

BIG IDEA

When we read specific stories in the Old Testament, it's hard not to wonder...Is God angry or loving?

SCRIPTURE

Exodus 25:22, 2 Samuel 6:1-8, James 1:19-20, Numbers 4:11-15

NOTES FOR DISCUSSION

- On its surface, the story of Uzzah can make people think that God may fly off the handle for what seems like a small infraction. Get the group to discuss the history of God's instructions about the Ark. Use what we know about God's character from the entirety of the Bible when trying to understand Uzzah's death. We can trust that God knows the intentions of David and Uzzah and how they were not unaware of the instructions related to the Ark.
- The reason Yahweh instructed the Ark to be carried on poles by the priests was because that is how royalty was honored in that culture. The King, sitting on a throne, being carried by his servants. It's called a litter. It was important for Yahweh's symbolic presence to be treated in this fashion because he is Israel's King. Litters were for royalty. Carts were for things. Placing the Ark on a cart as a mere "thing" revealed the attitude of the people's hearts toward their King. It was disrespectful. It was an insult to Yahweh. It was a bit like asking Yahweh to ride in the trunk of the car.
- See Matthew 21:12-13 for a time Jesus got angry with the money changers in the temple who had set up shop in the court of the Gentiles and were most likely ripping off people through the exchange of currency.
- We have all made mistakes and had times where we may have felt that God was angry or disappointed with us. Let the group share examples of this. Guide the group to discuss the times they have experienced God's love. When and where have they felt closest to him? Discuss how we may see this in our daily lives.
- How can we be better listeners, more patient, kind, and understanding with others? What does being "slow to anger" look like for each of us? Have the group discuss ways they can individually put this in practice in their relationships with others. Discuss how this change in behavior would make a personal impact and benefit the people around us too.
- Mark Twain once said, "Anger is an acid that can do more harm to the vessel in which is stored than to anything on which it is poured." Pray for God to work through you this week to be slow to anger. Be intentional about this, not only with strangers but with those closest to you.