

HOME BIBLE STUDY SERIES

Problems of the Heart (#1)

- 1—Bitterness
- 2—Worry
- 3—Fault-Finding
- 4—Guilty Conscience
- 5—Anger
- 6—Pride

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Lesson One

"Bitterness"

Are you excited about living? Do you look forward each day with joy and anticipation of good things to come? Or, is life a drag? Has all the joy gone out of living? Most people would probably fit somewhere in the middle of these two extremes—they are not really joyous and happy, but neither are they miserable and bitter.

Some people have allowed bitterness to come into their lives. It has come from one of several different things:

1. Some have experienced tragic losses of material things;
2. Some have experienced a tragic death in the family;
3. Some may have had too many negative things happening in their lives;
4. Some are giving in to all the failures in their life;
5. Others have experienced the meanness of other human beings that makes one's life miserable.....etc.

All of the above can be looked upon possibly as "bitter pills" to have to swallow; but we are the ones who determine whether we harbor bitterness in our hearts because of them. The Patriarch Job certainly had some "bitter pills" to swallow—and he could have let them make him bitter towards God for allowing such things to happen to him; but the indication is that he was able to weather the storms of life without causing him to be bitter!

Prov. 17:25 _____

Prov. 14:10 _____

Job 10:1 _____

Heb. 12:15 _____

Bitterness, if allowed to continue undealt with, can ruin one's future here on earth and for all eternity.

Bitterness is identified with "taste." But it is also identified with a condition on one's heart or inner being and outlook. It is used in connection with such words as: wrath, anger, clamor, evil speaking, malice, envy, and self-seeking (Eph. 4:31; Jas. 2:14). It is one of those bad things that must be put away from our lives! Even husbands are warned not to be bitter towards their wives (Col. 3:19). God wants His people to be joyful and rejoicing in life....not bitter!

Solutions for Bitterness

If God commands us to put away "bitterness," we can be sure of two things at least: (1) Bitterness can be put away for God does not command us to do something we are incapable of doing; and (2) We will be the better for putting such away from our hearts! But does God offer us help to deal with the deep bitterness of soul that sometimes blights our lives? We believe the answer is "yes!"

- 1. **Identify the source of bitterness!** Until one can look face to face at the culprit that caused the bitterness, it will not be possible to properly deal with the terrible feeling in our hearts. When the cause has been fully identified, analyze it thoroughly. If it has been events beyond your control, be willing to accept what God allows to be brought into your life. Learn the lesson(s) that God wants you to learn. If it has been caused by the actions of a person, try to identify with that person as to why they did what they did. All of us do things we shouldn't, make mistakes, hurt other people intentionally or unintentionally. Can we make allowances for their mistake(s).
- 2. **Forget the Past!** The Apostle Paul made some terrible mistakes in his past that he had to deal with (Acts 8:1-4, etc.). His way of dealing with them was to *"forget them!"* (Phil. 3:13). Put those things away, stop bringing them up; let them be put to rest! A bitter soul has got to deal with past events in their lives or be plagued with them the rest of their lives. The past is done and cannot be undone! Let it go!
- 3. **Turn to Him who can bring joy into your life again!** Just think of what He went through for your salvation, willingly and without complaint (Phil. 2:5-8).

Ps. 43:4 _____

Ps. 42:1-4 _____

Ps. 51:12 _____

Acts 20:24 _____

- 4. **Look to the Future!** The Apostle said that he had not only forgotten the past but also looked and pressed on to the future before him (Phil. 3:13-14). Look to the future that God has promised to the faithful (2 Tim. 4:7-8). We need to rejoice in the hope that God has given to His children (1 John 5:13).

5. **Turn to the source of God's great wisdom!** James says that envy, self-seeking, and bitterness comes from an earthly, sensual, and demonic wisdom (Jas. 3:14-15). He has provided us with the great truths that can set us free from these problems of the heart—if we will only listen (John 8:32). Search His Word for these great "gems" of wisdom that can bring joy, rather than bitterness, to our lives!

The Grave Danger!

Jesus told about an evil spirit that went out of a man. The heart of that man was swept and put in order, but **empty**. The evil spirit finds seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell in the man. It is stated that the last condition is worse than the first (Matt. 12:43-45). It is not enough to put away bitterness, but we must also fill our hearts with many good things!

Matt. 15:17-20 _____

Phil. 4:8 _____

Concluding Thoughts

There are things that can happen in our lives that may bring a bitterness of soul.

Ruth 1:20 _____

Luke 22:62 _____

Exod. 1:14 _____

The danger is that we will allow these and other things to cause us to be bitter in our hearts toward God, our fellow-man, our mate, or our own selves. Bitterness is a poison in the heart that can become fatal to our soul. It is a problem that we can and must deal with as a Christian.

Questions for Discussion

True or False

- _____ 1. Life can be exciting but it can also be a drag.
- _____ 2. If we are bitter about how life has treated us, it is in reality our fault for being bitter.
- _____ 3. Job had his share of "bitter pills" to swallow.
- _____ 4. There are things that can make us bitter of heart, but not bring bitterness into our heart.
- _____ 5. Bitterness is identified with taste.
- _____ 6. Bitterness is identified with such words as: wrath, anger, clamor, evil speaking, malice, envy, and self-seeking.
- _____ 7. God has to take bitterness out of our hearts because we are not capable of doing so.
- _____ 8. We cannot identify the source of bitterness in our lives.
- _____ 9. We must learn how to make allowances for people's mistakes.
- _____ 10. Men cannot forget the past, but they can forget the past according to the Apostle Paul.
- _____ 11. Only God can give us the ultimate joy that helps us to deal with the problems of the heart.
- _____ 12. The Word of God gives us plain statements on how to deal with bitterness in our lives.
- _____ 13. It makes a difference in our lives what we think about.
- _____ 14. There is a difference in have a bitterness of soul and having bitterness in our hearts.
- _____ 15. I have totally dealt with bitterness in my life.

Lesson Two

"Worry"

We hear people say, "Don't worry!" Yet, they are worried that we worry. We know that we should not, but we often do worry. People get to a point in their lives where they say, "I cannot stop worrying!" But God says that we should not worry (Matt. 6:25-34). Again, we need to emphasize that God does not command us something we cannot do; and, what He does command of us is for our own good!

The Word Defined!

If you have not noticed that different versions use different words or expressions to try to define the word in the English Language, you may be wondering why we use the word "worry." Notice how the different versions translate this Greek word (Merimnate):

KJV—"*take no thought to*"

NKJV—"*Do not worry*"

TCNT—"*Do not be anxious*"

Goodspeed—"*Wondering*"

Moffit—"*Trouble over*"

Simple English Bible—"*Worry over*"

The word "fretful" might be a good word to use instead of the above. We often point out (whether correct or not) that God is not forbidding being **concerned**, but about being **worried** or **anxious**. It might be of interest to see how the KJV uses this Greek word in the New Testament:

Be Careful—2 times

Care—5 times

Have care—1 time

Take thought—10 times

Dangers of Worrying!

God always has a reason for what He expects of us—it is either for our good or it brings undesirable circumstances. May we suggest the following three things that are considered good reasons not to worry:

1. Worry can bring on Physical Ills. Have you ever heard this statement—"*You are going to worry yourself sick.*" Can worry actually bring on sickness in our lives? Doctors, along with research people, tell us that a high percentage of our sickness comes from worrying. They suggest that worrying can bring on

ulcers, high blood pressure, allergies, heart trouble, gastrointestinal diseases, headaches, etc.

Research has also indicated the possibility of worrying bringing on cancer in certain types of persons (the high-strung person). Jesus went to the very heart of what people worry over—food, clothing, and shelter—the necessities of life. And yet, these are the very things that God has so richly provided for all people on earth—whether just or unjust (Matt. 5:45). If these things are so accessible; then, why do people worry over such? The following is a little complicated, but I hope understandable!

1. There needs to be a distinction made between **"being concerned about something"** in contrast to **"worrying over something!"** Worry doesn't do anything but drain us of energy and hope, while concern prompts us to do something about our needs (Jas. 1:22).

2. God has set certain laws into force, such as: ***"What a man sows, he will also reap!"*** (Gal. 6:7). If a person wants food, he should sow seed, water it, and reap the harvest of what he has planted. But God has also given man the common sense to store up for the future needs, as well as, to save some seed for next year's planting. God has provided the earth, the seed, the water, and the sunshine—but it is up to man to do his part or he will starve to death—and, it will not be God's fault! When a person makes poor decisions or becomes lazy or unconcerned, he will suffer the consequences of such!

Prov. 23:21 _____

Prov. 21:5 _____

Prov. 21:20 _____

3. David made this observation: ***"I have been young, and now am old; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his descendants begging bread."*** (Ps. 37:25). Why could David make such a statement? I believe it is because righteous people are dependable, active, obedient, and generally make good decisions, and are blessed by God.

Matt. 6:33 _____

Prov. 11:19 _____

Prov. 10:2 _____

Prov. 10:3 _____

Prov. 6:6-11 _____

2. Worry can be habit forming. If we are not watchful, worrying will become a way of life. We will worry about everything:

- a) I might lose my job;
- b) I might lose my savings;
- c) Worry about the Ozone Layer and other ecological problems;
- d) Worry about Nuclear annihilation.
- e) Worry about taxes, bills, on & on & on, etc.

Such people will worry even if most everything is going okay. They have become accustomed to worrying and feel the need for such. We may look upon it as a habit, but in reality it is a **SIN!** Sin is disobedience to God (1 John 3:4). God commands us not to worry! When we worry, we sin! And it will not leave our life until we have an earnest desire to overcome the sin of worry. We must "kick" the sinful habit!

Phil. 4:6-7 _____

Phil. 4:13 _____

3. Worry weakens our faith and trust in God. We need to see the real problem is a weak faith in God's power and His promises. You remember the 10 spies that came back from Canaan with a negative message: *"We can't take the land...there are giants in the land with great walled cities."* (Num. 13:27-33). Notice what God said about this report: *"How long will this people spurn Me? and how long will they not believe Me, despite all the signs which I have performed in their midst?"* (Num. 14:11). Was God too weak to help them conquer the land? Were the giants in the land more powerful than God? Did God deliver them from Egyptian slavery to bring them into the wilderness to be slain? Were they saying that God really did not care about them? Are we saying that God cares more for the grass, the flowers, and the birds than He does His redeemed people?

Rom. 8:28 _____

1 Pet. 5:7 _____

Phil. 4:19 _____

Prov. 3:9-10 _____

Concluding Thoughts

Dealing with worry is a necessity! We can do it by:

- 1. Let the Scriptures in this lesson be indelibly imprinted in our minds!
- 2. Meditate on passages that build faith and trust in God.

3. Learn to make good decisions and be concerned about doing our part!
4. Get out of debt and stay out of debt!
5. Repent of our lack of faith and change our ways!

Questions for Discussion

True or False

- _____ 1. God commands us not to worry, but He knows we cannot stop worrying.
- _____ 2. Another expression for "worry" is "be not anxious."
- _____ 3. To be "fretful" is another way of showing that we worry.
- _____ 4. It is possible for a person to worry himself sick.
- _____ 5. Worry can drain us of energy and hope.
- _____ 6. The Law of "Sowing and Reaping" has nothing to do with our worrying.
- _____ 7. God's providing of the rain and sunshine has no connection with why people worry.
- _____ 8. A lazy person cannot rightfully expect God to care for him.
- _____ 9. Righteous people are promised that they will not have to go begging for bread.
- _____ 10. Worry can become a habit hard to break.
- _____ 11. Worry is definitely a sin.
- _____ 12. Worry comes out of a weak faith in God.
- _____ 13. God cares more for the grass, flowers, and birds than He does for His people.
- _____ 14. Staying out of debt is one way to get rid of worry.
- _____ 15. We need to repent of our lack of faith in God.

Lesson Three

"Fault-Finding"

A common fault of mankind is "fault-finding!" Husbands find fault with their wives; wives find fault with their husbands; parents find fault with their children; and children find fault with parents. Fault-finders are found everywhere—home, work, government, and relations. **Why?** Because we all have faults—no one is perfect (Rom. 3:23). It is usually very easy to find fault in others around us.

Is fault-finding a sin? Jesus condemned it, so it must be! (Matt. 7:1-5). In fact, He illustrated clearly what it is. It is a form of judgment...but more, it is hypocritical judgment or unjust judgment. A fault-finder usually is a negative person. His whole attitude radiates negativism. Such a person is usually miserable because he deals in the bad and not the good.

But there has to be a difference between being critical and be hypocritical; because, not all criticism is bad. There is what we call "constructive criticism." The purpose is to help a person, build them up, help them to see a better way to be, to think, or to act. Hyper-criticism is exaggerated criticism. Hypo-criticism is acting the hypocrite. Jesus showed this by His example that He used in Matt. 7:1-5. ***"Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye."*** (v. 5).

A look at Fault-Finding!

Men have tried to illustrate what is meant by the above expression. Look carefully at the following and see if you agree.

1. Some point out that it is putting personal prejudice in the place of principle.

John 7:24 _____

It is important that we have the right purpose, motive, reason for offering unsolicited criticism to another person. It is very important that it not be taken as a personal vendetta. The judgment must be according to God's righteous standards and not according to our personal prejudices. It is also easy to justify those whom we like and condemn those whom we dislike.

2. Fault-Finders are hard to please.

Matt. 11:16-19 _____

Fault-finders have a hard time being reasonable, logical, or consistent. Jesus said that the people found fault with John because he did not eat or drink; but they found fault with Jesus because He did eat and drink!

3. Fault-Finders form their judgments without seeking to know all the facts.

Rom. 2:1-3 _____

The Jews showed clearly that they made their judgments from a one-sided view of things because their judgment of others was a judgment of their own selves! The Apostle continues on to show that their hearts were hard and impenitent (v. 5). To make proper judgments, we need to have access to all the facts or information available from the Word of God especially.

4. Fault-Finders can also impute wrong motives of others.

1 Cor. 2:11 _____

Since we cannot know the mind of another unless he tells us what he is thinking, we should not judge them upon the basis of our prejudice. In our courts, it is important to find out the motive for the action of the person we are judging. We need to give the person under observation an opportunity to explain his reasons why he did or does what he did or does.

Not everyone has good reasons for their actions, but they should be given an opportunity to shown them if they have them.

5. Fault-Finders fail to try to understand the circumstances that brought about the actions.

Jas. 4:11-12 _____

Wrong judgment of others is when we impute unworthy motives to them and put the worst possible interpretation on their words and actions. The desire is—to hurt, harm, degrade, put down, slander, or defame the character of another.

Jesus, in Matt. 7:1-5 (and other places), is condemning all censorious judgment that is harsh, hasty, unfounded, hypercritical, hypocritical, unloving, malicious, slanderous, and ill-natured judgment.

It is also important that we realize that Jesus is not condemning all judgments, but only wrong judgments. We need to spend a few minutes looking at the proper kind of judgments to be made.

Proper Judgments

It has to be obvious that people have to make judgments or choices every day of their lives. What the Bible is warning us against is the wrong kind of judging—*"self-righteous, loveless, and censorious judgments."* (Matt. 7:1-5; Jas 4:11-12). Our approach at judging a situation will determine our decisions and actions. Bad judging will bring bad decisions and bad actions. But good judging can help us make better decisions and conduct ourselves more properly as children of God (Matt. 5:14-16). Jesus' admonition in Jn. 7:24 shows this clearly—*"Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment."* God has created us with the capability of making judgments to protect ourselves, our families, etc. He expects us to use this ability correctly, not incorrectly! We need to form our judgments of people, things, events, and our own conduct according to righteous (right, correct) judgments.

Judging Others

What is our purpose for judging others? Is it to help them be a better person and more useful to God? Is it to save their soul? We need to be sure of our intentions before we judge or do anything.

Gal. 6:1

- a) How can you know someone has trespassed? _____
- b) How can you know that you are spiritual? _____
- c) How do you "consider yourself?" _____

Matt. 7:5

- a) How can you know that you or someone else has a fault? _____
- b) What makes a person a hypocrite who judges another? _____
- c) Who will be effective in helping a brother to repent? _____

Concluding Thoughts

Can we profit from the faultfinding of others? Yes, we can if we are willing to overlook his wrong motives and his stating such at the wrong place or the wrong time. Jesus could not escape his critics.....who are we to think that we can escape being criticized by others? *"Those who live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."* (2 Tim. 3:12).

Questions for Discussion

True or False

- _____ 1. Fault-finders find fault with people because it is easy to do so.
- _____ 2. Fault-finding is not a sin, but it is not very pleasant.
- _____ 3. A Fault-finder is usually a negative person.
- _____ 4. A Fault-finding person is usually miserable.
- _____ 5. There is no difference between being critical and being hypocritical.
- _____ 6. Constructive criticism is a misnomer!
- _____ 7. There is a difference between "hypo" and "hyper-criticism."
- _____ 8. Judging people according to our prejudices is vindictive judgment.
- _____ 9. Hypercritical judgment is usually made concerning those whom we dislike.
- _____ 10. Hypercritical judgment is usually a "one-sided-view."
- _____ 11. Imputing wrong motives for people's action can only be done correctly by the more intelligent person.
- _____ 12. Jesus is condemning all criticism when He said "Don't Judge!"
- _____ 13. Bad judging can bring bad decisions and actions.
- _____ 14. It is impossible to know who is a "spiritual person."
- _____ 15. A hypocrite is one who judges another.

Lesson Four

"Guilty Conscience"

Man is a "being" of Conscience! It is one of his most distinctive and impressive characteristics. He automatically possesses the ability to evaluate his own actions. *"Nothing is more awe-inspiring than the starry heavens above and the moral Law within (man)."* (Kant). Man is able to think, evaluate, and choose the right and reject the wrong. Both society and God holds man responsible for his choice.

Conscience Defined

The Greek word that is translated "conscience" is *Συνειδεις* (Sun "with" and Oida "know." It means to "know with" or "to know with oneself." *"Witness borne to one's conduct."* (Vines). He further adds: *"The process of thought which distinguishes what it considers morally good or bad, commending the good, condemning the bad."* Early philosophical writings of Babylonians and Egyptians depict their consciousness of their moral obligations and failures. These writings give a sense of moral responsibility similar to what is found in the 10 commandments. The Gentile world did not have a revealed written law as the Jews did later. But they seem to have known the basic moral precepts of the Law...which shows the work of the Law written in their hearts and their **CONSCIENCE** also bore witness to such by its excusing or condemning their actions (Rom. 2:13-16; Rom. 1:32). Man's ability to recognize what is right and wrong had to come from God. *"It is not the product of environment, training, habit, race impressions, or education, but it can be influenced by all of these. It is rather the perversion and confusion of conscience that is of social origin."* Society helps to **strengthen** or **pervert** the God-given consciousness of right and wrong.

An Illustration

Jesus was approached by the scribes and Pharisees who brought to Him a woman caught in adultery. They were trying to trap Him by asking Him what should be done with such a woman. They continued to press Him for an answer. Jesus said: *"He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first."* The Scriptures stated that they were *"convicted by their conscience."* Jesus got them to look at themselves and see themselves for what they were and hopefully would bring them to repent! Their consciences were aroused and it made cowards of them all. Their guilt was obvious, their defeat was quick, and they left quietly one after another until all were gone. Their consciences did their job!

Kinds or Conditions of Man's Consciences

1. A Good Conscience. Paul said that he lived in all good conscience even though he persecuted Christians (Acts 23:1). He evidently had not gone against his conscience at any time. A good conscience is one that:

1) Is Obedient to God! It approves of our actions.

1 Pet. 3:16 _____

1 Pet. 3:21 _____

Rom. 13:5 _____

2) Is One void of offense.

Acts 14:16 _____

Rom. 9:1 _____

2 Cor. 4:2 _____

3) It is Pure.

1 Tim. 3:9 _____

1 Pet. 2:19 _____

Rom. 14:22-23 _____

2. A Corrupted or Defiled Conscience. This occurs when one goes contrary to his conscience. This is shown in the discussion about eating meat offered to an idol. The former idol worshipper was not able to eat that meat because of his conscience (1 Cor. 8:7). Thus, a corrupted conscience is one that is:

1. Brought about by a weak conscience.

1 Cor. 8:7 _____

Tit. 1:15 _____

2. Brought about by a seared or hardened conscience.

1 Tim. 4:1-2 _____

Prov. 30:20 _____

Eph. 4:17-19 _____

Isa. 59:9-14 _____

Jer. 6:15 _____

3. Brings about an evil conscience.

Heb. 10:22 _____

4. Brought about by an over-righteous outlook.

Eccl. 7:16 _____

3. A Cleansed Conscience. When a conscience is corrupted or defiled, it is needful to have it "cleared" of this fault! Why? So, it will no longer feel guilty. A cleansed Conscience is one that has been:

1. Purged of it's wrongdoing.

Heb. 9:14 _____

Job 27:6 _____

2. Been Forgiven.

Acts 2:37-38

The Process of Conscience

How does our conscience work to help us to do right, avoid the wrong, or get our lives straightened out? The following is a suggested process that needs to be evaluated by you:

1. It produces a sense of ought! It distinguishes between the right and wrong and encourages us to do right.

2. It produces a sense of well-being or guilt! If we do right there is a sense of well-being. If we do wrong there is a sense of guilt.

3. It also produces a sense of a need for punishment for doing wrong. When we go against our conscience, we naturally feel guilt, shame, disquiet, distress, remorse, etc. (Prov. 28:1). Remorse of conscience can be seen in Judas, King Saul, and Herod.

4. It produces an instinctive anticipation of punishment after death! This is obvious from ancient writings of men. It seems to be built into us. This is the reason why the threat of punishment after death is so easily understood when preached—but so undesired!

5. It produces a social judgment upon others' actions as well. The effect of society's judgment is often great, but it can be a help in encouraging one to do right.

Concluding Thoughts

Man's conscience distinguishes between the morally right and wrong; urges man to do that which he recognizes to be right; passes judgment upon his acts; and executes judgment within his soul. Adam and Eve help us to easily see this process. They did what was wrong, they had a sense of guilt, and they hid from God because they were ashamed, and feared his judgment. The following quotes are commendable:

"The Conscience is a wonderful gift from God."

"It is a guardian of morality, justice, and decency in the world."

"It is an irrefutable testimony to the existence of God, Himself."

"It is an innate guide to determine right and wrong actions."

Our challenge is to let our conscience do its God-given work!

Questions for Discussion

True or False

- _____ 1. Both Society and God hold men responsible for their actions.
- _____ 2. The word Conscience means "to know within."
- _____ 3. Early writings of Babylonians and Egyptians show that they understood about man's conscience.
- _____ 4. Man's understanding of what is right and wrong is something that is developed by his surroundings.
- _____ 5. The perversion and confusion of conscience comes from his surroundings.
- _____ 6. Jesus aroused the consciences of the scribes and Pharisees when he said: *"He that is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first."*
- _____ 7. There are three basic kinds of Consciences within mankind.
- _____ 8. A cleansed conscience is one that has rationalized away its guilt.
- _____ 9. It is possible for a person to have an evil conscience.
- _____ 10. A cleansed conscience is one that has been forgiven.
- _____ 11. Our conscience produces a sense of a need for punishment for doing wrong.
- _____ 12. The conscience within man urges him to do the right.
- _____ 13. The conscience is a wonderful gift from God.
- _____ 14. The conscience is irrefutable evidence of a divine Being.
- _____ 15. A person can suffer from false guilt.

Lesson Five

"Anger"

There are two emotions of men that cause most of our problem situations—Fear and Anger. Of the two, anger is probably the one that causes more harm. Anger, with all of its varied forms, is condemned by God as sinful and harmful to man (Eph. 4:29-32). If we want to keep our fellowship with God, we must deal with this action or reaction (1 John 1:7-10). Those who will not deal with it cannot inherit the kingdom of God (Gal. 5:19-21). A study of anger has led many to identify the following sixteen different attitudes and actions as related directly to anger.

Bitterness	Malice	Clamor	Envy
Resentment	Intolerance	Criticism	Revenge
Wrath	Hatred	Sedition	Jealousy
Attack	Gossip	Sarcasm	Unforgiveness

The Main affects of Anger

Anger not only affects the person who harbors it, but it also affects others as well. Following are some of the results of Anger upon both the individual and others:

1. Results of Anger expressed towards others.

1. Wives have been battered, children abused, marriages and families damaged so badly that they can't be mended.
2. Started more wars, created more conflicts, and brought ruin to more countries than any other emotion.
3. Anger caused the first murder (Gen. 4:5-8).
4. Most emotionally scarred persons are the victim of someone's anger.

2. Results of Anger in One's own Life.

1. Over 50 different illnesses have been linked to Anger or Fear or both.
2. Suppressed anger and bitterness can make a person emotionally upset until he is "not himself."
3. When anger dominates, it squelches love.
4. Anger can make young men impotent and young ladies frigid.
5. Makes a person unbearable to be around.
6. When the effects of anger comes into the life of the person who has not

controlled his anger, he often blames God or others for his condition.

3. The Spiritual damages of Anger

1. It can cause one to remain a spiritual infant, or cause a person to turn away from Christ (1Pet. 2:1-2).
2. His carnality can be the cause of much strife and dissension that can cause him to lose his soul and the souls of others (1 Cor. 3:1-3).
3. A person can go so far into sin that he will lose the promise of eternal life and an abundant life here (Heb. 6:4-6).

Anger and Sin

All Anger is obviously not sin (Eph. 4:26-27); but, most of it is sin and should be dealt with as such. A short-term unselfish anger that is not injurious to anyone would not involve sin, but could still have a bad effect on the person if not dealt with properly. Some fourteen times Anger is condemned in Scriptures:

- Ps. 37:8 _____
- Eccl. 7:9 _____
- Prov. 15:17 _____
- Prov. 17:1 _____
- Prov. 21:19 _____
- Prov. 15:18 _____
- Prov. 25:28 _____
- Prov. 22:24-25 _____
- Prov. 16:32 _____
- Prov. 10:12 _____
- Col. 3:8 _____
- Jas. 1:19-20 _____
- Eph. 4:31-32 _____

Anger can be sin because it is selfishly induced. It is this kind of Anger that wreaks so much havoc. And when sinful thoughts are harbored against someone in our hearts, it will eventually spill over into overt actions.

Overcoming Anger

The following thoughts are given to stir up your desire to deal properly with Anger and let it not go unchecked:

- 1. Anger needs to be faced as sin.** If we try to justify anger, explain it away, or blame another, there is no hope of really conquering anger in one's life. There is no way to gain a victory over something you do not consider as wrong.

2. Angry thoughts and deeds must be confessed. Facing up to anger as sin involves confessing to others and/or to God that you have done wrong (1 John 1:9). Just to think on good things does not deal with those sins that have already been committed. They need to be confessed and forsaken.

3. Ask God's help in putting away angry thoughts and deeds. We are encouraged to seek God's help because He cares for us (1 Pet. 5:7). He wants us to crucify sin in our lives (Rom. 6:6).

4. Forgive the person who caused the anger. Christians are to be forgiving people because of the great debt that we have been forgiven of (Eph. 4:32). We need to keep praying for strength to forgive.

5. Learn to give thanks for all things. We not only need to be thankful for the "good things," but for the "bad things" as well. God will work all things out for our good (1 Thess. 5:18; Rom. 8:28). Thanksgiving is a good way of dealing with insults, injuries, and rejections. And, let's not forget, we can sin too (1 Cor. 10:13).

6. Concentrate on the need to love one another. Think on, concentrate on, pray about my need to love as God loves (Phil. 4:8; 1 Jn. 4:7-10).

7. Constantly repeat the above things as needed!

Concluding Thoughts

Anger is a way of showing our disapproval of others and/or their actions. It probably is the wrong way most of the time, but it is a forceful way to let people know "I don't like you or your actions." However, if this way of disapproval can be tamed and directed toward sin, wrongs, injustices, etc., it could be a means of accomplishing good.

Anger usually comes out of hurt, frustration, loss of control, selfish desires violated, suspicion of others, expecting too much of self or others, or fear that is shown by anger. At times, we may allow other's anger to set off our anger. We are reminded that a soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger (Prov. 15:1).

Anger does not help the situation generally; it causes unfair thinking and unjust actions; and does far more harm than any good. All of God's people need to put away anger!

Questions for Discussion

True or False

- _____ 1. Fear, as an emotion, is far more detrimental to a person than anger.
- _____ 2. Anger was the caused of the first murder.
- _____ 3. Over 100 illnesses have been linked to anger alone.
- _____ 4. Anger usually blames others for the results of anger in his life.
- _____ 5. A man's carnality is shown by his anger.
- _____ 6. All anger is obviously not sin.
- _____ 7. Anger is identified as sin.
- _____ 8. Anger often spills over into overt wrong actions.
- _____ 9. There is little hope of dealing with anger if we always blame others for our outburst or wrong actions.
- _____ 10. God cannot help us put away our anger, we must do it.
- _____ 11. It is not possible to forgive the person who caused our anger.
- _____ 12. We need to be thankful for all things that come our way—both good and bad.
- _____ 13. Unselfish love for others can help us to overcome our anger.
- _____ 14. Anger is generally our way of showing disapproval.
- _____ 15. Anger often comes out of hurt.

Lesson Six

"Pride"

The Devil's fall as a created Angel is generally attributed to "Pride!" This is indicated in the following Scriptures (1 Tim. 3:6; Isa. 14:12-15). There is quite a bit stated about pride in the Scriptures. We won't have time to look at all of them, but hopefully some of the main ones will be helpful in dealing with this problem of the heart.

While pride is considered a sin in the Scriptures, it is quite obvious that men have begun to use the word in a "good sense!" We talk about being proud of our children when they do right; our country when it does the right thing in the eyes of other nations; and we can even be proud of the changes in our lives for the better. But at the same time, we give the glory to God for these good things so that we will not be exalted above what we are as human beings created by God.

There is another term that we need to look at in contrast to Pride—that is humility! Pride is having an exaggerated opinion of one's self; while humility is a proper view of one's self. Humiliation is a degrading of one's self or others. It is important that we have a balanced view of ourselves in the presence of God and other human beings. The Devil had too high an opinion of himself and rebelled against God. Many of the Angels fell into the same pride trap and have been cast down into Tartarus, in chains of darkness, awaiting the judgment (2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6). Human beings must strive to avoid the pride trap!

- Prov. 21:4** _____
- Prov. 11:2** _____
- Prov. 8:13** _____
- James 4:6** _____
- Rom. 12:3** _____

Pride in its Different Forms

1. Spiritual pride. Jesus' contrast between two men shows this clearly. The Jewish Nation's rejection of Jesus was because of "spiritual pride."

Lk. 18:10-14 _____

Rom. 10:1-3 _____

2. Intellectual pride. The idea of superiority of intellect—know more than others....even God.

1 Cor. 8:1-3 _____

Prov. 3:5-6 _____

3. Pride over Material Things. "Look what I have;" "I have more than you;" or "My thing is better, or more important than yours." But it can also be seen in putting my trust in material things.

Lk. 12:16-21 _____

Ps. 62:10 _____

4. Social Pride. Class distinctions, positions in society, or snobbery are some of the terms that identify this concept.

James 2:1-4 _____

Rom. 2:11 _____

5. Pride of Race. The Jews looked down on Gentiles and the Samaritans. The Greeks considered everyone else as barbarians. We still have this same mentality among us today.

John 4:5-9 _____

Col. 3:10-11 _____

HOW IS PRIDE SHOWN IN THE FOLLOWING SCRIPTURES?

Acts 5:1-5 _____

John 13:1-17 _____

Acts 24:25 _____

Prov. 13:10 _____

Ps. 10:4 _____

Prov. 16:18 _____

Dealing Properly With Pride

1. Have God's attitude towards pride. (Prov. 6:16-19) _____
2. Allow God's love into our hearts. (1 Cor. 13:4) _____
3. Do not exalt ourselves (nor let others) above what is proper.
(1 Cor. 4:6) _____
(Rom. 12:3) _____
(Gal. 6:3) _____
4. Let God humble us.
(Micah 6:8) _____
(James 4:10) _____
5. Do not accept humiliation of men, but do not over-react and think too highly of yourself—have a proper self-esteem or self-evaluation.
(Matt. 22:39) _____
(Eph. 5:28) _____
(Phil. 2:3) _____
6. Be willing to die to sin and self and submit to God's Will in our lives.
(Gal. 2:20) _____
(Rom. 6:6) _____
(Rom. 6:16-18) _____

Concluding Thoughts

Notice again that God wants us to have a correct view of ourselves before Him and our fellow-man. It is not to be too high or too low. There is danger and harm in either position. Our view of ourselves needs to be a balanced view. Man is viewed by God as important enough to send His Son to earth as a man to redeem us—we have worth in His sight. God has no interest in humiliating us, but He wants us to be humble—recognizing our true condition before Him and our fellow-man!

Questions for Discussion

True or False

- _____ 1. The devil rebelled against God because God humiliated him.
- _____ 2. The word "pride" can be used in a good sense.
- _____ 3. Humility is the opposite extreme to pride.
- _____ 4. Humiliation is the degrading of one's self or others.
- _____ 5. The Scriptures tell us that the devil fell into the "pride trap."
- _____ 6. Fallen Angels have been sent to Hell awaiting the Judgment.
- _____ 7. God says that He will personally humble the proud.
- _____ 8. Intellectual pride is shown by exalting our thinking over others who are not as smart as we are.
- _____ 9. The "rich fool" was rich in material things, but was not rich towards God.
- _____ 10. Social pride is a way of saying I am above your level.
- _____ 11. Racial pride is about erased from our midst in this country.
- _____ 12. God's emptying of Himself to become a man is an excellent example for all of us.
- _____ 13. Pride cannot exist in a heart filled with God's love.
- _____ 14. Dying to sin and self is not humiliation, but a proper recognition of ourselves before God.
- _____ 15. A proper self-image or self-esteem can help us to be balanced in our view of self.

