable clothes



### WHY CAN'T WE JUST GET ALONG?

## FAVOURITISM

and had some kind of disability? What would the difference be? How does this verse challenge those behaviours?

- Can you think of someone in particular that you have unfairly treated as less important? Someone you have excluded or shown a lack of interest in? (Ask anyone who feels comfortable to share about that situation and to share how they could have responded differently).
- Ask your group whether it would be easy or hard for them to live out this scripture at school. Does anyone have a 'rivalry' with another group at school? Are there any groups you really struggle to get along with or really don't understand?

Don't feel like you need to end up with action points out of this conversation, although there's certainly nothing wrong with it if your group goes there! When you're ready, transition into the INVOLVE activity, and we'll come back to set some action points in the APPLY section.

### QUESTIONS FOR ESTABLISHED CHRISTIANS

In addition to the questions above, you may find these useful:

- Do you ever feel like you have no choice but to play along with your school's popularity game? What sorts of things make you feel this way? (Give examples if they stare at you blankly. For example, a desire to be validated as 'cool', fear of bullying [or actual bullying].)
- How do you fight against the groups/popularity culture? What qualities would a 'warrior' need to have?
- Do you think there are any occasions when it is acceptable to favour some people over others? (If the Queen came to your church should she get special treatment? What about the General of The Salvation Army? Should you go to extra effort to ensure that someone who is unable to walk has a seat? How is this sort of 'special treatment' different to favouritism?)

## INVOLVE

We are going to spend some time praying for people 'outside' our friendship groups, and we're going to trust God to give us the names of the people he wants us to pray for.

Have everyone spend 2-3 minutes asking God to give them the name of someone to pray for. It should be someone they know but who isn't part of their normal friendship group. You might explain it by encouraging your group to think about the names of all the people in their year at school, and seeing whether one particular name or a group of names seems to jump out at them more than the rest.

Either in pairs or as a whole group, pray for the people who you have thought of.



## FAVOURITISM

### APPLY

Challenge your group to do one thing out of the ordinary to set an example of unity this week. Some examples could be:

- Commit to saying hello to everyone from your year when you see them. (Bonus points if you smile too)
- Try to include someone in your group who doesn't really belong to a group. (Don't be offended if it doesn't work – some people are quite happy being on their own. The important thing is that you have an inclusive attitude!)

### LEADER'S NOTES

To help you start thinking about this issue, and what the young people in your group might be going through type "mean girls: politics of girl world" into your YouTube search engine. The author of the book that the movie *Mean Girls* is based on gives a very interesting commentary on how the 'favouritism' issue plays out in schools today.



## WORDS

This week you will need:

- A copy of the attachment for each person

### CONNECT

Here are some questions to get your group started:

- Sum up your week so far by making a noise. Why did you pick that sound?
- What would you like to achieve this year that you didn't achieve last year?
- What was your favourite childhood toy and why?

### DISCUSS

Today's discussion focuses on the topic of the tongue – and the incredible power it has. We'll identify some of the ways our words can be used for good/evil and consider how we as individuals can use our words to bring life.

If you want to use a video clip to introduce the discussion, you might like to use one of these clips.

- [www.skitguys.com/videos/item/can-you-hear-me-now](http://www.skitguys.com/videos/item/can-you-hear-me-now)  
(A humorous introduction to the discussion from The Skit Guys)
- [www.youtube.com/watch?v=k2hWcZlrEss](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k2hWcZlrEss)  
(Reflective clip made by a teenager, for her peers)
- [www.worshiphousemedia.com/mini-movies/6115/One-Word](http://www.worshiphousemedia.com/mini-movies/6115/One-Word)  
(Hard hitting clip that focuses on the potential negative impact name calling and labeling can have)

Start the discussion by asking everyone in the group to share about one time when they were powerfully affected by what someone said to them, or about them.

(Some will probably share about a time when someone's insult affected their self esteem. Others might share about how someone's encouraging words helped them through a time when they felt there was no hope. Be prepared with your own story to help get the ball rolling if necessary.)

### QUESTIONS FOR NEW CHRISTIANS

Read James 3:1-8.

Ask a volunteer from the group to summarise these verses in their own words. Does everyone else in the group agree with the summary? Would anyone like to add to it?



### WHY CAN'T WE JUST GET ALONG?

## WORDS

You might find it helpful to steer the conversation using the following questions:

- James describes the tongue as “a restless evil, full of deadly poison”. Do you think this is a little extreme? Why/why not?
- James says one word can be like the spark that starts a huge fire that destroys everything. How can one word start a chain reaction that leads to something so big? In what way could your words have this kind of impact on someone or something?
- Do your words ever fall into the destructive and/or ungodly category? Give yourself a rating out of 5 for how much of an issue you feel this is for you. (5 = “I’m out of control. Just about everything I say is destructive and hurtful” and 0 = “absolutely everything I say is pure, constructive and totally righteous. I can’t even remember the last time I said anything that wasn’t full of grace and truth.”) Ask each group member to explain why they chose the number they did.
- What do you think a follower of Jesus should do if they find themselves repeatedly using their words destructively? Have you tried something in the past that has helped? Read Matthew 12:34. Based on this verse, what should we do if we notice ourselves using our words sinfully a lot?

### QUESTIONS FOR ESTABLISHED CHRISTIANS

Read James 3:1-8.

Ask someone from within the group to explain what they believe this verse is saying. Does everyone agree? Would anyone like to add to it?

Use the following questions to help your group go deeper:

- James likens the human tongue to a wild animal, a spark that starts a huge, destructive fire and to lethal poison. How fair do you find think these comparisons are? Which one do you connect with the most and why?
- Do your words ever fall into the ‘destructive and/or ungodly’ category? Give yourself a rating out of 5 for how much of an issue you feel this is for you. (5 = “I’m out of control. Just about everything I say is destructive and hurtful” and 0 = “absolutely everything I say is pure, constructive and totally righteous. I can’t even remember the last time I said anything that wasn’t full of grace and truth.”) Ask each group member to explain why they chose the number they did.
- If you want to go really deep, and your group trusts each other, create some space for your group to provide some feedback on how each other uses their words. Perhaps sharing 3 strengths and 1 area for growth might be a valuable way of doing this. (But don’t do this activity if you don’t trust your group to either give or receive the feedback in the right spirit).
- Have you ever made a conscious decision to change the way you speak, to honour God more with your words? Tell us about that. (Prompt with extra questions if necessary. What was the issue?)



## WORDS

What made you want to address it? How did you go about it? What happened?)

- Read Matthew 12:34. Bearing in mind that the original writer and audience would have understood the heart in the way that we now understand the mind, what do you think this verse is saying?

### INVOLVE

Ask each person in the group to share one aspect of their speech that is not God-honouring. (For example, gossip, slander, jokes made at other people's expense, dirty humour.)

*Then*

Ask each person to share one thing they are going to do to address this area of their life. If they simply say that they will spend some quality time on their knees in prayer that's a great response! Don't feel like you need them to come up with something more 'practical'.

*Then*

Have each person pray for someone else in the room OR have an open, unstructured time of prayer. Try to ensure that each person is prayed for specifically, for a fresh infilling of the Holy Spirit.

### APPLY

Challenge your group to start each day this week by asking the Holy Spirit to direct and guide them. (If everyone in your group already does this every day – brilliant!) Encourage them to pray specifically that the Holy Spirit would make them more aware of the words they use.

If they are up for it – invite your group to keep a brief 'tongue' journal this week. They'll record what they observed each day about how they used their words and what difference it made to invite the Holy Spirit to lead them each day.

### LEADER'S NOTES

- To further explore the idea of sinful talk consider 1 Peter 3:10 and Isaiah 6:5
- The attachment is a reprinted excerpt from Samuel Logan Brengle: Heart for God and is a paraphrase of Brengle's words in Heart Talks on Holiness. You might like to use this as a point of discussion, or simply provide it to your life group members to take home and reflect on.

## WORDS

### THE REMEDY FOR SINFUL TALK

What is the remedy for sinful talk?

- 1. Put yourself in the other person's shoes**  
Consider that he may have struggles you know nothing about. He may have business troubles and cares, or he may have family trials of which you are a stranger, or he may have had a very faulty early training which has marred him for life. We ought to leave judgment to God, who knows all and is infinitely wiser and more merciful than we are.
- 2. Think about your own sins and faults**  
This will be far more profitable than thinking about his. It is infinitely more likely to make a better person of you.
- 3. Remember the danger sinful talk poses to yourself**  
One of the chief dangers in wrong-speaking is that we eventually under-estimate everybody else, and over-estimate ourselves. We see our own virtues and other people's faults, when we ought to look long at their virtues and our own faults. If we want to be like Jesus, we must obey the command, 'In humility consider others better than yourselves'. (Philippians 2:3).
- 4. Consider how Jesus loves the person**  
If Jesus loves him enough to die for him, can't we love him too? And if the person is Christian, then he or she is a child of God. Your Heavenly Father is her Heavenly Father. Consider how a parent with four children loves them all, and is hurt when one of them is wronged. How much more does God love that person as well as you, and is hurt when she is wronged.
- 5. Get a clean heart, full of the Holy Spirit**  
Get a heart full of love, and then you will not have to criticise any man.

*Paraphrased from Samuel Logan Brengle's  
Heart Talks On Holiness*



## CHRISTIAN CONFLICT

This week you will need:

- A piece of paper and pen for each group member

### CONNECT

Here are some questions to get your group started:

- If you were able to make one dream come true for someone else – no matter how outrageous it is – what would you choose?
- What's one thing you have read in the Bible recently that has helped you?
- If you could choose for it to be one season all the time which would you choose and why?

### DISCUSS

Today's discussion focuses on the conflict or disunity that sometimes takes place amongst Christians. We'll consider how God feels about this, and what the root cause of this kind of behaviour is.

Sadly, there are many Christians who feel unloving feelings towards each other. They disagree strongly on something, they feel jealous because their fellow Christian got an opportunity they wanted or they are hurt by something their fellow Christian said but never raise it and instead, hold on to the hurt until they feel bitter resentment towards the person.

Start the discussion by asking:

- Do you get along with and only feel nice feelings towards all of the Christians you know? Can you think of any Christians you really don't like or who you have fought with? Perhaps someone who you've completely stopped talking to because of a fight you had? (Make sure your group doesn't use this as an opportunity to slander or bad-mouth someone! It's probably best if they can share the story without mentioning names. As usual, it would be ideal for you to have an example of your own ready to share.)
- How do you think God feels when Christians fight with or feel hatred towards each other?

Ask your group members to turn to James 4:1-10. Ask a volunteer to read the passage slowly, loudly and clearly.

### QUESTIONS FOR NEW CHRISTIANS

Explain that James gives any Christian who is in conflict with another Christian a strong talking to here – he jumps up and down to get our attention about how appalling and unacceptable this kind of behaviour is for Christians.



### WHY CAN'T WE JUST GET ALONG?

## CHRISTIAN CONFLICT

James makes out that it is extremely bad and extremely serious when Christians turn against each other.

According to these Bible verses, the main reason why we end up not getting along with our fellow Christians is our own selfishness. In verse 2 it says that there's a battle going on inside of us. Part of us wants Jesus to have full control, but part of us is still being selfish and is still focused on what we want.

Finish by asking your group the following questions:

- Do you feel like you battle with selfishness? (How can you tell when you're being selfish? Often we are blind to our own selfishness, so you might have to push your group to really question and examine their attitudes and behaviour - e.g. Do they have a servant attitude at home, or are they lazy?)
- Is selfishness always the cause of conflict, or can there be other causes?
- What is the difference between conflict and a disagreement? Is there one?

### QUESTIONS FOR ESTABLISHED CHRISTIANS

Use the following questions to guide the discussion:

- What stands out to you the most from the Bible passage?
- Do you think it's realistically possible for a church to have no conflict?
- What is your role in resolving or preventing church conflict?
- Ask someone to read Matthew 5:23-24. What do Jesus' words add to today's discussion? Do you think sometimes we play down the importance of living in harmony with each other?

## INVOLVE

Ask a couple of people to re-read verses 7-8. (If you have a couple of different translations available, that would be great).

Explain to your group that we are going to take some time now to 'humble ourselves' and to 'purify our hearts'. Is there someone they need to apologise to? Is there someone God is prompting them to forgive? Have they become aware of a selfish desire within them that they need to surrender?

Give each person a piece of paper and a pen and allow 5-10 minutes for everyone to reflect on how God wants them to respond to what they have read tonight. (Play some reflective background music if possible).

When the time is up, encourage anyone who is willing to share with the group about what they wrote down.

At the end, ask someone to close by praying for the group as a whole.



## CHRISTIAN CONFLICT

### APPLY

What is one thing that you will do in response to what you learned this week? (If there is an obvious practical application to what individuals wrote during the 'involve' section, encourage them to embrace that).

### LEADER'S NOTES

- When James uses the language of war: 'wars', 'fightings', 'at war', 'kill', 'fight', 'wage war' he is using the words metaphorically. His intention is to convey how absolutely horrific an occurrence it is when feuds, hostility, resentment, hatred and disunity of any kind occurs amongst followers of Jesus.
- If your group are struggling to access the language in the Bible translation you usually use, you might like to print out or read your group the paraphrase from The Message (below).

### GET SERIOUS

*<sup>1-2</sup>Where do you think all these appalling wars and quarrels come from? Do you think they just happen? Think again. They come about because you want your own way, and fight for it deep inside yourselves. You lust for what you don't have and are willing to kill to get it. You want what isn't yours and will risk violence to get your hands on it.*

*<sup>2-3</sup>You wouldn't think of just asking God for it, would you? And why not? Because you know you'd be asking for what you have no right to. You're spoiled children, each wanting your own way.*

*<sup>4-6</sup>You're cheating on God. If all you want is your own way, flirting with the world every chance you get, you end up enemies of God and his way. And do you suppose God doesn't care? The proverb has it that "he's a fiercely jealous lover." And what he gives in love is far better than anything else you'll find. It's common knowledge that "God goes against the wilful proud; God gives grace to the willing humble."*

*<sup>7-10</sup>So let God work his will in you. Yell a loud no to the Devil and watch him scamper. Say a quiet yes to God and he'll be there in no time. Quit dabbling in sin. Purify your inner life. Quit playing the field. Hit bottom, and cry your eyes out. The fun and games are over. Get serious, really serious. Get down on your knees before the Master; it's the only way you'll get on your feet.*

*James 4:1-10 (MSG)*



## PATIENCE

### CONNECT

Here are some questions to get your group started:

- What's one thing you have gotten better at this year?
- What's your favourite time of day?
- If you could change one thing about the city or town you live in, what would it be?

### DISCUSS

Today's discussion focuses on the topic of patience. We'll consider why it's so important.

To get the discussion started, ask the following questions:

- What's the longest you've ever had to wait for your meal at Maccas? How did you react to the wait?
- Can you remember a time when you got really worked up about having to wait for someone or something? Tell us about it. (Give examples if needed: waiting for a friend who was meant to be meeting you, waiting for your parent to pick you up after school, waiting for something you'd ordered on the internet to arrive in the mail, waiting for God to answer a prayer, waiting for your 2 minute noodles to be ready).
- Why do you think we find it so hard to be patient?

Ask for a volunteer to read James 5: 7-11.

### QUESTIONS FOR NEW CHRISTIANS

Use the following questions to guide discussion:

- The farmer waits patiently for just the right time before harvesting his crops and gets a much better harvest as a result. Can you think of other aspects of life where we get to experience something better if we wait? (E.g. Waiting until you're married to have sex, allowing the brownies to stay in the oven for the full baking time rather than pulling it out early just because we're too eager, waiting til Christmas morning to check out your presents when you're a kid – even though you found them hidden in the garage a few weeks earlier).
- Are there any particular personality traits or habits in others that you find particularly irritating? Do you know why it's so annoying? How can you prepare yourself to be more patient with these people?
- The prophet Jeremiah (Jeremiah 11:21) faced intense persecution for his faith. People threatened to kill him if he kept preaching God's word, Ezekiel (Ezekiel 24:16) had his wife, the one he most loved taken from him and Job lost absolutely everything – his health, his family, everything he owned. And yet all of these people persevered and remained faithful to God.



### WHY CAN'T WE JUST GET ALONG?

## PATIENCE

- \* Do you think you would be able to stay strong and keep trusting in God if something like that happened to you? Why/why not?
- \* What sorts of things do you think could help us stay patient and persevere when things don't turn out the way we want them to as quickly as we want them to?

### QUESTIONS FOR ESTABLISHED CHRISTIANS

In addition to the previous 'New Christians' questions, you might find the following questions helpful:

- This passage refers specifically to Jesus' return. In verse 9 we read that "the Judge is standing at the door". Think about the idea that tomorrow (or, in fact, any day) could be the day when Jesus returns, when you stand before him and are judged.
  - \* Would you say that you live every day with eternity in mind?
  - \* Does an 'eternal perspective' make it harder or easier to be patient with the things you face today in life? Explain your answer.

### INVOLVE

Are there some people within your group who are facing really tough times at the moment? Take time to pray for them – for perseverance and strength.

OR

If no-one in your group is struggling – think of someone outside of the group who you can pray for. Maybe you could also each take time to write an encouraging text message to them.

### APPLY

We have reached the end of the series!

Ask each person to share one thing they will do differently this week based on what they have taken from the book of James.

### LEADER'S NOTES

- As with last week, if your group are struggling to access the language in the version you usually use, you might like to print out or read your group the paraphrase from The Message (attached).



## PATIENCE

---

### JAMES 5:7-11 (MSG)

<sup>7-8</sup>Meanwhile, friends, wait patiently for the Master's Arrival. You see farmers do this all the time, waiting for their valuable crops to mature, patiently letting the rain do its slow but sure work. Be patient like that. Stay steady and strong. The Master could arrive at any time.

<sup>9</sup>Friends, don't complain about each other. A far greater complaint could be lodged against you, you know. The Judge is standing just around the corner.

<sup>10-11</sup>Take the old prophets as your mentors. They put up with anything, went through everything, and never once quit, all the time honoring God. What a gift life is to those who stay the course! You've heard, of course, of Job's staying power, and you know how God brought it all together for him at the end. That's because God cares, cares right down to the last detail.

