



## Overcoming anger as a dad by killing these four things

Okay, “killing” sounds angry. My bad. But, many of you tell us your biggest struggle overcoming anger. No, you’re not the only dad in the world who struggles with this.

But, let’s not get comfortable feeling “not alone.” Being in a group of angry guys is just a Fight Club. Brad Pitt might’ve made that cool. But, it’s a lame way to raise your kids.

The better way, nay, the only way, is to point your kids to Christ by being a model of kindness and grace.

Which is why I worked with my former pastor and dear friend, Pastor Matt Morgan, on writing a field guide for dads on anger. Matt gets to the core of anger by addressing the four things we value most.

So many dads struggle with anger. Trust us, we know. We’ve heard you. We’ve had dads tell us their biggest challenge for years now.

### Here’s how a few dads said they struggle with anger:

- “Not in control of my emotion when my children not obeying what I instructed them to do/not to do.”
- “My son has abandoned our teachings, we don’t communicate we just fight.”

- “My single most challenge is patience. When I ask my 4 and 6 yr old to do something I expect them to do it the first time.”

**Here's the point:** Don't feel alone because you're frustrated as a dad. But, let's not excuse anger as a way of life. **Let's overcome anger and point our kids to Christ.**

Here's the excerpt from Matt's field guide for overcoming anger:

## **Wanna overcome anger? Kill these four things.**

As Jesus stood outside His friend's tomb, there was a righteous anger at the destructive power of sin. Jesus wasn't just “hangry”. His anger came from a place that longs for the glory of God seen in the flourishing of His creation. But, when faced with the stench of sin, Jesus brought forth life.

Sometimes, what is at the heart of our deeply felt anger is a passion for justice, goodness or beauty in a world that has been marred by sin. Sometimes sourcing our anger will show us something outside of us that God — in His grace — is giving us a passion for. This will be an opportunity to leverage your God-given strength and initiative toward joining God in the renewal of all things. Fighting injustice, bringing light and life where there was once darkness is a good and right expression of godly anger.

More often than not, when we look deeper into the source of our anger, it will expose values inside of us that are fighting against God's good design for our lives. Some common values that ultimately manifest as anger when they are violated are:

### **Thing to kill #1: Control**

If we have a deep value in our hearts to be in control of our lives, it can be very unsettling to feel out of control. I feel like a good bit of parenting is akin to hopping on a roller coaster only to discover they forgot to include the safety restraints. If we value control, the loss of that control can come to the surface as anger.

### **Thing to kill #2: Power**

This is the battleground for many parents of toddlers. One of my little girls — in her toddler years used to scream at us, “Don't tell me!” Moments like this leave us grasping for what feels like our rightful position, and as our power is confronted, our anger often feels like the only solution to get it back. Dad of a teen, you know this well.

## Thing to kill #3: Comfort

The desire and pull toward ease and comfort can be strong in men. As fathers, this is one of the first things that gets assaulted as we step into our new roles as stewards of another person's life. Working hard to care for, lovingly lead, and invest in another human being takes effort. If you have a disproportionate value on comfort, the affront to this value will come out as anger.

## Thing to kill #4: Fear

Sometimes, what's coming out as anger or rage is really just a response to the emotion of fear. To admit we are afraid is dangerous and leaves us feeling exposed. As fathers, there are so many things that can produce fear in our hearts. Are we doing a good enough job? Will my children be healthy and safe? Am I able to provide enough for my family? Masking these real fears with anger won't bring relief, it will only produce more hardship.

**Slowing down to understand where our anger is coming from is vital.** Often, what is exposed in us is misplaced and distorted affections. If we would do the hard work of honestly assessing our emotions, we will discover our hearts need to be redeemed and transformed by Jesus. This is where the healing power of the gospel does its best and most lasting work in our lives.

**Question:** Control, power, comfort, fear—of these options—which one would you say you value the most?