

Is Anger You Master?
(How Satan seeks to shut down our minds and destroy relationships)
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Introduction: How does Satan enslave men to a way of life?

- A. Satan works by deception, and his ways thrive in darkness and ignorance.
 - 1. Satan will steal, kill and destroy the hearts of men. (Jn 10:10; Eph 4:17-18)
 - 2. In their ignorance men take steps that lead to slavery. (Ex. Capturing monkeys)
- B. Will I choose freedom or slavery? Start with my heart. (Prov 4:23; Mt 22:37-38)
 - 1. As a young man I wondered how anyone could possibly fall into certain sins!
 - 2. Freedom comes when we understand and imitate the love of God. (Jn 17:3)

I. Understanding the dangers of uncontrolled anger

- A. Is anger a sin? How would you answer?
 - 1. There is a place for every God-given emotion.
 - 2. Jesus became angry and did not sin! (Mk 3:5; Heb 1:9)
 - 3. When anger is not guided by God's word then it can open our hearts to be controlled by the devil. This is when sin enters! (Eph 4:26-27)
- B. As a young man I did not understand the dangers of uncontrolled anger!
 - 1. I often saw it among my brethren. Many laughed and treated it like a fleabite.
 - 2. Eternal life and a life of anger and bitterness do not go together. (1 Jn 3:15)
 - 3. As I began to see with those caught up in sin, I saw a sobering path to slavery.
 - 4. Consider the terms describing the "works of the flesh" and then see that which is connected to uncontrolled anger ("the anger family") (Gal 5:19-21)
- C. Strength is found when the "fruit of the Spirit" reins in our anger. (Gal 5:22-23)
 - 1. Who is actually a strong man? (Prov 16:32)
 - 2. Consider how even strong spiritual men allowed a moment of anger to bring tragedy into their lives. (Ps 106:32-33)

II. The deception of uncontrolled anger.

- A. Satan wants to take a good heart that is angry about injustice and enslave it.
 - 1. Should I be angry and want justice when others are hurt? Yes!
 - 2. How should I respond to an irrational enemy? (Psa 69:4, 19; Psa 23:4-6)
 - 3. How many hide bitterness in their hearts and think they are living as a disciple of God? Ex. "I must love you, but I don't have to like you!" (Lev 19:17-18)
- B. How can I recognize anger in my life?
 - 1. Often those with the greatest problem with anger, often do not see it. (Ex. Driveway)
 - 2. Some are taught to "bury their anger". Consider Shimei. (2 Sam 16:5-6, 8-9)
 - 3. I am amazed at how people "store up" their anger for years! (Ex. Elder appointment)
- C. People express anger in different ways.

Active and Strong expressions - Murder, suicide, physical violence, physical damage, bullying, cursing.

Not as Strong expressions - Slander, ostracize others, provoking others, humiliate others.

More Subtle expressions - Gossip, ridicule, sarcasm, criticism, careful revenge.

Unsuspected expressions - Withdrawal from others or activities, psychosomatic illness, depression.

- D. What are we really communicating? Do people often think I am angry? Maybe I am!

1. Consider the three levels of communication.

Content of words - 7% - The tone of voice - 38% - Non-verbal, body language - 55%

2. How often do people seethe with anger, but then try to deny it?

III. Bitterness always leads to slavery under a harsh taskmaster

A. Bitterness takes away your ability to rationally think.

1. We can put away anger when we trust God for vengeance. **(Rom 12:17-19)**

2. When you decide to be “judge, jury and executioner” you will pay a high price!

3. You will constantly live and think about the one you hate. (Private enemy #1)

4. In time you will even fight God. You will deny the obvious! **(1 Jn 2:9-11)**

5. It is one of the greatest destroyers of Christians. Why would someone quit serving God when a man has hurt them? It makes no sense. **(Rom 3:4)**

B. Bitterness will destroy meaningful relationships.

1. What to the one that is quick to complain and express their anger?

2. Consider King Saul’s “pity party.” **(1 Sam 22:8)**

3. This is the one “attention getter” that will eventually get you no attention

4. Bitter people want slaves and not true friends! You must hate who they hate or you are cast out. “Fellowship of the miserable” **(Prov 22:24-25; Heb 12:15)**

5. Our own family will pay the highest price for our anger. **(Eph 6:4)**

C. Bitterness leads to depression and cowardice.

1. How can you have any strength when you take on only what God can handle?

2. Jesus offers us a way to be free from this terrible slavery. **(Mt 11:28-30)**

IV. Knowing God is the key to overcoming the slavery of bitterness

A. Have a firm understanding of the Jesus Christ, the author of your salvation.

1. How did He respond when hurt? **(1 Pet 2:21-23)**

2. Can we be like Jesus? **(Luke 23:34; James 4:7)**

B. Seek to be honest and admit any anger in your life.

1. Be the first to break the anger circle. **(Prov 14:29, 17)**

2. Change how you speak. **(Prov 15:1)**

3. Change how quickly you speak. (Circuit breaker) **(James 1:19-20)**

C. Seek to forgive all those who repent. **(Eph 4:30-32; Mt 6:12)**

1. If we refuse to see our anger, then God cannot forgive us.

2. Can you trust God enough to forgive? What has He done for us? **(Matt 18:21-35)**

D. Let anger be your ally.

1. Be angry at things that God is also angry with.

2. Let anger move you to do good. **(Rom 12:21)**

IV. Is bitterness in my life?

1. Do people often ask me why I am angry? 2. Do I find myself rejoicing in the misfortunes of another? 3. Am I often dwelling on the hurts another has done to me? 4. Do I enjoy talking about the wrongs of others? 5. Have my mate and my children become afraid to communicate with me? 6. Have I deliberately refused to greet another, or do I seek to avoid another because of bitterness? 7. Does my anger often make me tired and desire to withdraw from life? 8. Have I considered doing what I know is wrong but justify it by my bitterness?

Conclusion: Jesus offers us true freedom! Let us learn from Him and take His yoke.

The Dark Path of Bitterness ***by Larry Rouse***

How is it possible for Satan to defeat and capture a child of God who has previously escaped his grasp? In conversion Satan is exposed for the deceiver that he is. Jesus described him as having “no truth in him” and as being a “liar and the father of it (**John 8:44**).” While it is inconceivable for a Christian to ever imagine himself as willingly placing his life under the control of the “evil one,” Satan in fact has a strong track record of accomplishing this very thing. “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour (**1 Peter 5:8**).”

Satan’s goal is to cut off the word of God from your heart and then drive you by your emotions. The Bible frames this struggle in this way: “Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. (**Romans 8:12-13**)” Over the years I have witnessed many of my brethren destroyed in this manner, and the vast majority were overcome with bitterness and anger.

There is a place for anger! When Jesus asked a straightforward question and received no reply, He looked into their hearts and responded in this way: “And when He had looked around at them with anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts... (**Mark 3:5**).” My Lord was angry, and my Lord never sinned. There is a place for anger when it is under control and directed by the principles of God’s word. “Be angry, and do not sin: do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil. (**Ephesians 4:26-27**).” We need to be angry when we see sin! But always remember this warning “do not let the sun go down on your wrath,” because a failure to do so will give the devil a place in your heart and be assured, he will take advantage of it.

Why do so many of my brethren not take uncontrolled anger seriously? I know of too many men that laugh about their temper and others who laugh with them saying “that’s just the way he is.” What does the Bible say? “Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him (**1 John 3:15**).” Does this verse get your attention? My eternal life is no laughing matter and anything that could come between me and my God has my attention.

Consider the works of the flesh: “Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, **hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions**, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told *you* in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God (**Galatians 5:19-21**).” Did you notice the “anger family” in this verse? While we hear many good sermons on immorality and false doctrine, do we hear that same emphasis on uncontrolled anger? Remember “those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”

The Bible plainly tells us of the difficulty of controlling our anger. “He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city (**Proverbs 16:32**).” Moses was commended by God above all others for his ability to control his spirit (**meekness – Numbers 12:2 ASV**), but in a moment of anger he spoke rashly and thus sinned. “They angered Him also at the waters of strife, So that it went ill with Moses on account of them; ³³ Because they rebelled against His Spirit, So that he spoke rashly with

his lips. (**Psalm 106:32-33**).” While Moses went to the ultimate Promised Land of God, heaven, he was not able to enter the physical Promised Land because of this one moment of anger.

When we begin to dwell on our hurts and nourish our anger, we are placing ourselves firmly in the hands of Satan. Have you ever tried to reason with an angry person? When you give in to a life of anger you also give up your ability to reason. “A brother offended is harder to win than a strong city, and contentions are like the bars of a castle (**Proverbs 18:19**).” The corrupt politician and the false teacher specialize in slander designed to shut down the thinking process. There are many Christians that I have known who, because of their anger towards a man, have quit serving God. What sense does that make? It is like getting mad at the dog and kicking the cat! In short, your anger will make you a crazy person, unwilling to listen or reason, and ready to fight anyone or anything that gets in the way of your desire for revenge.

Local churches have been devastated by just one man who plants seeds of bitterness. We are warned in the scriptures to be “Looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled (**Hebrews 12:15**)”. Bitter people often try to build their own personal kingdoms that one has described as “the fellowship of the miserable.” You will be received and flattered by this group as long as you hate whoever the leader hates. I personally have been attacked by such groups for doing nothing more than showing kindness to someone that was an object of another’s anger.

Bitter people will be lost if they do not repent. The greatest evangelists for Satan today are those Christians who plant the seeds of hatred in the church of our Lord.

In time bitter people will burn themselves out and their kingdoms will disband. Sometimes the bitter person will repent and return to the grace of God. Sadly, however, they often are unable to reverse the effects of the angry seeds they planted in the hearts of those that were closest to them. It is in the lives of their friends and especially in their children that the harshest fruits of planted bitterness will be seen.

There is a better way. “Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you. (**Ephesians 4:31-32**)” You will never regret releasing the desire for vengeance upon those who have hurt you. Our God has pleaded with us in this regard: “Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord (**Romans 12:19**).”

Do you really believe in God? Are you really a Christian, willing to follow in the footsteps of Jesus? Look carefully at the specific footsteps our God has placed before us: “For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: “Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth; who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously (**1 Peter 2:21-23**). The next time you are tempted to inflict punishment upon your enemy, I hope you will remember the pleading voice of God where he said, “vengeance is mine.” If you really trust God, then you will let it go. Please do allow Satan to do his work through you.