

Instructions:

Group leaders, take some time before your gathering to look over these questions. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you as you pick 3-5 questions to discuss that pertain to your group's unique style and needs.



Series: Vice

Talking about sin makes us uncomfortable. We can identify and try to avoid the “bad ones.” It’s easy to see in the lives of our neighbors. And evil is clearly at work out there in the world beyond us. But what about the sin and evil that arises from our own hearts? What about our own propensity to sin; those bad habits, tendencies, or traits that we would rather *not* be reminded of? Join us this Lent as we reflect on the historic seven vices in order to identify a multitude of mundane, everyday sins that can cling too closely.

Message Description:

Proverbs 14:29 says, "Whoever is slow to anger has great understanding, but he who has a hasty temper exalts folly." The Bible has a lot to say about anger. But is it ever ok for a Christian to be angry? We see Jesus feel and express every human emotion, including anger, but never sin. How can we grow to express good anger that moves us to action, to work for justice and reconciliation, and to surrender the sinful habits of anger that tend to wrath? *There but for the grace of God go I.*

Key Scriptures

*Search me, O God, and know my heart!
Try me and know my thoughts!
See if there be any grievous way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting!*
Psalm 139:23-24

Additional Resources:

- For more information on a daily practice of self-examination, check-out: <https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/ignatian-prayer/the-examen/>
- For a prayer practice that will lead you through study and examination, check-out <https://www.24-7prayer.com/resource/lectio-365/> or download the app, lectio365!

Questions Related to This Week's Teaching:

1. In her teaching, Rachel asked if it was ever ok for Christians to be angry. Prior to the teaching, how would you have answered this question? What do you think now?
2. What is the difference between anger and wrath?
3. When was the last time you were truly angry? What made you angry? Was it "good anger" or did it border on wrath?
4. Of the three categories of disordered expression of anger (getting angry too easily, getting angrier than you should, staying angry too long), which one do you struggle with the most?

Going Deeper:

Read James 1:19-27

- According to this passage, how can we begin to become slow to anger?
- What does it mean to be a doer of the word?
- What role does our speech play in expressing our anger?
- Luke 6:45 says, "... out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks." How does this relate to our conversation about the vice of wrath?

"Our speech and words.. express wrathful patterns: these sinful habits include angry outbursts, insulting others, blaspheming God... If we regularly use insulting words for others, post social media rants, or mutter a steady stream of derogatory commentary while driving, we need to look at the inner source of those habits...

America's new cultural trademark is contemptuous communication, often barely disguised as 'humorous banter' or 'political discourse.' Contempt comes in the form of middle school put-downs, memes and roasts, trash-talking, scoring social points by trading insults on Twitter, or monologuing on talk shows. How many hours of television or talk radio do we have to listen to before it seems like normal conversation to habitually demonize those who disagree with us? Is it really ok to trash people publicly on social media as a recreational pastime?" (*Rebecca DeYoung, Glittery Vices*).

- Do you agree with these examples of contempt in our cultural dialogue today? Are you ever tempted to join in with the contempt by how you express your anger (at this point wrath) over how you or others have been wronged? When and why?
- How are we called to be counter-cultural in how we speak, to both fellow Christians and people outside the church?

For Personal or Group reflection (questions from Rebecca DeYoung):

1. Keep your own anger journal for a week. Review it later, asking:
 - a. What are my anger triggers?
 - b. What do they reveal about my expectations, my hurts, my hopes and plans, my sense of what I deserve, my sense of what I can control?
 - c. How much of my anger is "good anger?"
2. What are practices that can help you surrender or express your anger so that it doesn't grow to wrath? How can we help you practice those or hold you accountable?