

DAILY DEVOTIONAL

What To Do When You Don't Know What To Do

WEEK 1

PAY ATTENTION TO HOW YOU AFFECT YOUR FAMILY.

"In your anger do not sin:" Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry.

EPHESIANS 4:26, NIV

DAY 1

Have you ever thought about how many emotions you experience in a day? In a span of 24 hours, you can go from happy, to angry, to excited, to sad, to frustrated, to thrilled—and sometimes without any warning!

The truth is, while all of our emotions are powerful, anger seems to be the one that most often motivates our actions, words, and thoughts in the wrong direction. Sure, it's a valid feeling, but if we hang on to that feeling for too long, it can cause us to make unwise choices. That's why Paul encourages us to deal with our anger head on—to get to the source of it before the day ends so that we don't find ourselves in trouble because of it. Because when anger isn't dealt with, it has a tendency to grow. And anger growing out of control never leads to anything good. Is there something making you angry? **Ask God to help you let go of it, so you're not tempted to act on it.**

Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.

JAMES 1:19B, NIV

DAY 2

Have you ever been talking to someone only to realize they're not actually listening to you? Or maybe you've been the one who's dropped the ball on listening. Maybe you've been halfway through a conversation before you realized you had no idea what the other person had been saying. You had checked out and missed the whole conversation!

A Greek philosopher, Epictetus, once said, "We have two ears and one mouth so that we can listen twice as much as we speak." In other words, listening is so much more important a tool than speaking. Which is exactly what James, the brother of Jesus is saying here. We should rush to listen, and slow down before speaking. It takes a certain level of maturity to actively listen to someone else. But when we practice this—when we truly and actively listen to others—we not only get the chance to show them respect, we grow in maturity in our own right as well. **Today, as you find yourself in conversation with others, practice active listening.**

A hot-tempered
person stirs up
conflict, but the one
who is patient calms a
quarrel.

PROVERBS 15:18, NIV

DAY 3

Superheroes are known for their ability to swoop in and save the day with their superpowers. But did you know you have a superpower, too? Seriously. You may not wear a cape or climb up the sides of buildings, but when you demonstrate patience, it's almost as good as being able to fly. Because patience has the ability to change circumstances and people for the better.

Interacting with other people can be unpredictable, and life has a way of testing your patience. But with God's help, you can put your superpower to work to help you keep your cool no matter who or what tests your limits. And keeping your cool is a decision you will never regret. **Try to memorize this verse today. Use it as a reminder to call on God to help you exercise some supernatural patience in big and small ways this week.**

Get rid of all
bitterness, rage and
anger, brawling and
slander, along with
every form of malice.

EPHESIANS 4:31, NIV

DAY 4

Some things are easier said than done. It's easy to say we should get rid of bitterness and anger, but to actually do it? That's a different story! But just like with any difficult task, practice makes perfect. Meaning, if you want to get better at getting rid of bitterness and rage, you have to practice getting rid of it. So when you feel anger brewing up inside of you, the best thing to do is replace it with compassion for the person on the other end. When you feel bitterness creeping in, change your perspective and focus on the good in your life.

When you find yourself tempted to fight with or talk about someone else, pause and ask yourself what a better response might be. Practice an alternative so that rage and bitterness aren't your first response. And you'll begin to find that the more you practice taking steps in the right direction—steps toward compassion, and peace, and unity, and kindness—the easier taking those steps will become.

Even fools are thought
wise if they keep
silent, and discerning
if they hold their
tongues.

PROVERBS 17:28, NIV

DAY 5

Self-reflection is a good habit to begin developing at any age. And all it means is to start taking a minute and observing how you are in the world around you. Instead of just reacting to people, pause and consider how what you might say or do will impact the people around you. Sure, it would be a lot easier to go about life without a care or thought for the way others see us. But there's so much value in pausing to think about our words, actions, and choices from the perspective of other people.

How can you be more aware of the affect you have on the people around you? Find a trusted friend, Small Group Leader, or adult in your life. Ask them to help you do some self-reflection. **Today, identify one aspect of your life or character that you want to work on bettering. Then, pray together about the ways you can work on it this week.**