

Slow to Anger

Ready:

“My dear brothers and sisters, understand this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger, for human anger does not accomplish God’s righteousness.” James 1:19-20

Set

Often, we find ourselves on a playing field, court, or even a boxing ring, dealing with our human nature to win at all costs, which can lead us to anger. As a young fighter, both inside and outside the ring, I was angered by a loss or just from the adrenaline to beat my opponent. Before becoming part of the Church, anger was my go-to emotion in my quest for victory. It was not until I started seeking Jesus that I realized anger was not the emotion anyone wanted or needed to be a champion.

You would think that boxing, martial arts and mixed martial arts (MMA) evoke anger from the participating athletes. That may be true with those fighting for ego, but those fighting with a champion’s mindset focus not on how angry they are at their opponents but on how skilled they are at beating them.

Two-time world heavyweight boxing champion “Big George” Foreman, who eventually gave his life to Christ as a minister, put it perfectly when he said, “You don’t have to try and hurt people and be angry to be an athlete. The kids would come in and want to learn to box... and I’d try to show them they didn’t need anger. They didn’t need all that killing instinct they’d read about. You can be a human being and pursue boxing as a sport.”

As Big George learned through his losses, anger can be a very destructive emotion. It can cloud our judgment, make us say and do things we regret, and damage our relationships. When angry, we are less likely to think clearly and make rational decisions. We are also more likely to act impulsively without considering the consequences. Anger leads to many more losses than it does wins.

“Refrain from anger and give up your rage; do not be agitated-it can only bring harm. For evildoers will be destroyed, but those who put their hope in the Lord will inherit the land.”
Psalms 37:8-9

This is why God makes it clear that being slow to anger is important to Him. When we can control our anger, we are more likely to make good choices and act in a way that is pleasing to God. Athletes who follow Jesus and seek to live a life free of anger will find greater success and fulfillment in their sport and in life.

Following Jesus can help you as an athlete to develop the self-control and inner peace you need to overcome anger. Jesus teaches us to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us ([Matthew 5:44](#)). He also teaches us to forgive others, even when they have wronged us ([Matthew 6:14-15](#)). By following Jesus' teachings, you can learn to let go of anger and bitterness, and instead, focus on love, forgiveness and peace.

Remember, anger is a normal human emotion. But it's important to learn how to manage it in a healthy way so that it does not control us. By being slow to anger, we can make better choices and live more fulfilling lives as athletes and in life.

Go

- What are the things that typically make you angry?
- How can you express your anger in a healthy way that is pleasing to God?
- Have you developed strategies for avoiding anger in your sport?

Workout

[Ephesians 4:26](#)

[Proverbs 16:32](#)

[Colossians 3:8](#)

Overtime

“Heavenly Father, thank You for teaching me that anger is not a winning emotion and that putting away my anger and rage is what's pleasing to You. Let my decisions in my sport and in my life be ones filled with patience and self-control. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.”



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8701 Leeds Road | Kansas City, MO 64129 | 800.289.0909
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