

enditnow Emphasis Day 2015

Resource Packet

“Love At Home”

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**Prepared by the General Conference
Abuse Prevention Emphasis Day Committee**

Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries

Adventist Review

Children’s Ministries

Education Department

Family Ministries

Health Ministries

Ministerial Association

Women’s Ministries

Youth Ministries

<http://www.enditnow.org/>



SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST
CHURCH

General Conference
World Headquarters



Department of Women's Ministries

April 13, 2015

Dear Sisters:

Sin has caused much sorrow and pain in this world and in the lives of families and individuals worldwide. Domestic violence in families is one area of such sorrow and pain. Can we stop domestic violence? No. But we can make a difference through education and providing safe places for family members to share their suffering and pain and receiving healing with God's help.

This year our **enditnow** Day will focus on violence in families, especially between husband and wife. We know the home is to be a place of love and joy for families, yet sadly in too many families, in our communities and in our churches, the problem of abuse is rampant. This year's sermon by Dr. Julian Melgosa, "Love at Home" deals with this issue and speaks to the heart of the problem, which is, a problem of the heart. Our heart's must be filled with the love that the Holy Spirit gives us (Galatians 5:22) and that love is one we should share in our families and to others.

The seminar we have included, "Anger Management," deals with how to manage the anger that lies at the source of much of the abuse we find in families and relationships.

Our prayer for each person who presents and hears this material is that God, through the Holy Spirit will show us the true condition of our hearts; and that we will respond by seeking His forgiveness, the forgiveness of those we have hurt, and a fresh infilling of His love. And finally, that those who have suffered will receive healing and renewed joy.

God's Word admonishes to "Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other" (Romans 12:10, NLT). May this be our daily experience through Jesus.

Joyfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Heather Dawn Small". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Heather-Dawn Small, Director

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SUGGESTED ORDER OF SERVICE
enditnow Emphasis Day - August 2015

Prelude

Responsive Reading: SDA Hymnal- "Marriage" 830

Invocation

Hymn of Praise: SDA Hymnal- "Love At Home" 652

Scripture Reading:

So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. Ephesians 5: 28-29, NKJV.

Offering

Prayer for the offering

Children's Story:

"A Complete Make-Over"

Pastoral Prayer

Special Music

Sermon:

"Love At Home"

Hymn of Response

Benediction

Postlude

Children's Story

"A COMPLETE MAKE-OVER"

Eleven-year-old Fredo was struggling with his bad habit. He just had to smoke his marijuana. So whenever he could get away to some corner outside of the school grounds, he would get to his little white pouch of “pot.” But deep inside Fredo knew he had to stop it! But he tried and tried, but never could do it.

One morning as he got to school, a new boy appeared to have just joined the school.

“Hello! My name is Jose,” the new boy introduced himself with a big smile on his face.

“Just moved here and I was told that this school is great!” Jose continued excitedly.

“I am Fredo. What’s so great about this school?” Fredo answered with a look of query on his face.

“I hope to make new friends here,” said Jose, “maybe you could be my first friend.”

“Sure, no problem. Will introduce you my good buddies too,” Fredo promised his new friend.

Pretty soon Jose became friends with five other buddies of Fredo and they seemed to be a fun group of friends. But one day, as Jose was rounding a corner on his walk home, he noticed Fredo and his buddies were running past him quickly to a back alley. He gave chase and then hid behind some trees to watch.

“Oh, no, they are smoking drugs!” exclaimed Jose with great disappointment.

He approached Fredo and his friends. They were shocked to see him right in front of them. So he knew their secret now! Would he report them to the principal? They would be in trouble with the school and with their parents.

“Don’t you know drugs are back for you?” asked Jose with great concern in his voice.

“Please, please don’t report us, Jose,” begged Fredo and his buddies.

“Okay, I won’t report you all, but you need help,” Jose exclaimed, “But I know only Jesus can help you stop these bad habits!”

“Help us? Who is this Jesus? How can we find him? Would it cost us a lot?” the boys asked hastily.

“No, it won’t cost you a centavos. But you must trust Jesus to change your habits and your life,” Jose said with confidence.

Jose started to share with Fredo and his friends Jesus who is his Forever Friend. He prayed with them and he taught them to pray. He invited them to his church and other young people’s activities.

Weeks past and months past and soon this group of buddies were spending more time praying. Jose has invited the pastor and the youth leader of his church to work with the boys. They spent more and more time after school in good and healthy activities. They studied the Bible together and trusted in God’s promises to help them.

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. Proverbs 3:5,” Fredo was repeating it over and over again.

“You know what? Trusting in God’s strength to kick the drug habit was like God asking me to just jump down from the high wall and that He will catch hold of me,” Fredo exclaimed with joy on his face.

“Yes, the more times you jump and God catches you, you know you can trust him more and more, right?” Jose asked the boys with a twinkle in his eye.

“Yes, I know God can help me face the storms and difficulties in my life!” Fredo exclaimed with assurance.

After attending over two weeks of evangelistic meetings, on February 21, 2015, Fredo and his five friends accepted Jesus as their Savior, their Forever Friend and were baptized that beautiful Sabbath morning. There was not one person with dried eyes when Fredo and his friends testified how Jose helped them find Jesus and God who helped them overcome the temptations of drugs.

Yes, we can always trust God even when we face difficulties and problems in life!

(Story from Linda Koh, GC Children’s Ministries Director)

Sermon

“Love At Home”

SCRIPTURE READING

So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. (Ephesians 5: 28, 29, NKJV).

Imagine this scene: several hundred people are attending a popular music concert. Suddenly a fire breaks out close to the stage. Alarms sound and everyone’s survival instinct kicks in. Everyone runs full speed away from the fire towards the door. They don’t care who is in their way; their only goal is to reach the exit. They push past others, young and old. A few fall down. One is trampled before he can get up. All are frantic to save their own lives. As illustrated by this scene, the love for one’s own body is a powerful force

Protecting and preserving our bodies is part of the innate survival instinct of humans. Self-preservation is so strong that when faced with high risk of death, even altruistic, benign, and compassionate individuals tend to prioritize their own survival over the survival of others.

Today’s Scripture reading compares the husband-to-wife love with the love that humans have for their own bodies. This force is no other than self-preservation—perhaps the most powerful instinct in higher-order creation. The apostle urges husbands to love their wives with the same strength with which they love their own bodies—that is, with the same strength as their survival instinct. We are told that, far from hating our body, we love it, care for it, nourish it, and protect it. That is exactly what husbands are expected to do for their wives! Furthermore, the inspired writer compares this force to the way the LORD nourishes and cherishes the Church. We have two vivid comparisons to marital love: (a) the survival instinct of self-preservation, to indicate intensity, and (b) the love of God for his Church, to indicate sacredness.

This message does not leave any doubt about the sincerity, tenderness, kindness, and affection a husband should show his wife. Today, we will reflect upon the marriage relationship

and family environment where this kind of love may be realized.

1. Homes are shelters

Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your children will be like olive shoots around your table. (Psalm 128:3, NIV).

This verse offers a beautiful description of what a quality family environment should be—a place where the wife and mother is ‘like a fruitful vine’ and the children ‘like olive shoots’ around the family dinner table.

ILLUSTRATION

Still today Mediterranean houses often have an open central patio with rooms surrounding it. Vines thrive naturally in such a climate. Often vines grow in the inner square of the house, providing fruit, decoration, and shade. This environment is the place where the family gathers in the cool of the evening, where little ones play safely, and where access is available to the various rooms and the mother can monitor the entire living quarters. Wives are compared to these vines that are all around the patio walls.

In spring, many very small olives-to-be appear on the branches of the olive tree. These beautiful little grains announce future fruits as well as the hope for future generations. They bring immense satisfaction to those awaiting the next harvest. This image is compared to the children of a couple gathering around their parents at the dinner table.

What an attractive picture of what a family should be—an inner court, a shelter, a protected environment where people, connected by blood and emotional ties, share time and space together and grow and develop in safety. This can be the place where each member finds support, understanding, compassion, and solace.

Unfortunately, things sometimes go wrong and this image turns into the opposite—a secluded corner where a member of the family may verbally or physically abuse another with impunity. Sadly, the place where every family member should find shelter becomes a shelter to

protect the abuser!

When a woman's home ceases to be a sanctuary, a place where the love of her husband is a source of consolation, she may need to flee to an external shelter in order to be safe. This is far from what the Creator planned for the marriage relationship. As Ellen White says, "To married men I am instructed to say, It is to your wives, the mothers of your children, that your respect and affection are due. Your attentions are to be given to them, and your thoughts are to dwell upon plans for their happiness." (AH 337)

2. Homes are to be places of safety, not violence

Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them. (Col. 3: 19, NIV).

Paul writes to the Colossian men specifically, admonishing them not to be harsh with their wives. This message was necessary within the cultural setting where the husband, who was in a position of power, could abuse his wife in various ways. William Barclay, in his commentary on this text, explains that under Jewish law a woman was a possession of her husband with no legal rights, just like an object or real estate. For example, a husband could divorce his wife for any reason, but a wife could never initiate this process. Likewise, in the Greek culture of the time, women were expected to always remain indoors, but their husbands could have relationships with other women at will. It is reasonable to believe that, given the common and natural practice of the culture, many husbands among Paul's readers did not treat their wives with respect. Perhaps that is why the apostle Peter compares women in marriage to a 'weaker vessel' and urges husbands to give them honor lest their prayer would not be answered. (1 Peter 3:7).

What a beautiful figure of speech! Treating your wife like a fragile vessel. How much happiness could be added to marriages if men would treat their wives as if they were holding a precious, valuable, and beautiful vase that requires preservation, not violence!

Unfortunately, if Peter or Paul were to write their letters today, they would, most likely, still need to use similar language: "Love your wives and do not be harsh with them." Today, in the 21st century, one in three women worldwide has experienced physical or sexual violence,

typically by an intimate partner. Although most countries (2/3) have outlawed domestic violence, most such incidents are never reported, thus perpetuating the problem.

Ellen White said that an abusive husband could not be considered a 'husband' in the true sense of the word: "If he is a coarse, rough, boisterous, egotistical, harsh, and overbearing man, let him never utter the word that the husband is the head of the wife, and that she must submit to him in everything; for he is not the Lord, he is not the husband in the true significance of the term." (AH 117)

This message is not only for those who are in a violent relationship. Church members bear responsibility if they simply feel sorry and look away from abusive home situations within the church family. Church members cannot say: "Someone else will help." Instead, believers should use their strength to bring relief to the suffering. Many are gifted with empathy and may listen and encourage victims of abuse. Others are talented mediators who can meet with couples to guide them to create a non-violent home through the power of the Holy Spirit. Others can prayerfully and skillfully serve as counselors. Yet others can provide protection in cases when a human solution seems impossible and a victim decides to flee to protect herself and her children.

Violence and abuse are not only physical. They can also be verbal and emotional. Jesus made a very solemn admonition: *But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, 'Raca,' is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell.* (Matt. 5:22). If this principle applies to general believers (brothers and sisters), how much more does it apply to married couples who have committed themselves to love each other for life!

ILLUSTRATION : Kathy's husband has never hit his wife, but he certainly uses words to belittle her. He constantly finds fault with the way she keeps the house, takes care of the children, and cooks meals. He often compares her unfavorably with others. When angry, he uses foul language towards her, words he would never utter in the presence of outsiders. As a result,

Kathy's self-respect is crushed. She considers herself useless, a failure, and feels little reason to live. On more than one occasion, she has had suicidal thoughts. The children are being exposed to behavior that teaches wrong values. In such situations, a girl usually identifies with the victim, her mother and a boy with his abuser father. This greatly increases the chance that they will adopt those same roles in their own marriages.

Jesus' message in Matthew 5:22 is terrifying because of the eternal consequence to those who verbally abuse others. It is the duty of each Christian to be respectful of everyone, including spouse and children, in spite of differences and disagreements. To avoid the harm of verbal abuse, the Bible invites us to use wise, kind, and loving words. Scripture compares these words to the tree of life (Prov. 15:4) and to a honeycomb (Prov. 16:24). It also tells us that "An honest answer is like a kiss on the lips" (Prov. 24:26) and "a gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger" (Prov. 15:1). *[This might be an opportunity to remind people to attend the Anger Management Seminar]*

While physical violence is almost exclusively carried out by the husband towards the wife, women do at times apply verbal violence to their husbands. Some surveys indicate that 10-15% of abuse is directed towards men. This includes name calling, shouting, threatening to leave with the children, threatening to hurt the children, threatening to use slander, lies, etc. Women also need to seek the godly character that produces tender and loving words towards their husbands and children, for Satan can use their sour verbal messages to elicit violent behavior. However, violence by men or women is never justified, not even when provoked (Matt. 5:38, 39).

3. Homes are to be sources of honor, not of shame

We may sometimes wonder why a woman will remain in an abusive situation. One reason may be that women feel that if they take a proactive role to stop abuse, the honor of

the family will be stained and they will be shamed.

Cultures have various concepts of honor and ways to avoid shame. In most cultures, individuals and families are considered honorable when they have possessions or have inherited privileges from the past (for example, aristocrats). Honor is granted to those who have built up a good reputation in their communities, or have been granted distinction such as an award from a high government official or head of state. Children tend to receive more honor if they are firstborn or male.

But the Word of God rejects those sources of honor because God does not make differentiation because of race, gender, origin, or class (Gal. 3:28). For God, attaining royalty and special consideration is not about earthly privileges, but about the choice to follow Him (1 Pet. 2:7, 9), a very different meaning from what we may consider honor. Furthermore, honor in the Bible is not used to build oneself up, not even family, tribe or nation. Honor in the Bible is used to honor God and to honor significant others—parents, spouses, or people who risk their lives for Jesus (Phil. 2:29). In fact, God is pleased when His children do not seek honor. Solomon received it *because* he was not asking for it: “I will give you what you have not asked for—both wealth and *honor*.” (1 Kings 3:13, NIV).

Yes, the home should be a place of honor, where children honor their parents, where spouses honor each other, and where God is honored above all. And in our churches we should create an atmosphere of safety. No one should feel the need to ignore or hide things such as domestic violence for fear of being shamed or risking the honor of the family. No one should blame the victim, nor should the victim blame him/herself, for no victim can be responsible for the acts of the perpetrator. It is crucial to recognize abuse, call it by its true name, and never excuse it.

4. Homes are to be places of trust, not fear

When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. In God, whose word I praise—in God I trust and am not afraid. (Ps. 56: 3-4, NIV).

Messages of reassurance against fear are common in the Bible. The messages 'do not fear,' 'do not fret,' or 'do not be afraid' appear 185 times in the King James Version of the Bible. This is fairly consistent across other versions and translations into other languages. The Lord knows that our world is full of fear. Being afraid is one of the most common emotions in humans.

Being afraid is a part of human growth and development. Toddlers are afraid of the dark; preschoolers fear sleeping alone; adolescents are afraid of rejection by their peers; adults' fears may center on their job, children or finances.

Those are considered 'developmental fears,' acceptable and normal for the various stage of our lives. Given time and maturity, the fears vanish. However, being afraid in one's own home/family is neither developmental nor normal. Children should not have to be afraid of an abusive father or mother. Wives should not have to live in fear of their husband. Elderly parents should not have to fear being mistreated by their own family. This is not God's plan for families. He does not want us to be afraid of our loved ones.

When relationships between family members are healthy, family members will happy and well-balanced, prepared to face life and succeed.

But abusive behaviors deteriorate relationships, and their effects remain. Victimized wives and children are at risk of anxiety, hypervigilance, depression, suicidal thoughts, feelings of powerlessness, low self-esteem, aggression, shame and guilt, sleep disturbances, physical pain without cause, underachievement, inability to trust, substance abuse, relational problems, and problems with sexuality. Children in an abusive environment have higher chances of becoming abusive themselves.

5. Abusers must not be tolerated, but they should be helped

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Rom. 12:2, NIV).

Sometimes men become abusive because they are the product of their background, culture or society. They have learned that behavior, and they act without thought, careless of others' feelings or safety. Others, however, use bullying and abuse to obtain selfish rewards, such as ego boosting, power, submission, sexual gratification, etc.

There is little hope for abusers who do not want to be helped; however, those recognizing that their behavior is wrong and that they need help may be considered hopeful cases.

Some abusers may not even realize that they are abusive. Abusive behavior may be recognized by asking oneself these questions:

- Do I treat my boss, neighbor, or colleague in the same way I treat my wife?
- Do I treat my wife or children the same way in public as I do at home?
- If someone treated my daughter, sister, or mother in the way I treat my wife, would I see it as acceptable?

If the answer to any of the above is 'NO', there is a high possibility that abuse is occurring. Sometimes a wife is assertive enough to confront her husband and tell him that his behavior is inappropriate. Other women do not say anything and suffer in silence. In these cases, someone caring, such as a family member, friend of the family, or a skillful pastor may serve as channel to help the abuser recognize his problem. When there is good will, there is hope.

ILLUSTRATION: Martin had a problem with anger. When his wife or one of their children irritated him, he would get angry, shout, and hurl threats and insults at everyone. He did not hit his wife or children, but spewed insults and rude expressions at everyone in the home. Once the outburst was over, Martin felt ashamed and apologized, although he tended to put the blame on some provocation. Once Martin admitted this was not Christian behavior, he and

his wife went to a marriage counselor who predicted a good prognosis because both partners wanted to solve the problem. (Often, abusive husbands refuse to get help and put all the blame on their wives). Martin was taught a number of techniques to help him prevent his explosions. His wife and children were also given assignments. A number of family routines were initiated to help Martin control his temper. The family made this a topic of constant prayer. This family was successful. Martin now knows his abusive outbursts can be prevented. With his determination, his counselor's and his family's support, and with God's strength, he has resolved not to relapse.

6. The church should be a friendly, supportive, compassionate place

Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. (Rom. 12: 10-13, NIV).

The community of believers is a great place to belong. Although for some, it may be difficult to see the benefits, a growing body of research is showing the multiple physical as well as emotional blessings of going to church regularly. On a light side, consider this illustration.

ILLUSTRATION: A church member who for 30 years had attended services regularly was disenchanted with the conduct of some church leaders and began to doubt the benefit of going to church. He wrote to the local newspaper: "I am writing to state that I have attended church weekly for the past 30 years, I have heard almost 3,000 sermons, and I remember practically nothing from them. My conclusion is that neither the pastors nor I should continue to waste more time with church."

Many readers responded with letters of their own. One said: "I have been married for 30 years, and my wife has cooked some 30,000 meals for me. I can hardly remember any of those menus. But one thing I know: I have been well nourished for all my married life, and if my wife had not been faithful in feeding me, I would have died a long time ago."

Sometimes, bitter experiences arise from our interaction with other members, and relationships become strained. But imperfect as it is, the church can be an excellent source of social, spiritual, and emotional support. For abused wives and children, the support of the church community, their Christian love, is important for survival and healing.

Additionally, many places in the world do not have support centers sponsored by aid organizations or government agencies. In such cases the church must recognize its responsibility to provide critical resources and support.

Church congregations can become...

- Places where committed, caring, discreet individuals are available to listen, encourage, and aid victims of domestic violence.
- The only place to go in locations without centers sponsored by NGOs or governments.
- A caring family, able to empathize in a reliable way with those suffering.
- A woman-to-woman support system, perhaps via Shepherdess or Women's Ministries.
- The context where the local pastor can provide moral support and serve as a mediator to confront the abuser.
- A place where selected members surround and support abused women and children who may be able to talk, to cry, and to pray in a non-threatening, non-judgmental environment.

7. The LORD is the ultimate answer

"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6, NIV).

The problem of domestic violence can be approached in many helpful ways, but the best solution comes from our Lord Jesus Christ. The problem of spouse abuse is rooted in selfishness, and the lasting solution requires a change of heart. And only God has the power to transform our hearts and change our thoughts. As brothers and sisters, a family in Christ, it is our duty to adopt measures, to develop policies, to take action against abuse, and to do all we can to support the people involved. As we do so, let us call upon the Lord. May we move forward in the strength and wisdom that comes from above.

The perpetrator needs forgiveness and the power of the Holy Spirit to overcome the factors contributing to abusive behavior. He also needs a radical change of heart. The victims (spouse and children) need the comfort that comes from Jesus Christ and from caring Christian friends. The victim needs strength and heavenly wisdom. The victim needs reassurance that she/he is not responsible for the abuser's behavior and need not feel guilty. Lastly, she/he needs patience because solutions take time.

Extended family, including the church family, also need the outpouring of the Holy Spirit—to become sensitive, unflinching, wise, and caring in order to love, support, and provide the practical and spiritual help needed.

May God bless each one of you, giving you the determination to act, the honesty to recognize this need, even within Christian families, and the wisdom to know how to support those suffering. May every church community become the honest, supportive and caring place it is meant to be.

**ANGER MANAGEMENT
SEMINAR**

By Dr. Julian Melgosa

[Note to presenter: Anger Management Seminars are designed to be administered over several days. However, this one contains a sample of content and exercises that can be used in about 2 hours if transparencies (there are 47) move fairly quickly. Friday evening or Sabbath afternoon are possible times. I have tried to integrate Bible, Spirit of Prophecy, and Christian thoughts and ideas because it is important to understand that the power of God is necessary to manage anger, an emotion that can be very dangerous and sometimes cause damage with long lasting effects.]

SLIDE 2: Introduction

Most of us have probably become angry on occasion. Let us hope the moment passed quickly, we apologized and moved on. However, anger that is not under control can be extremely harmful, even lethal. It is vital to learn early how to control this emotion.

Most of us have probably become angry on occasion. Let us hope the moment passed quickly, we apologized and moved on. However, anger that is not under control can be extremely harmful, even lethal. It is vital to learn early how to control this emotion. And while learning to control and channel our anger appropriately may not root out the underlying cause, it can equip us to prevent heated moments and violent outbursts towards others, especially our families. In this seminar we will learn some useful strategies to help us manage anger and become better spouses, parents, and friends.

SLIDE 3: ANGER—THE EMOTION MOST HARMFUL TO RELATIONSHIPS

- **“Do not be quickly provoked in your spirit, for anger resides in the lap of fools.”**
(Ecclesiastes 7: 9)
- **“If you are patient in one moment of anger, you will escape one hundred days of sorrow.”** (Chinese proverb)

This advice in Ecclesiastes, as in many other Bible verses, can help prevent major problems. The inspired author calls those who display anger *fools* because a wise person will avoid angry outbursts. Anger is hurtful, not only for the person who is attacked but also for the one displaying anger and those witnessing the episode.

The Chinese proverb reminds us how lasting the consequences of one brief moment of anger may be.

SLIDE 4: WHAT IS ANGER?

- Anger is an emotion (a strong feeling). It does not necessarily cause aggression, but aggression is more likely to occur when one is angry.
- A certain type of anger is acceptable: “In your anger, do not sin” (Eph. 4: 26).
- However, anger is never defensible when it causes harm—to oneself or to others.

It is important to recognize that anger itself is just an emotion. It is like temptation. (For example, a lustful thought may go through the mind, but one may quickly dispel it by the grace of God). Temptation is not sin. However, when one allows those thoughts to take over and fill one’s mind, that is sin. The same thing is true of anger. Anger is an emotion that needs to be channeled, but if it causes harm—to others or to oneself—it damages mental health and is a sin.

SLIDE 5: HOW DOES IT WORK?

- Anger, like any emotion, causes physiological changes in the heart rate, blood pressure, and levels of adrenaline and noradrenaline. It produces great inner turmoil.
- Anger may be a reaction to:
 - Another person (spouse, boss, child, neighbour)
 - Self (forgot something, made a mistake)
 - Circumstance (weather, traffic jam, loss)
 - Memories (past trauma, past embarrassment)

Anger is one of the most powerful emotions and will affect several physiological systems. This means that it can affect our physical health if anger is experienced consistently or extremely. Just as we do not wish to eat or drink anything that will ruin our health, in the same way we should avoid the physical harm of anger. Furthermore, anger poses risks to our mental health: we lose friends; relationships suffer; and our thinking and reasoning deteriorate.

SLIDE 6: ANGER REVEALS ITSELF AT THREE LEVELS: PHYSIOLOGICAL, COGNITIVE, AND BEHAVIORAL

- 1. THE PHYSIOLOGICAL. The most important responses are faster heart rate, raised blood pressure, muscle tightening, increased breathing rate, sweating, pale or flushed face, and cold hands.**

Physiological. These responses are sent by the limbic system (the center of our emotions) that translate into faster heart rate, raised blood pressure, muscle tightening, increase in breathing rate, sweating, pale or flushed face, and cold hands. Physiological responses may vary from person to person and will also depend on the intensity of anger.

We need to differentiate FEELING from EMOTION. A feeling is a thought that represents an attitude, something we like or dislike, feel comfortable or uncomfortable with, etc. Feelings do not arouse any physiological response. However, a feeling may often become an emotion; at that point it will activate a series of physiological responses in various body systems: the respiratory, circulatory, muscle-skeletal, endocrine, and others.

SLIDE 7: ANGER REVEALS ITSELF—LEVEL 2

- 2. THE COGNITIVE. When we are angry, our thinking becomes irrational and distorted, negative, and focused on what is making us angry.**

Cognitive. The thinking process is affected by anger. When one is angry, thinking becomes irrational and distorted. It tends to be negative and to focus on what is making one angry. For example, what someone said, the behavior of others, something that seems unfair or undeserved. Anger affects our cognition. We might lose the ability to weigh the consequences of our anger because we are carried away by the strength of the emotion.

SLIDE 8: ANGER SHOWS ITSELF—LEVEL 3

- 3. BEHAVIOR. Anger may be revealed in various ways. We may become flushed and shaky, and raise our voice, slam doors, or say nasty, hurtful things. In the most extreme manifestation, the angry person becomes violent, screaming at others, kicking objects or pets, and hitting people—with fists or any handy weapon.**

Perhaps anger is most often revealed in our speech. When angry we may say things we do not mean and hurt others deeply. Furthermore, there is a strong possibility that we do not weigh

what we say and how we say it in moments of anger. If people's angry outbursts were recorded on camera, they might be surprised!

Anger that is manifest in overt behavior is perhaps the most dangerous level. It may include: becoming flushed and shaky, raising one's voice, slamming doors, or saying nasty, hurtful things. In the most extreme manifestation, the angry person becomes violent, screaming at others, kicking objects or pets, and hitting people—with fists or any handy weapon. Sometimes these behaviors are against the law and can result in criminal penalties.

SLIDE 9: THE NEGATIVE IMPACT OF ANGER ON PHYSICAL HEALTH

PHYSICAL HEALTH: When anger is frequent or intense, it can easily harm your physical health. Continued anger will make you more susceptible to heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, cholesterol problems, loss of physical defenses, and sleep disorders.

The list of health problems given on the slide is sufficient to show the effects of the physiological commotion that our organic systems experience. Some people in SDA communities are quite concerned about their diet because being careful with our diet is important to our health. However, in our zeal for diet and food, we may forget the damage to our bodies when we become angry.

SLIDE 10: THE NEGATIVE IMPACT OF ANGER ON MENTAL HEALTH

MENTAL HEALTH: When anger is frequent or intense, it may hurt one's mental health. Anger places a great deal of stress on the body and may lead to problems of concentration and reasoning, as well as an inability to enjoy life. Anger can also affect one's mood, resulting in depression or other mental disorders.

Anger also has adverse effects on our mental health. For example, a person who experiences angry outbursts with relative frequency will experience low levels of well-being and little satisfaction with life. As a result the person is unhappy and often isolated, which opens the door to mental disorders.

SLIDE 11: THE NEGATIVE IMPACT OF ANGER ON RELATIONSHIPS

RELATIONSHIPS: When anger is frequent or intense, it will inevitably harm relationships. Connections with family, friends, neighbors, and acquaintances will deteriorate.

If one displays chronic anger, family relationships will deteriorate. Angry outbursts or an atmosphere of anger tends to leave lasting scars on loved ones. They will feel less and less comfortable around you and will lose their trust in you. Your anger is especially harmful to your children for two reasons:

1. They will tend to copy and reproduce the angry behavior
2. Often they will be scarred emotionally, and their personalities may not develop properly.

Friends and others who feel the heat of your anger are likely to drift away, and you will be lonely.

SLIDE 12: THE NEGATIVE IMPACT OF ANGER IN THE WORK PLACE

IN THE WORK PLACE: When anger is frequent or intense, it is likely to affect your employment. It may lead to difficulty working in teams, damage to your reputation, and ultimately to unemployment.

Your employment: Displaying anger in the workplace can easily make it difficult to work in teams; it will lead to lack of respect for you and what you say, damage your reputation, and often lead to loss of employment.

SLIDE 13: ANGER AND THE BRAIN #1

There are three basic layers in the brain, from the base to the outer layer:

1. **The brain stem.** It controls our physiological functions.
 2. **The limbic system.** It controls our emotions.
 3. **The neocortex.** It governs the highest intellectual functions.
-

The brain is like a three-scoop ice cream cone, from the lowest to the upper levels:

1. **The brain stem.** It controls and monitors our physiological functions: breathing, heart rate, movement, etc. We are not even aware of what it is doing. It works automatically and independently of our will and desire.

2. **The limbic system.** It controls and monitors our emotions. This is the site of the fight-or-flight response and the site of emotions, including anger.
3. **The neocortex.** It takes care of solving problems, making decisions, planning events, anticipating consequences. This area, especially the **prefrontal cortex**, ‘tames’ the impulses and emotions of the limbic system.

SLIDE 14: ANGER AND THE BRAIN #2

- **THE PREFRONTAL CORTEX is capable of managing our emotions and impulses. It is capable of controlling the outward manifestations of anger. In sum, the battle for the soul is fought there. The choice between good and evil happens there.**

-
4. The **prefrontal cortex** is the site of advanced thinking, unique to human beings, and capable of submitting emotions, impulses, and tendencies to principles and ideals.
 5. The **prefrontal cortex** can control anger and other negative emotions originating in the limbic system, as well as allow and promote positive emotions (love, compassion, gratitude...) that also come from the limbic system.

Unlike the limbic system that sends its signals independently and autonomously, we do have control, through our decisions and choices, over the prefrontal cortex. In sum, the battle for the soul is fought there. The choice between good and evil happens there.

SLIDE 15: ANGER CONTROL

The role of the prefrontal cortex is good news: We *can* control our temper.

But what happens when someone seems unable to control his or her temper?

- **He or she needs to be willing to learn strategies for managing anger.** *[Some will be presented in this seminar].*
- **He or she will be helped by submitting to the power of the Holy Spirit.**

The role of the **prefrontal cortex** is good news. Our will, our choice, our principles and beliefs can overcome anger. We can control our temper. The bad news is that some people—perhaps due to inherited tendencies or observed patterns—have serious difficulty managing their anger. They will need additional help. It is fundamental that they accept responsibility. It is vital to admit that they have a problem that can be helped—sometimes via self-help strategies like the ones to be presented in this seminar. At other times, they must be willing to go to counselling,

if available. Above all, the person must seek the aid of the Holy Spirit in the battle to control his or her anger.

SLIDE 16: ANGER CONTROL

There are two necessary components of anger management:

1. **God's intervention.** "Without Me you can do nothing" (John 15: 5).
2. **Our own sincere efforts.** "You must also rid yourselves of... anger" (Col. 3:8).

Our individual effort means accepting personal responsibility and being willing to do something about our anger. We can learn practical techniques and strategies that will help us control our anger. [Several strategies will be presented in this seminar].

There are two necessary components of anger management:

1. **God's intervention.** We need God's help. "Without Me you can do nothing" (John 15: 5). This is especially true with addictions (both chemical and non-chemical) or anger. God's help is available: "For it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure." (Phil. 2: 13).
2. **Our individual effort.** We must do our part. We cannot expect God to do that which we can do for ourselves. God asks us to control our anger: "Be angry and sin not" (Eph. 4:26). "You must also rid yourselves of... anger" (Col. 3:8). Our own part involves:
 - a. Recognizing that we have a problem and that the blame cannot be placed on anyone else. Without this step, it is impossible to be helped.
 - b. Learning and practicing simple, helpful techniques that one can incorporate into daily living to create good habits. [Several strategies will be presented in this seminar.]

SLIDE 17: CONTROLLING ONE'S ANGER

An encouraging explanation of the way God can help us control anger is seen in a message Ellen G. White sent to a married couple with serious problems of disharmony:

“Appeal to your heavenly Father to keep you from yielding to the temptation to speak in an impatient, harsh, willful manner to each other, the husband to the wife, and the wife to the husband... I beseech you to bring yourselves under God's control. When tempted to speak provokingly, refrain from saying anything. You will be tempted on this point because you have never overcome this objectionable trait of character. But every wrong habit must be overcome. Make a complete surrender to God. Fall on the Rock, Christ Jesus, and be broken. As husband and wife, discipline yourselves. Go to Christ for help. He will willingly supply you with His divine sympathy, His free grace.” (*The Adventist Home*, p. 342)

This passage suggests a few simple and powerful principles:

1. Be careful with words, never speaking harshly.
2. Any temptation to speak in provocation should be overcome simply by BEING QUIET.
3. Although it is difficult to change these traits, there is hope!
4. Christ will supply what we cannot provide!

SLIDE 18: ANGER IN RELATIONSHIPS

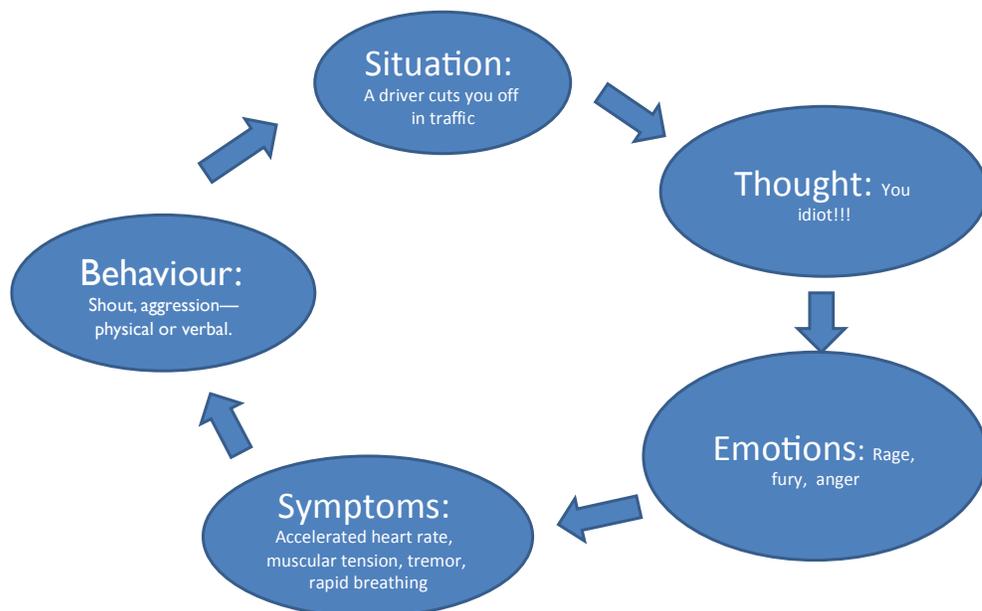
- **Old concept: Anger must be *let out*; otherwise we may suffer from hypertension.**
- **Current concept: When we *let anger out*, we are at risk of hypertension, and our relationships may suffer permanently.**

For many years in the past, experts were saying that it was very dangerous not to let out anger because of the accumulation of psychological tension as well as the risk of hypertension. Therefore, anger must be *let out*.

Today, it is known that the psychological tension will be much greater as a result of the serious damage to relationships when anger is displayed. In addition, the physical harm from displays of anger is truly dangerous to our health.

SLIDE 19: THE ANGER CYCLE

The Anger Cycle



This illustration shows a typical example of how anger may build in a driver in city traffic. The emotion of anger builds quickly and takes over the person, who then displays undesirable behaviors. [The example can be adapted to other situations in places where people rarely drive.]

SLIDE 20: ANGER IN RELATIONSHIPS

- **The chart shows: Situation → Thoughts → Emotions → Symptoms → Behavior**
- **Most anger management techniques will focus on “Situations” or on “Thoughts” in order to prevent the last and most dangerous parts of the chain—“Symptoms” and “Behavior.”**

Understanding this sequence of “Situation → Thoughts → Emotions → Symptoms → Behavior” can be very helpful to prevent verbal and physical violence. Sometimes the person prone to

anger (or someone close) can detect early signs of anger (such as pounding heart, shakiness, etc.), and that is the time to say to oneself, “NO! Stop it!” Or to breathe very deeply and go somewhere else before the behavior becomes a problem.

For a Christian, it is helpful to have a very brief prayer or Bible phrase to repeat to calm one’s anger. For example:

“Help me, LORD.”

“Jesus, be near me.”

“I can do all things in Christ.”

“The LORD is my shepherd.”

SLIDE 21: TECHNIQUES TO MANAGE ANGER

SLIDE 22: ANGER WARNING SIGNS

Anger Warning Signs

Recognize the signs of your anger		
Sweat	Rapid breathing	Tense tummy
Raising voice	Staring at the opponent	Blood in face/eyes
Trembling hands	Tight fists	Typical angry face
Total silence	Aggression	Blaming/insulting opponent

Everyone has different signs that indicate growing anger. Each one of us must recognize ours. Knowing the signs will help us to recognize the building emotion that precedes an angry outburst and thus avoid that behavior. It is also good to remember that these signs can escalate and become so pronounced that they will affect our physical health.

SLIDE 23: IDENTIFYING TRIGGERS

- **What are the people, places, or situations that trigger your irritable or angry feelings?**
- **Certain time of day**
- **Traffic**
- **Being hungry or tired**
- **When it is hot/cold**
- **Other _____**
- **Other _____**

[Note to presenter: This can be conducted as a whole group activity, allowing participants to share their own triggers openly. It can also be done in small groups, letting people create their list. It is not necessary to share with a large group, but this could be done, depending on the atmosphere of the activity.]

SLIDE 24: IDENTIFY THOUGHTS

- **What are the thoughts that cause angry feelings in you? For example, When I think of...**
 - My wasted opportunities in the past.**
 - Mr. -----'s unreliable nature.**
 - The hurts that my old friend caused me.**
 - _____**

[Note to presenter: This can be conducted as a whole group activity, allowing participants to share their own triggers openly. It can also be done in small groups, letting people create their list. It is not necessary to share with a large group, but it could be done, depending on the atmosphere at the seminar.]

SLIDE 25: IDENTIFY THOUGHTS

Generally, the following are dangerous ways of thinking that may lead to angry behavior:

- **Overgeneralizing.**
- **Obsessions.**
- **Mind reading and jumping to conclusions.**

Counselors and clinical psychologists often find that people with mental health issues tend to peculiar ways of thinking. Typical examples are:

1. **Overgeneralizing:** For example, “You ALWAYS interrupt me.” “You NEVER consider my needs.” “EVERYONE disrespects me.”
2. **Obsessions:** “I must finish the entire ‘to do’ list today; otherwise I am a failure.”
3. **Mind-reading and jumping to conclusions:** “My children are being disobedient because they want to hurt me.” “My boss is asking me to work on this project to upset me.”

[Note to presenter: Create similar examples suited to the audience.]

SLIDE 26: IDENTIFY THOUGHTS

Generally, the following are dangerous ways of thinking that may lead to angry behavior:

- **Collecting “straws.”**
- **Blaming.**

Additional examples of defective ways of thinking:

- **Collecting “straws.”** When you pile up in your mind a series of small irritations, constantly reviewing them and adding more until you reach the “final straw” and explode.
- **Blaming.** When you blame somebody else for everything that happens instead of taking personal responsibility for your own life.

SLIDE 27: SIGNS, TRIGGERS AND THOUGHTS

It is very important to identify anger’s signs, triggers and thoughts; otherwise, they will take the lead and *we* will be driven by *them*. However, identifying them is insufficient; we need to learn to do something about them.

SLIDE 28: WHAT TO DO

Avoiding triggers is ideal, but many triggers cannot be avoided, such as boss, work, traffic, spouse, children, etc. Here are two useful strategies:

- **Breathe!**
- **Count!**

Avoiding triggers is ideal, but many triggers cannot be avoided, such as boss, work, traffic, spouse, children, etc. Here are two good strategies:

- **Breathe!** Deep breathing is the most efficient relaxation technique.
- **Count!** When you feel your anger escalating, count s-l-o-w-l-y to 10, or to 100, or backwards. Focus on the numbers, apart from the anger. Take a deep breath at the same time. This can abort the build-up.

SLIDE 29: MORE STRATEGIES

- **Talk to yourself**
- **Talk to the Lord**

-
- **Talk to yourself.** This technique is widely used in clinical psychology. It is called 'self-instruction.' For example (in these examples, John is speaking to himself.):

"John, you care about people; you will not hurt others."

"John, you can handle this tension."

"John, you will not blow up."

"John, you can calm down. John, breathe deeply."

- **Talk to the Lord.** The believer always has the All-powerful Creator to depend upon. A brief prayer is extremely powerful. For example:

"Lord, I am in your hands."

"Lord, you are my shepherd. Guide me. Help me."

"I can do all things in Christ."

"Dwell in me now, Lord."

SLIDE 30: MORE STRATEGIES

- **Create a mental picture of the consequences.**
 - **Create a mental picture of spiritual imagery.**
-

These strategies can be very powerful if one has prepared ahead of time, rehearsing them and elaborating on them to have ready in moments of anger.

- **Create a mental picture of the consequences:** Thinking of the consequences of your display of anger can stop the process. Have it ready in your mind to retrieve. For example, imagine one of these scenarios: (a) you have lost your job because of losing your temper, or (b) your spouse/children are hurting/traumatized because of your angry outbursts and door slamming.
 - **Create a mental picture of spiritual imagery:** Select a Bible story/character and visualize the scene. Have your mental picture ready to use when anger builds. For example, visualize Simon Peter pulling his sword and cutting off the Chief Priest's servant's right ear. Then hear Jesus saying, "Peter, put back your sword."
-

SLIDE 31: MORE STRATEGIES

- **"Thought Stopping." Thoughts leading to anger come in chains. As soon as an early link in the chain appears:**
 1. **Say "STOP!"**
 2. **Intentionally drop the idea from your mind**
 3. **Distract yourself.**
-

"Thought Stopping" is one of the techniques valued most by clinicians using cognitive behavioral approaches to help people with obsessions, compulsions, addictions, phobias, etc. This strategy is based on the fact that thoughts lead to anger. The process is like a chain made up of several links. As soon as an early link in the chain appears, try one of these strategies:

1. **Say "STOP!"** Say this to yourself firmly, even aloud if circumstances permit, in order to dispel the thought immediately
2. **Drop the idea from your mind.** Dispel the thought completely. This is best achieved by having other ideas to replace the undesirable thought.
3. **Distract Yourself.** How? Take a walk, run an errand, do some cleaning, or think of a funny event that made you laugh.

SLIDE 32: BEST TIMING

The apostle Paul says: “Do not let the sun go down on your wrath” (Ephesians 4:26).

SLIDE 33: BEST TIMING

What is the best time to smooth things out after an angry outburst?

The text “Do not let the sun go down on your wrath” need not always be taken literally. Bear in mind these considerations:

- **Cool down after the angry outburst.**
 - **You may need a few hours to cool down.**
 - **Find the ideal time and place to make up.**
-

The text “Do not let the sun go down on your wrath” need not always be taken literally. This is excellent as a principle, for you do not want to leave hard feelings unresolved for too long. So, the sooner you seek reconciliation, the better. However, bear these considerations in mind:

Generally it is not advisable to try clear things up while anger is still simmering. Someone still fuming after a fight is not ready to communicate calmly. In such a case, it is better to let things cool down normally; a few hours of waiting may be necessary.

It is not only a matter of waiting, but of finding an optimal moment and location to smooth feelings—perhaps outside the home, in a neutral setting, when no one is in a rush.

SLIDE 34: MORE STRATEGIES

- **Focus on the positive. Nourishing interpersonal relationships makes anger situations less probable. *(A suggested activity follows.)***
 - **Express gratitude. Recent research shows that expressing gratitude prevents anger and promotes well-being in those who communicate thankfulness. *(A suggested activity follows.)***
-

Being optimistic is a matter of habit. Some people tend to see the glass as half empty, while others tend to see it as half full. In relationships, it is a healthy thing to observe one’s opponent and focus on their good qualities, abilities, and good intentions, etc.

Expressing gratitude has also been found to be effective in nourishing relationships. Even non-faith counselors are teaching gratitude protocols to clients. These strategies help people attain feelings of wellbeing and improve their interpersonal relationships.

SLIDE 35: EXERCISE: THE QUALITIES OF MY SPOUSE/FRIEND

Qualities that attracted me to him/her:

- _____
- _____

Favorite memories with him/her:

- _____
- _____

I value him/her because:

- _____
- _____

[Note to presenter: This can be done individually, in couples, in families, or in groups. If there is time, this can be completed during the seminar; if not, the form can be taken as a handout to be completed at home. Once participants complete their list, they can share with the others.]

SLIDE 36: EXERCISE: A LETTER OF GRATITUDE

- **Choose a person you are grateful to for having helped you or done something special for you.**
- **Write a detailed letter of appreciation. Be specific, stating those things for which you are grateful.**
- **Explain how writing this letter has helped you.**

[Note to presenter: This activity is for seminar attendees to do after the seminar. This should be a real exercise, choosing a real person and expressing one's gratitude in writing. As an alternative, the exercise can be done by visiting the person and expressing your appreciation face to face, or perhaps by phone.

SLIDE 37: HOW TO FACE ANGER (SUMMARY)

[Note to presenter: This chart presents a summary of the practical anger management strategies that have been shared during the seminar. If there is no time, this can be omitted.]

How to face anger (Summary)

Strategies	
Early detection	Know the signs, triggers, and circumstances to calm yourself down on time
Take a break	Leave the situation (“I’ll be back in a moment”). Vigorous physical activity can work wonders.
Breathing	Slowly breathe in and breathe out (at least 4 seconds each)
Focus on the positive	Express positive qualities and gratitude towards others
Think of consequences	What will it happen if I blow up? Now? Later on? Tomorrow?
Cling onto the Lord	We need Jesus to prevent anger and to channel those feelings positively

SLIDE 38: NOTE ON PSYCHOLOGICAL STRATEGIES

- **Techniques and strategies are helpful, but they are insufficient. True change comes miraculously from above—“transformed by the renewal of your mind” (Rom. 12: 2).**
- **People with anger problems require the action of the Holy Spirit through prayer, meditation on Scripture, spiritual activities, frequent moments of peace and quiet and (when possible) professional counseling.**

It is important to remember that techniques and strategies provide support to manage harmful behaviors, such as getting angry and possibly hurting oneself or others. However, our most important need is to surrender to the Holy Spirit, to be transformed, to behave in a caring and Christlike manner. That is the true solution to anger.

SLIDE 39: DISCUSSION CASES

- **Working in groups, discuss rational, peaceful, and Christ-centered solutions to the following situations.**

[Note to presenters: The following cases may be modified to suit the culture. The purpose of these cases is to help those attending apply what they have learned in the seminar. They can be discussed in small groups, in pairs, or with the whole group.]

SLIDE 40: SCENE 1

SCENE 1: I'm working hard to complete all the tasks my boss has asked me to do. I am in constant activity. Yet he has come back three times in the last 10 minutes to ask me when I am going to finish.

SLIDE 41: SCENE 2

SCENE 2: My son has promised to take the dog for a walk. The dog really needs to go out, but my son continues playing computer games, ignoring my request.

SLIDE 42: SCENE 3

SCENE 3: This morning my husband promised he would be home in time to eat dinner with me tonight. (He is very busy and cannot normally do this.) He just phoned to say he is not going to make it. He has promised and cancelled two times already this week.

SLIDE 43: SCENE 4

SCENE 4: My wife is in charge of doing laundry and ironing at our house. Days ago I told her I needed a clean and ironed dress shirt for an important meeting today. When I dressed this morning, I had no ironed shirt.

SLIDE 44: SCENE 5

SCENE 5: Last Sunday, my mother-in-law invited the family to dinner. She cooked a dish to which I am allergic, and I think she knows it.

SLIDE 45: THE GOLDEN RULE, AN ANTIDOTE TO ANGER

- **So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets. (Matthew 7:12)**
-

Applying this principle to every aspect of our relationships with others would solve many problems and would promote happiness.

The story is told of a rice farmer who was tending his fields on the mountainside overlooking his village and the beach. His position and perspective allowed him a perfect view of the village, the beach, and the vast ocean. Suddenly, on the horizon he saw the ocean forming huge waves. A tsunami! Everyone in the village would perish unless warned. Quickly deciding how to attract their attention, he set his field on fire. The villagers, seeing the fire, ran up the mountain to help put out the fire. Because they climbed, they were safe from the ravaging tsunami. Moments later, gigantic waves roared over the beach and the homes. But the lives of those rushing to put out the fire were saved. The rice farmer did not care about losing his crop. The villagers did not stay comfortably at home. Both sides sacrificed for each other and saved their lives.

No doubt we each have moments of anger. Let us learn and practice strategies for conquering anger, so that, with God's help, we can have better physical health and warm, healthy relationships with family and friends. Let us walk with our Lord, the one who is our example and who gives us the strength to change.

SLIDE 46: TO LEARN MORE ABOUT ANGER MANAGEMENT

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