

MOVIE: “Catch Me if You Can”**Sub Topic Theme:**

Power: Anger gives me Control

Lesson Objective:

The purpose of this lesson is to help students recognize when they are angry and how anger, if unrecognized, can gain a foothold in their life, controlling them without them even knowing it. This lesson uses the movie *Catch Me if You Can*

to give students a chance to think critically while looking at the life of another person and integrating it with Scripture.

**Intro to the Movie:***Catch Me if You Can*

When we first open with *Catch Me if You Can* we see Frank Sr. being inducted as a lifelong member of the Rotary club. An honor bestowed upon few. It is clear in this first glance of Frank’s family that Frank loves both his parents deeply and especially looks up to his father.

From there however, things begin to change. No sooner has that happened then we find out that the IRS is after Frank Sr. for tax evasion. His father does everything he can think of to straighten things out, but in the end they end up having to drastically downsize everything.

Now in a public school for the first time, living in a small apartment with an older car, Frank must learn to make this new life work. After Frank has been going to school for one week, his parents are called in to speak with the principal about Frank’s attendance. It’s not a matter of if Frank has been at school; he has been, but he has also been posing as a substitute French teacher, giving homework, planning field trips and holding parent- teacher conferences! While his mom is a little upset, his father is more... proud ... his son was able to pull something like that off for a whole week before anyone even noticed.

As things continue to go downhill for Frank’s father and here, Frank’s mom can’t take it anymore. Frank walks in on her cheating on his father with one of his father’s friends. Next thing we know, Frank’s parents are getting divorced, and he must choose who he wants to live with. It is all too much for Frank, so in a panic he runs away.

Frank wanders from place to place for a while when he realizes he doesn’t have to live this way anymore and decides to do something for his father. He is going to get it all back. Everything the government took from his family he will get back.

What's important to understand here is that Frank is angry at the government. He may not realize it, but he blames them for everything that has gone wrong in his family. Things were going good, until the IRS came in exposing the tax evasion a cheating employee had committed, leaving Frank's innocent family left with large amounts of money owed to the government.

Frank recognizes that moment as the start of the collapse; so in an effort to survive and to begin taking back what was rightfully theirs, he starts cashing forged checks he makes himself. Frank's brilliance in how he accomplishes all that he does pulls the movie watcher in.

As we continue to follow him we find him impersonating airplane pilots, doctors, lawyers and even student newspaper writers. He keeps in touch with his dad through letters and occasional visits. Each time he tells his father how he is getting it all back, how mom will come back when she sees everything has been worked out and their family will be one again. Throughout this time an FBI agent has picked up Frank's trail and is trying to find him as, at this point, he has cashed millions of dollars worth of forged checks.

The last time he visits his dad, his father asks him where he is going. The FBI have talked to Frank's dad, revealing the truth about what as been going on. In an intense scene the father asks him again, where are you going? Frank tells him what he has been telling him all along, that he is getting it all back. This is when Frank learns this will be impossible as his mother has already re-married, and Frank pleads with his father to ask him to stop. With the news of the FBI close after him, his mother's re-marriage and his father choosing to close down the business and now wearing a mailman uniform instead of a suit, everything is spinning out of control for Frank and he pleads with his father to ask him to stop, but his father is silent and Frank runs out the door.

When the movie ends the FBI agent has caught him, his mother has a child of 4-6 years of age with her second husband, his father has died, and he is sentenced to years in solitary confinement. But there is hope after all as four years into his sentence he is offered a job working with the man who caught him in check fraud. In the end Frank realizes he does not have to get it all back and with that he experiences freedom.

(The 3D Lenses) Look at the way that Frank tries to control the situations he finds himself in. He spends the whole movie trying to gain back what his family lost and he never really does; in fact he ends up losing more! He doesn't get to say good-bye to his father whom he admires before he dies, his mother starts a new family without him, and he spends years in jail. Look for these themes of loss; in most cases in this movie the loss is because of a power struggle that Frank faces.

Discussion Group Questions:

1. What are different ways you saw Frank's anger toward the government control him? Frank was hurting and upset; and because of not knowing what to do with those feelings, his whole life spun out of control. Where do you see examples of that?

2. Do you think Frank realized his life was out of control, realized he was angry? Or do you think he felt like he was making it, doing good for his family?
3. If you were to talk to Frank at any point in the movie, how would you help Frank see that he is letting his anger control his actions, thus control him?
4. What were some of the side effects of Frank's actions? (Lonely, always running, hiding...)

Group input:

Leader-solicited responses from the large group on reactions to some of the questions

Gathering of ideas and themes recognized in the discussion groups with a focus on guiding the students toward the main objective: *to help students recognize when they are angry and how anger, if unrecognized, can gain a foothold in their life, controlling them without them even knowing it.*

Bullet Objective:

Put this summary section into your own words, but here are some ideas you can use:

Frank didn't realize how his anger was controlling him; he spent the whole movie trying to gain back what his family had lost. At the start of the movie, he was 15; looking forward to taking a girl he had a crush on to the Jr. Prom. By the time the movie ends he is at least 23, if not older. Frank didn't mean for things to go as far as they did, but he didn't realize he was being controlled by something other than himself.

This isn't hard to fall into. Think about your own life. Have any of you ever been angry at a friend for doing something so you decide not to talk to them for a little bit? Maybe you needed space. Didn't want to say anything hurtful after all. Next thing you know two weeks have gone by and you didn't even realize it! I've seen this happen to friends and one of them PCSes before they ever start talking again! Or maybe something happened to you, something unjust so you decide to take matters into your own hands. You're going to show people just what you're made of. You may feel like that puts you in control, but the opposite is actually true. We're letting our anger control us! And we are the ones who lose.

Let's check out this passage from Numbers 20:1-13. If you struggle with anger and letting it control you, don't worry, you're not the only one. Remember Moses from the Bible (or the movie *Prince of Egypt*)? Moses was the man God chose to lead his people out of slavery in Egypt and into the land he had promised them. Thing is, it took a little longer than the Israelites expected; there was more hardship than they wanted and they really tested Moses' patience.

Numbers 20:1-13
Events at Kadesh

In the first month the whole community of Israel came to the wilderness of Zin and camped at Kadesh. There Miriam died and was buried.

There was no water where they camped, so the people gathered around Moses and Aaron and complained: “It would have been better if we had died in front of the LORD’s Tent along with the other Israelites. Why have you brought us out into this wilderness? Just so that we can die here with our animals? Why did you bring us out of Egypt into this miserable place where nothing will grow? There’s no grain, no figs, no grapes, no pomegranates. There is not even any water to drink!” Moses and Aaron moved away from the people and stood at the entrance of the Tent. They bowed down with their faces to the ground, and the dazzling light of the LORD’s presence appeared to them.

The LORD said to Moses, “Take the stick that is in front of the Covenant Box, and then you and Aaron assemble the whole community. There in front of them all speak to that rock over there, and water will gush out of it. In this way you will bring water out of the rock for the people, for them and their animals to drink.” Moses went and got the stick, as the LORD had commanded.

He and Aaron assembled the whole community in front of the rock, and Moses said, “Listen, you rebels! Do we have to get water out of this rock for you?” Then Moses raised the stick and struck the rock twice with it, and a great stream of water gushed out, and all the people and animals drank.

But the LORD reprimanded Moses and Aaron. He said, “Because you did not have enough faith to acknowledge my holy power before the people of Israel, you will not lead them into the land that I promised to give them.”

This happened at Meribah, where the people of Israel complained against the LORD and where he showed them that he is holy.

Talk about serious consequences! Moses leads these people for over 40 years and he didn’t get to enter the Promised Land because he lost his temper when the people were being super ungrateful for everything God had provided under Moses’ leadership.

Look at the passage again though. See how it builds. In another account of this story (Exodus 17), it says that the people were ready to stone Moses because they were so angry with him. I can see how Moses would have been angry. The people had already forgotten how much God had provided for them so he yelled at the people. Let his anger rage, disobeyed God. God had told him simply to speak to the rock to show the people his power yet again, but Moses didn’t trust God to do things the best way. Instead, he let his anger control him instead of letting God lead him fully, and he struck the rock *twice*

instead of obeying. I wonder if Moses knew what he was doing when he did it, or if the anger snuck up on him and he didn't realize it until it was too late like Frank and the last conversation that he had with his dad.

That's why it's important to be aware of yourself. Anger can be a dangerous thing; it can lead us away from our Heavenly Father and make life much more complicated than it needs to be. That's why we have to be aware of our anger and why knowing the truth is important. Anger does not give us control; it controls us. A resilient life is one that gets the upper hand on anger!

Challenge:

1. Pray that God would help you develop greater patience with those around you so that you don't get angry as often, and memorize this verse, Proverbs 16:32; "It is better to be patient than powerful. It is better to win control over yourself than over whole cities."
2. After memorizing the verse, write it down on an index card and carry it with you. Whenever you feel yourself starting to get angry, take it out and read it. Reading God's word gives us truth to guide our lives.
3. For this next month read one chapter in Proverbs each day. When you find a verse that talks about anger, or a verse of encouragement that means a lot to you, write it down, and flip through these when you need encouragement or a reminder of truth.

Pray for God's purpose and power to complete these challenges and begin transforming students. Remind them of the online personal journey at ReZilient Life for further involvement with this topic of Anger and how it controls us when we aren't careful