



Road Rage!!!

The definition of road rage is “violent anger caused by the stress and frustration involved in driving a motor vehicle in difficult conditions.” Now relate that definition to our relationship with our teens. Road rage in our journey is a violent outburst by mom, dad, and or the teen that is caused by lots of stress and frustration in work or school while trying to maneuver our life in difficult situations or issues. Road rage doesn't always have to be evidenced by an obvious outburst. For example, road rage can be that person who gets ticked off by the person on the highway who passes them in an unsafe manner or what's known as "cuts them off". Then when they have an opportunity to catch up to them again and the other cars' lane starts to slow down the cut-off person will speed up to make sure they can't get over in front of them. They get a kick out of watching that car have to wait for multiple cars back before they can get over.

We want to make sure we are not like the woman who was dealing with some road rage issues. You see an honest man was being tailgated by a stressed-out woman on a busy boulevard. Suddenly, the light turned yellow just in front of him. He did the right thing, stopping at the crosswalk, even though he could have beaten the red light by accelerating through the intersection. The tailgating woman hit the roof, and the horn, screaming in frustration as she missed her chance to get through the intersection. As she was still in mid-rant, she heard a tap on her window and looked up into the face of a very serious police officer. The officer ordered her to exit her car with her hands up! He took her to the police station where she was searched, fingerprinted, photographed, and placed in a holding cell. After a couple of hours, a policeman approached the cell and opened the door. She was escorted back to the booking desk where the arresting officer was waiting with her personal effects. He said, "I'm very sorry for this mistake. You see, I pulled up behind your car while you were blowing your horn, flipping off the guy in front of you, and cussing a blue streak at him. "I noticed the 'Choose Life' license plate holder, the 'What Would Jesus Do' bumper sticker, the 'Follow Me to Sunday-School' bumper sticker, and the chrome-plated Christian fish emblem on the trunk. Naturally, I assumed you had stolen the car." Our beliefs come into play and our teens are watching us see if we back up our words with our action when it comes to keeping our cool in difficult situations.

Communication during angry moments is also vital to a successful relationship with our teens. We don't want to be like the man who was driving down a road while a woman was driving down the same road from the opposite direction. As they pass each other, the woman leans out the window and yells, "PIG!" The man immediately leans out his window and yells, "WITCH!" They each continue on their way, and as the man rounds the next curve, he crashes into a huge pig in the middle of the road, totaling his car. Misunderstanding of what's going on inside each other during emotional situations is a BIG reason why we don't communicate well and heated arguments get started. It's also important to know that males usually get angry twice as much as females. Males usually get angry at things or activities while females get angrier at people. In other words, men can

scream and kick a broken lawnmower while the woman looks at him in disbelief wondering what in the world makes him so crazy. On the other hand, mom can get really angry at how Nancy didn't clean her room while dad says "what's the use, just don't go up in her room."

Road rage with our teens is something that we can't take lightly. If we don't help our teens AND ourselves deal with anger issues then it will affect how successful we all become in our careers as well as our families.

Let me first start with a myth that many Christian families have about anger. Many families teach their children that anger is unacceptable and will not be allowed in their family. That type of belief about anger is not biblical and can be a dangerous attitude. If the child is suppressing their anger and never really taught how to manage that anger they will only push it down deep into their being and it will eventually come out in either one of two ways. We will talk about the two main types of anger later in this chapter but neither are very productive and can be very hurtful emotionally and physically. The reason why I say that is an unacceptable emotion to portray as unbiblical is due to Ephesians 4:26 which says, "In your anger do not sin." It doesn't say never get angry or if you get angry it's sin. If you think getting angry is a sin then you've got some issues with Jesus. It is clear while Jesus was in the temple that His anger motivated Him to righteous activity when He threw out the money changers and turned over their tables. (Matthew 21:12-13). Ephesians 4:26 says "in your anger do not sin", so you can be angry without sinning. So what's the purpose of the emotion of anger? God allows for anger in our lives so that it will motivate us to do good. It's when we cross the line of our selfish ambition and let our words and actions get out of control that anger becomes sin. It's when anger no longer is interested in doing what is right in God's eyes, but right in our own eyes, that it becomes a problem.

- **I believe that anger, when used wrongly, is the most destructive action thrust upon each other and damages long term opportunities for a strong loving relationship.** Most of the time we are not honest with ourselves and our teens are not honest with us when it comes to why we are really angry. We often will pass it off as the other person has wronged me and I'm not going to allow that to happen. Someone more than likely has wronged someone else but it does not give them the license to sin against that person in destructive anger. The Good News version of Proverbs 25:28 says, "*If you cannot CONTROL your anger you are as HELPLESS as a city without walls, open to attack.*" Notice the two words I have underlined. Learning to control your anger and teaching your teen to control their anger is critical to successfully communicating a feeling of being loved and valued. The reason why this is so important is that teens are all about feelings. As stated numerous times in this study so far, but it is worth repeating, "teens know they are loved by mom and dad logically but often don't feel loved by mom and dad." Notice the second word underlined is "helpless". When a person is under the control of the wrong kind of anger they become helpless to the results. Think about how easy it is to say and do the wrong thing in a heated argument. How many times have you wished you could take back some of the things you said and did during a knockdown, drag-out fight. It's because you became helpless while under the influence of impure anger. Understanding why we get angry is the first step in getting a grasp of managing harmful anger and controlling our **road rage**.

Understanding the why's-

Proverbs 19:11 says, "A man's wisdom gives him patience...", so understanding why we tend to get angry will be helpful. If we can figure out the cause of what's triggering the anger then it will go a long way in having a better relationship with our teen.

According to Dr. Gary Chapman, there are two kinds of anger, distorted anger, and definitive anger. **Distorted anger** is what happens when no actual wrong has been done but rather, your personal expectations/agenda/demands have not been met. This type of anger-trigger is the most common with us. It is born out of our selfish pride and our self-centered nature. This self-centeredness is also what keeps us from recognizing when we have done wrong and need to apologize.

Definitive anger occurs when an actual wrong has been done as defined and derived from the principles in the Bible. It's something that God would be angry about. Things like abuse, cheating, deceit, hypocrisy, selfishness, oppression, etc. This type of anger is justified and should motivate us to do right. We need to, however, show Godly characteristics so we can change the situation to a positive experience.

So understanding what type of anger we have will go a long way in helping us manage the anger. For example, suppose your teen just lied to you about whose house they were at during a party the night before. You are angry that they lied to you. Your anger in this situation is **definitive** because a wrong has been committed against a biblical principle of deception. Now how you control your emotional anger is another issue that we will address later but at the moment it is not wrong for you to be angry. However, suppose your teen came home 30 minutes after their curfew and didn't communicate with you why they were late. When they walked in your anger was such that you said some things that made the teen respond to you in kind, which led to an argument. Now the facts of the case are the teen was late due to a flat tire their friend had and they just didn't think about calling you and waking you up. They didn't do anything that was against a Godly principle, they were just irresponsible so your anger would be **distorted**.

Irresponsibility may be frustrating to deal with but it's not necessarily sinful, especially if they are learning how to become more responsible. Distorted anger is anger that is not usually based on facts that's why it's distorted. When distorted anger is present usually an apology or confession will be in order by the parent or teen. Teens have a tremendous amount of distorted anger toward their parents because they don't have all the facts about why a parent feels the way they do. If a teen understood their parent better they would not get so angry with them. They might not like what their parent does and it might frustrate them a little but they would be able to manage their anger toward them better. That's why it is so important for the parent to clearly define what certain expectations are and the consequences are, so their teen understands the "why's". Then when the teen loses their anger which goes against biblical principles their options for healing that anger is clear from the biblical perspective.

Okay, so why do I get angry?

Now that we have looked at the types of anger we deal with let's look at why we get angry. What's amazing about distorted anger is it usually stirs up the most emotion within us because it's a selfish type of anger. However, as I stated earlier getting angry is not in and of itself a sin. There are actual reasons that drive us to either distorted anger or definitive anger.

One of the main reasons we get angry is over **unmet needs** that cause hurt and frustration. When a teen, for example, has the need to feel respected but doesn't feel they get any respect from their parents because they are "just a teenager" then you'll usually find anger developing. When a parent needs cooperation from their teen to help with house chores due to time pressures in their life and the need goes unmet then frustration kicks in and anger usually follows. We get hurt physically and emotionally. When dad hits his finger with a hammer you'll often hear his anger verbalized. When a teen football player blows out his knee you'll often see anger displayed because of what his season could have been. The hardest thing to deal with is the emotional hurt. When a teen breaks up with their boyfriend or girlfriend there is usually a period of emotional hurt or pain. This type of hurt can cause intense anger because of their need to feel accepted and loved by someone other than their parent. A teen can express anger when an unmet social need is not being met. They will take grounding or keeping them from going to a party as a way you are robbing them of social interaction with their friends. They view this as your way of making sure they don't enjoy their friends, therefore a teen will almost always display some type of anger. A wise parent is one who can discipline a teen while at the same time give them hope that more freedom will come to them for their need for social interaction when they earn the trust for such.

When nothing seems to work and things don't go our way we get frustrated. When frustration becomes a focal point of our experience we usually exhibit signs of anger. We have to ask ourselves frequently if what is causing our frustration worth getting angry over. You may get frustrated because you have asked a thousand times for your teen to clean up their room but is it worth getting angry over it? Some say yes because it's a sign of disrespect for the parent. It more than likely is just laziness on the part of your teen. They have no clue that you think a messy room is disrespectful. Believe it or not, the teen likes to live in the mess. It's their domain and their way of having a little independence. If you just have to have a tip-top clean room you might want to consider sending your teen to military school so when they come home it's ingrained in their head to have a clean room. Otherwise, you probably should just accept that you are not going to win this battle and quite frankly it's not worth what you can lose in your relationship with your teen to demand a clean room. Pick your battles wisely and make sure it's truly definitive anger that is driving your cause.

Insecurity is another cause for anger. We get angry when we are threatened, feel fear, or challenged. When we attack a person's self-worth, when we embarrass them, criticize them, and they feel insecure, they are going to fight back. When a person feels devalued they usually will get irritated which often will lead to anger. When they fight back they usually get angry. Teens feel very

insecure about who they are at this stage of their life. Parents have to be very careful about how they threaten a teen's self-worth.

Suppose a parent starts talking about how they don't like a certain person who is in their teen's peer group. The teen then talks about how they don't like certain people the parent has as friends. Then the parent says there's nothing wrong with that person and the teen says there's nothing wrong with their friend either. The parent points out some questionable character flaws of the teen's friend and then the teen points out the flaws of the parent's friend. Both start getting angry over the way they are talking to each other and before you know it turns into a loud argument. What happened? Both the parent and the teen felt threatened so they became angry to defend their positions. When both groups started attacking the others friends, it was an attack on the person's self-worth as to who is acceptable in their eyes. It became a judgment on each other's character and they didn't like it.

Now I'm not saying that parents should allow their teen to run around with anyone without finding out the person's character. We always want our kids to hang around with the right kids who will be a positive influence on their life. The tricky part is how does a parent encourage their teen to hang around strong Christians friends while at the same time impact those who don't know Christ. Sometimes, we have to trust our kids will have a positive impact on those who aren't such a shining star. The scriptures make it clear that we are to "let our light shine in such a way that they will see our good works and glorify our Father who is in heaven." (John 5:16). Jesus was always being told that he was the "friend of sinners" because he hung out with the wrong crowd sometimes. We have to make sure our teens are well-grounded and have a strong character to not be influenced negatively by the wrong crowd while at the same time befriend them in such a way that they can be introduced to Christ.

People naturally tend to want to preserve their self-worth. Think back when you were a child or a teen. Did you ever feel your parents didn't value you as a person? Did you feel like when you were a teen that they just excused you because of your immaturity? Did you ever feel like you could never please your parents? Being valued as a person goes a long way in determining how you respond to people in anger or not. If you don't feel you are being valued then more than likely you'll feel threatened and respond in anger. That's why it's so critical to find a way to make your teen feel valued, especially in the home. Make sure they know that they are good enough for you. The good news is that God in His Word is constantly reminding us how important we are to Him. We are so important to Him that He was willing to die for us. Our faith (Christianity) offers great hope to those of us whose worth is not acknowledged by our fellow human beings. We are taught that God places a high value on each person who calls on Him. Even when we fail to live perfectly, that worth is not erased. King David reminded us when he said, "What is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of Man that you visit him?" Ps. 8:4

So, Who Are These Angry People?

There are many learned behaviors when it comes to anger. It's important just like we took inventory of our personality types in the past to also determine what kind of anger person we are and to learn what kind of anger person is our teen. There are FOUR major anger personalities I'd like to discuss.

#1-The Maniac-

He explodes. He's a walking time bomb, a hair-trigger temper, out of control. When he gets angry, the parents usually get angry. They let it fly, throw things, cuss, yell, stomp up and down, throw a temper fit. A good example in the Bible of the exploder, the maniac, is Cain, who was the first murderer. Genesis 4:5, 8, "*Cain became furious and he scowled in anger. And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel, and killed him.*" This type of person immediately regrets their anger, they're embarrassed, and they regret what they've said and what they've done. They apologize. They're ashamed. We all know this type of anger. This anger is often called "Open Aggression". This person will frequently make sure they preserve their self-worth at someone else's expense. This person can't stand imperfections in people and things, although they will often show imperfections that they can't see in themselves. Teens who are maniacs will often scream internally "I have legitimate needs, respect me!" which then turns to "You HAVE to acknowledge me. I can't stand it when I am not affirmed." If you haven't figured it out by now the maniacs are quite insecure and demand to be heard to feel secure. Are you or any of your teens' maniacs? If you or your teen is a maniac then you'll want to pay close attention to how to manage your anger later in this chapter.

#2- The MUTE

This is the exact opposite of the maniac. This is the silent type. They hold on to it and clam up instead of blowing up. The mute doesn't like to reveal their feelings. They are pros at denying their anger. They like to pretend they are not mad. They will not admit that they're angry. They conceal how they feel. This is the crockpot version of anger -- stewing and simmering and all on the inside. When I swallow my anger my stomach keeps score. This person is susceptible to high blood pressure, ulcers, headaches, tension headaches, backaches, all kinds of things. All kinds of illnesses can be traced to bottled-up anger. There is a man, Dr. F. I. MacMillan, who wrote None of These Diseases, who has listed 51 types of illnesses that can be caused by bottled up anger, being emotionally upset and holding it in. This type of anger is also called **suppressive anger**. Some people who suppress their anger do so because they feel helpless with authority figures. They were never heard as a child or teen themselves, so they developed this complex of shutting off the world. They have the mentality of "what's the use" no one is going to listen to me anyway. You will often find suppressors have a superiority complex as well. They will think that only weak people become angry so I will rise above this mentality. These types of people are very image conscious and don't want to be perceived as out of control. **Warning: People who suppress their anger can at any time like a volcano erupt unexpectedly because they feel they are not being valued or a conviction (usually spiritually) is not being respected.**

A good example of this is Jeremiah, the weeping prophet. Jer. 15:17-18 *"I stayed by myself and was filled with anger. Why do I keep on suffering? Why are my wounds incurable? Why won't they heal?"* I'm holding it in and it's killing me! Have you heard anyone say, "That burns me up!" They're right. It's not so much what you eat that counts, it's what eats you. Are you a mute? Do you keep all the things that bug you all bottled up inside? Have you ever seen your teen lose it or they always seem so under control?

#3-The MARTYR

He is a pro at pity parties. He is self-punishing and passive. Whenever somebody gets angry he says, "It must be my fault. What's wrong with me?" His favorite words are "I should...must... have to... ought to..." The number one sign of a martyr is depression. Depression is just internalized anger most of the time. Most of the time a martyr will usually deny they have anger issues and will usually say it's just frustration. This type of anger is also known as "**passive-aggressive**" anger. Passive-aggressive people need to be in control with the least amount of vulnerability. They know they are angry but will do everything they can to not show it. Instead, they say internally "I'll show you." So how does a teen that is passive-aggressive stay in control with the least amount of vulnerability? Take grades for example. They know how important grades are to their parent so if they are angry with their parent and their grades don't mean that much to them then they'll use bad grades as leverage to get back at the parent. They may deliberately fail a course or make bad grades because they know how much that will eat at their parents. What's scary about a passive-aggressive person is they can come to the point they don't even know they are doing some of these things to get back at people. It just becomes part of who they are. They can take the verbal or whatever other abuse the parent dole's out for bad grades because they know the reaction of their parents proves the teen got to them without having to take them on one on one.

On the other hand, if you have a passive-aggressive student who places great value on good grades because that's where they get their self-worth then they will never use grades as a means of getting back at the parent. Instead, they may shut off all forms of communication and not talk to the parent because they know the parent so desperately wants to have a conversation. This kid will be the type that spends all waking moments in their room and never comes down for any meaningful conversation. This goes beyond the typical teenager who just doesn't like to talk to mom and dad because it's not cool to let them in on their lives. The passive-aggressive teen will plan out how they are not going to communicate and in what ways to make sure the parent is affected. **Parents beware of a passive-aggressive teen. They love to keep score and are very competitive and will tend to hold grudges.**

4- THE MENTOR

This is the anger type that you want to mentor your teen. The mentor understands the purpose of anger and how to manage it. They are not perfect by any means, but they grasp hold of the importance of making sure they don't destroy the person they have anger toward. This anger type is also called **Assertive Anger**. This type of anger still wants to preserve personal worth, needs, and convictions but wants to accomplish this while *considering the needs and feelings of others*. They address the concerns of their needs not

being met or convictions being trivialized but they also want to make sure there is an opportunity for ongoing love. They don't get bogged down on the minor things that are not that important in the grand scheme of things. They focus on the big subject matters that count. They work hard at the tone of their voice and how they say things and what they say. They don't excuse the hurt or frustration and they don't shy away from conflict. However, they have learned to speak the truth in love with the understanding of their anger motivating them to help build up the one they are addressing. This type of anger management is not easy and takes a great deal of self-discipline and prayer.

Side note: There is one more option for dealing with anger types. You can always determine from prayer and consideration to just DROP THE ANGER. There are times when even assertive anger does not work against a rebelling person so the best thing to do is to just choose to drop the anger. Dropping your anger means you accept your inability to completely control your circumstances and you recognize your limits. This option includes tolerance of differences as well as choosing to forgive. This is not like suppression because you chose to apply Biblical forgiveness and not hold onto it.

Okay, so how do we not have road rage?

Once we have acknowledged what type of anger the person we are and what type of anger the person we are dealing with we can start the process of managing our anger. It starts with the following understanding:

- **Many people know that their anger has become a nasty habit and they need an unnatural inner strength to break free from this pain. This happens when dependency on humans and circumstances is exchanged for a dependency on the strength of God.**

Your dependency on exchanging your anger for God's strength and victory must be grounded in scripture. We must as believers grasp hold of the destructive nature our anger has on others. Listen to God speak to you through some wise words found in the book of Proverbs.

- *"Every prudent man acts out of knowledge, but a fool exposes his folly." Prov. 13:16*
- *"A wise man's heart guides his mouth, and his lips promote instruction." Prov. 16:23*
- *"A man's wisdom gives him patience; it is to his glory to overlook an offense." Prov. 19:11*
- *"A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control." Prov. 29:11*

To control our road rage we must teach ourselves and our teens about the following steps to a healthy spiritual wellness program. Without this spiritual wellness program in your life, you will not be able to take the final steps to manage your anger and defeating distorted anger regularly.

Wellness Check-Up Program:

#1- Truly accept your worth in God's eyes

Read: Psalm 139 13-16

#2 -Acknowledge the unreliability of humans

Read: Jer. 17:9

#3- Acknowledge your own inability to solve all your problems

Read: Rom 8:5-8, Gal 6:7-10

#4- -Learn to yield your self-will to the will of Christ and letting our lives be guided by His wisdom.

Read: Eph. 4; 22-24, Rom. 12:2

#5- Chose to endorse healthy characteristics prescribed in God's Word. We set boundaries and act assertively when necessary and resolve to develop a Godly reputation. Read: Gal. 5:19-23

#6- Apply Rom: 12:2 principle-"Constantly work on renewing your mind"

In other words, how can you apply the traits of the Holy Spirit rather than the traits of unhealthy anger? It will take a constant reminder through prayer and communication with God to transform your thinking.

For example:

Learning to yield to peacefulness rather than succumbing to an unhealthy sour disposition. (*for instance, when you take a break from work, you can appreciate a few moments of rest rather than spending those moments griping about the work that's still ahead*)

Learn to show patience rather than irritability: (*for instance: when my teenager has not taken out the trash request for the 4th time. I can speak firmly yet remind myself that as a human his normal fleshly self is to be selfish and not a servant and it will take patience on my part to teach how to be responsible*)

Learn to show self-control instead of losing it and getting irritable (*for instance, when I'm explaining a task to my wife I can recognize that she does not have the same mechanical aptitude I have and I can choose to keep my level of irritation out of my voice when she asks simple questions*)

Now we're ready for the written test on road rage-

Once we have signed up for the spiritual wellness program we are ready to test ourselves to see if we are capable of defeating road rage or helping our teen defeat this nasty habit. It first starts with the following acceptance in your life. You agree to ...

Live in Humility rather than pride.

Teens have a really difficult time learning to be humble. It's just not in their natural makeup to show humility. They want to be the king of the hill and make sure everyone knows they are at the top of their game. However, a person who can't display humility and holds on to pride will struggle mightily with anger.

When you think of a proud person you normally think of someone who is boastful or arrogant. Pride is more than just arrogance or conceit. It is at the core of virtually any unhealthy, nonproductive emotion or behavior. Specifically, it plays a very influential role in problems with

anger. Would you like to know if you are a prideful person or if your teen is a prideful person? Take the following test.

- I tend to speculate why people are not as considerate as I think they should be.
- When someone is insensitive I let it bother me more than it really should.
- Impatience or edginess overcomes me when people act incompetently.
- Sometimes I fantasize about what life would be like if I could have ideal circumstances.
- My moods tend to rise and fall, depending on how others show me respect.
- When I express my opinions, I am disgruntled if the other person does not receive them well.
- I am known for having a strong personality.
- When I witness something good in another person's life, my initial reaction is to wish for the same thing in my life.
- In social circles, I feel the need to keep an unblemished reputation, even if it requires a cover-up.
- I would prefer to avoid disclosure of a personal nature.

If you check 5 or more items, your pride has gained a foothold on your emotions or behavior.

Pride is like a spiritual disease that is the manifestation of our innate sinful nature. (Adam/Eve). Satan succeeded in encouraging Adam to develop a self-preoccupied pattern of thinking. It should be "his way". We fight the same battle. Because self-preoccupation is central to our sinful nature it can be found in our problems too. For example, *My impatience is easily aroused when people don't meet my expectations. Read the following verses out of the book of Proverbs to help you have a better understanding of feelings of pride' in our lives. Prov. 11:2, Prov. 13:10, Prov. 16:18-19, Prov. 29:23*

- Teens struggle with this concept of "wanting it always to go their way". That's why when they are told no they have a hard time handling it. They truly believe that they have a better understanding of what's going on in their lives so the parent should submit to their desires so they can be happy. They want to fight for the right to control their destiny and anger will become a major part of that fight. A very important point to remember is that teens believe that people (their parents) and circumstances are the real cause of their anger. This type of thinking leads to a false conclusion that their anger will go away if they can force people to act as they want them to act. Do you see what the root problem is when it comes to grasping why we distort our anger? It's not because of others but because of us? We must understand that our distorted anger is our problem and it's a sin problem. Pride does not allow us to admit that. We want to always blame others. "Well if my teen would only do what I tell them to do then life would go well." What you are asking your teen to do may be harmless and their response to your request may be irresponsible, but if you respond to them with

distorted anger not based on sound Biblical application then you are the one who has to deal with your sin problem. By saying your anger is a manifestation of your sinfulness; you can conclude that your anger can be managed only as you come to proper terms with God.

- **How do you do this?**

By choosing **humility** rather than pride. Humility is other-focused. Question: When do you become so focused on getting your needs met that you step on others' feelings? (*For instance, I am so concerned about peace and quiet when I get home that when I discipline my son/daughter I have little regard for their feelings, or when you are preparing for guests in your home you have strong "perfectionist" requirements that do NOT create a relaxed, frustration-free atmosphere.*) Read Phil 2:5-11.

We must understand that humility accepts limits and a prideful person does not. As the parent, you can still be assertive in your definitive anger while being respectful of boundaries that have been set. We must establish personal boundaries including anything from communicating simple needs to standing for deep convictions.

For example, too many parents get really angry when their teen breaks a curfew or shows irresponsibility towards school. But have they set boundaries for their teen in a respectful way? If they have then when the teen rebels against these boundaries there is no need for anger. After all, breaking curfew is not a biblical concept but honoring your father and mother is. So what are the consequences of not honoring your father and mother? Have boundaries been set for your teen in this area? Be sure that you are not selfishly setting boundaries on personal preferences but true biblical teaching otherwise your anger will be distorted. Also, we must accept our teen's differentness. Prideful parents struggle to maintain balance. They tend to communicate their needs and convictions with the assumption that no one could disagree with them. These types of parents are easily offended and don't like to accept unique distinctions in their kids. They just don't understand why their teen is not more like them. So how does the inability to accept limits create anger? We are guaranteed to fail in our God-mimicking efforts (I know what's right all the time), and this ensures frustration which leads to anger. However, the parent that exhibits true humility and knows they don't have all the answers will be more inclined to reason with their teen in a way that the teen understands and accepts because they know the parents aren't perfect.

- Anger management requires us to willingly recognize our limits. When we become responsibly assertive we relinquish the dream that the world can and should fit our personal preferences all the time.

Final lap on road rage with our teens.

Here are six effective ideas that Dr. Les Carter and Dr. Frank Minirth in their book "The Anger Workbook"; I feel have a lot of merits. I mixed my ideas with theirs on the main points and added scripture that supports the concepts.

1. Don't Be Threatened by Your Child's Anger.

Don't be easily shocked by their anger. Instead, accept it as a normal teenage reaction. Teens have an ongoing internal conflict with authority. On one level they know they need the guidance, but on the other level they're preoccupied with themselves and they want zero input. This doesn't mean you don't have boundaries. But don't feel like you have to immediately squelch their irritation.

Controlling your response to their anger towards you is critical.

Prov. 13:16- "Every prudent man acts out knowledge, but a fool exposes his folly."

Prov. 14:3- "A fool's talk brings a rod to his back, but the lips of the wise protect them."

Prov. 14: "A quick-tempered man does foolish things, and a crafty man is hated."

Prov. 14:29- "A patient man has great understanding, but a quick-tempered man displays folly."

2. Let Choices and Consequences Shape the Teen

Don't be impatient for your teen to learn an important lesson. Figure out how to give the teen choices. Then the teen will have to accept the consequences of the choice they made. Don't think for your teen; teach the teen to think for themselves. After all, when they leave they'll have to do it on their own. You do this by learning to be an expert at asking questions to help them develop their solutions. Don't rush the process. Sometimes it takes a long time to learn the lesson. Don't try to be a quick solve artist.

Prov. 15: 23- "A man finds joy in giving an apt reply-and how good is a timely word!"

Prov. 16:21- "The wise in heart are called discerning, and pleasant words promote instruction."

Prov. 17:27- "A man of knowledge uses words with restraint, and a man of understanding is even-tempered."

3. Don't Preach

Don't preach, especially in anger- Otherwise, ironically you're showing your teen that you want them to calm down and don't show anger even though you're doing the same thing. Work on giving a "low-key performance". Do you debate fine points with your teen? Do you offer rebuttals to your teen's point of view? Do you work extra hard to convince your teen of the validity of your opinion? Do you accuse your teen of "insubordination" and you induce guilt for being different? Do you raise your voice when your teen disagrees with you? **Or do you listen and don't talk until they are through?**

4. Don't Major on the Minors

Your teen is not faced with the same issues that confront you. The “big” dilemmas are small in comparison to what we have to worry about. However, in their eyes, their issues are major even though they are minor. Their development is slowed when they feel their parent doesn’t know how to respond to their problems. Very important-Remember developing a relationship that has respect, encouragement, and empathy is more important than perfectionism, selfishness, impatience, and petty preferences.

Here are some checkpoints to see if you are majoring on the minors or let them slide.

- ✓ Do you let your teen make minor mistakes and learn from those errors rather than insist on a mistake-free life? (In their eyes)
- ✓ Is differentness allowed in your home and encouraged?
- ✓ Do you save your discipline for issues that matter? (What would your teen say?)
- ✓ When your teen gets upset over simple things, you can be objective and not get pulled into the emotions of the moment.
- ✓ You can chuckle or smile about some of the little worries that bother your teen.
- ✓ You don’t feel obligated to fix every minor problem your teen presents to you.
- ✓ I work hard at keeping minor issues minor.

5. Share Your Own Experiences

Try and share some of your adult struggles because your teens are as aware of your struggles as you are of theirs. Often, other than when the parents are upset with the teen, they (the teen), don’t see the real insecurity or anger from parents in areas of their life because they are masked. You become a more believable person which allows the teen to become more open when you share real-life experiences and your challenges. Many times parents aren’t vulnerable because they create an atmosphere of false superiority. The teen knows you sometimes don’t have it together. Being authentic opens communication.

Question: Did it make you feel put off when a friend or relative made himself or herself vulnerable and shared a very personal matter with you? Were you offended? Or were you appreciative that they found you worthy of such communication? Did your respect for that person rise? Guess what; your teen is no different. Believe it or not, they can handle a lot more than we give them credit.

- Deuteronomy 6:4-9

"Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your

6. Incorporate Spiritual Insights Delicately. (Don’t Spiritually Lecture)

Anger management is ultimately a function of spiritual maturity. Is. 26:3 says, “You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on you.” Spiritual insights are necessary for each teen who seeks emotional peace. Too many times the teen thinks Christianity is nothing more than just a bunch of dos and don'ts. Emphasize teaching on grace, forgiveness, selflessness, being respectful during a confrontation regularly. Once truths are taught you need to move from instructor to facilitator.

Conclusion:

I hope this information has been helpful as you look into how to help your teen deal with road rage and what it takes as the parent to mentor this type of anger. It would be helpful if you could apply the following in your life:

- Set Goals to Become More Relational
- Make Amends
- Chose to Be Positive in Your Communication
- Be Authentic

What kind of goals could you set?

- Set a goal of finding the good in others (rather than finding the negative)
- Set a goal of finding joy in small places
- Set a goal of doing good as a delight and not a duty
- Set a goal of not forcing patience by being more at peace with yourself, rather than “holding on” to anger.
- Set a goal of being approachable and willing to hear other's problems rather than always voicing yours.
- Set a goal of being courteous even when the problem is not resolved.
- Set a goal of accepting others imperfections, just as you want them of yours.
- Set a goal of not being chronically anxious and uptight when your day becomes hectic. Life's too short.
- Choose to develop a greater reputation as an encouraging person.
- Be more friendly and less critical with family and friends
- Show enthusiasm toward others' lifestyle interests.
- Commenting on what is right will take priority over commenting on what is wrong.
- Be more genuine
- Give less attention to minor problems.

- Laugh more with friends and family
- Be more flexible and less rigid
- Be a better listener.

What a challenge we have as parents helping our teens managing their anger we are calling road rage. So much of what they face has to deal with what others do to them and not what they do to others. Often they will be traveling down the road having a good ole time when bam! Someone comes along and does something that triggers that distorted anger in their life and here comes that mean angry person, out for revenge. We have talked about the different types of anger and how it affects us. Most of our anger is distorted and we have to learn to get a grip on it.

Anger is allowed when it drives us to do good without sinning against God and our fellow man. That type of anger is definitive anger. We have discussed the types of anger that people have and how our anger can be different from our teens. We may have maniac anger while our teen has mute anger. When you put those two together you'll usually have a one-sided argument but the mute might eventually win in the long run. We have discussed how not to have road rage and it starts with our pride and ends with humility. We then took some time to look at the solutions and steps necessary to have vital communication during angry moments with our teens. We then closed this chapter with some practical goals we can set for ourselves so we are more palatable with those around us.

My prayer is that you understand this is a lifelong project and will not be solved overnight. I pray that God will give you wisdom as a parent to help you communicate properly in your anger while teaching your teen how to manage their anger. May God strengthen you and teach you His wisdom as you travel down the road of life with your teen.