

## The Basic Factors in Worry and Anger

### **Personal Rights**

- Turning bitterness into forgiveness
- Transforming sources of irritation
- Yielding personal rights

“In order to have the mind of Christ as stated in Philippians 2:5 and enjoy the freedom and peace that results, we must learn the secret of dealing with our rights and expectations.”

### Six Basic Aspects of Forgiveness

- Forgiveness deals with our emotional responses toward an offender. Pardon deals with the consequences of his offense. Unless we have the authority we may not be able to pardon an offense, but we can always forgive.
- Forgiving a person is clearing his record with us and transferring responsibility for any punishment to God. Forgiveness will make it possible for us to have the same openness toward him after he offends us as we had before he offended us.

We must look at forgiveness from God’s viewpoint:

1. Forgiveness involves a positive attitude toward the offense rather than a negative attitude toward the offender.

If our initial focus after being offended is on the offender, it is difficult not to become bitter. But if we first focus on the offense and forget for the moment who offended us, we are much better able to look at the offense as a significant aspect of our personal character development. Our proper attitudes as a result of the offense become

the important concern. By using this approach, both the offender and the offense fade into insignificance and our response to the offense becomes the major concern.

2. Forgiveness views the offender as an “instrument” in God’s hand.

It is God who uses even the “wrath of man to praise Him.”  
Psalm 76:10 King David could have become very bitter toward the vile, hateful person who tried to humiliate him by publicly accusing him and cursing him. Instead, he viewed him simply as an agent of a higher power. He said, “The Lord hath bidden him (to curse me.” II Sam. 16:11

3. Forgiveness looks at the wounds of the offense as God’s way of drawing attention to the offender’s needs.

When the girl possessed of the devil continually disrupted Paul’s meetings, he could have become bitter at her disturbances. Her offenses toward his ministry, however, caused him to become aware of her spiritual needs and as a result he healed her. Acts 16:16-18

4. Forgiveness recognizes that bitterness is assuming a right we don’t have.

Only God has the right to punish. “Vengeance is mine: I will repay, saith the Lord.” Romans 12:19 a response of bitterness is an instinctive means of revenge toward the one who has offended us.

Most of us are prone to use silence toward the offender

5. Forgiveness realizes that the offender has already begun receiving the consequences of his offenses.

A person's happiness is dependent upon his harmony with God and others. An offense toward us simply indicates that he is violating one or more principles and these violations will have a deep effect upon his own happiness and success. If he has wronged us, we can be sure that he is insensitive toward others around him and will suffer from conflicts with them as well.

The reproofs of conscience, friends, circumstances, etc are sufficient tools of God to emphasize to him his offenses. When he recognizes the seriousness of his offenses, he will not give us the privilege of helping him if we have not reflected a loving spirit toward him through our attitudes.

6. Forgiveness involves cooperation with God in the offender's life.

When someone intentionally offends us, we can be sure that he is going to be fully aware of our response to him. In this case, we have a significant opportunity to demonstrate the potential forgiveness of God to him. As he sees our openness and love to him, he will be able to comprehend the same openness and love that God has toward him. In spite of his offenses toward God.

When someone unintentionally offends us, it indicates that the offender has personal deficiencies which he may not be aware of. In this case, our continued openness toward him may provide the opportunity to be of personal help to him in the areas revealed by his offenses.

The reward of meeting his needs will be a spirit of joy in us as we see him sharing with others the same attitudes he saw in us when we

properly responded to his offenses.

Forgiveness is having a greater concern for a person after he offends me than I did before he offended me. It is using the hurts of others as the basis of demonstrating Christ's love back to them.

### **The consequences of Bitterness**

When Jesus said, "Forgive seventy times seven," he was aware of the mental, emotional, physical and spiritual consequences of brooding over resentments.

#### **A. Physical Consequences**

- **Chemical imbalance** – Ulcerative colitis, toxic goiters, high blood pressure are only a few of the scores of diseases caused by bitterness. Our resentments call forth certain hormones from the pituitary, adrenal, thyroid and other glands. Excesses of these hormones can cause diseases in any part of the body. (None of these diseases, S.I. Mcmillen)
- **Facial features** – Refusing to forgive results in physical fatigue and loss of sleep. We may try to hide our resentments, but soon they will also be etched into our eyes and facial muscles as permanent reflections of our inward feelings.
- **Bone Health** – The life of the flesh is in the blood (Lev. 17:11) But the "factory" for the blood is the marrow of our bones. The health of our bones, therefore, determines the health of the body. Bitterness has a direct and devastating effect upon our bones. Ps 32:3; Pro. 15:30; Prov. 17:22; Prov. 12:4; Ez. 32:27

#### **Spiritual Consequences**

- **An inability to love God** I John 4:20,21, "If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not

seen. And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother”

- Doubts regarding our relationship with God If we refuse to forgive people, we are actually asking God not to forgive us. The significance of this point is emphasized by Christ. Matt 6:14.15, “For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.
- Major hindrances to the spiritual development of others may result. Our attitudes of bitterness will repel others. If we are to allow Christ to live in us, we must allow him to forgive through us.

### Emotional Consequences

- Depression is one of the most significant consequences of refusing to forgive the people who wronged us. Emotional energy is expended when we hold a grudge. We become depressed when we become emotionally weary.

### Mental Consequences

- A medical doctor illustrates the mental consequences of holding resentment with this description: “The moment I start hating a man, I become his slave. I can’t enjoy my work any more because he controls my thoughts. My resentments produce too many stress hormones in my body, and I become fatigued after only a few hours of work. The work I formerly enjoyed is now a drudgery. Even vacations cease to give me pleasure... I can’t escape his tyrannical grasp on my mind. When the waiter serves me my porterhouse steak, it might as well be stale bread and water. My teeth chew the food, and I swallow it, but the man that I hate will not permit me to enjoy its taste.” (None of these diseases)

It is for this reason that Solomon wrote, “Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewithin.”

### How do we benefit by being offended?

The energizing power needed to live the entire Christian life is called in Scripture, "the grace of God." (I Cor. 15:10; Titus 2:11,12)

God gives a certain amount of this grace to every person, but the proud resists the grace they get and lose God's power. Jam. 4:6, "But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

Thus, whenever we are humbled, we receive at that moment an added measure of God's grace.

How do we lose by a wrong response?

When we go through the humbling experience of having been offended and react to our offenders, we allow our pride to trample on the grace which God gave for that situation, and we are then left to our own ways thereafter since no new grace will be given to us until we humble ourselves again.

### **Transforming Sources of Irritation**

Irritations are God's invitation to reevaluate our rights.

- Transforming sources of irritation into sources of spiritual motivation. "Every one of use has experienced sources of irritation. Their benefit or harm can be compared to a grain of sand. In the eye, it will cause an irritation, infection and loss of vision. But in an oyster, it will cause an irritation, consecration and then a pearl.

### **Identifying Irritations**

"Many of our attitudes and actions are influenced more than we realize by that which irritates us. Therefore, it is extremely important that we identify and "Transform" every source of irritation."

### **Identifying three major sources of irritation**

- People – The personality traits, idiosyncrasies and inconsistencies of others provide an ever-present source of potential irritation.
- Environment – The deficiencies, inconveniences, undesirable elements and pressures of our environment constitute a secondary source of potential irritation.
- Self – The defects, weaknesses, illnesses, and personal deficiencies which we are not able to remove constitute a third source of potential irritation.

There are many irritations which we experience which we can stand and should remove. A squeaky door can be oiled; an angry neighbor can be appeased; and a personal habit can be changed. There are other irritations, however, which are beyond our power to correct or remove. These irresolvable irritations provide the basis for a significant process which God intends to take place within each of our lives.

### **What is the purpose of irresolvable irritations?**

- Unavoidable irritations which come from people, from our environment or even from our selves are very significant. These irritations are God's way of increasing our sensitivity to the needs of other people or expanding our world of opportunity or developing the inward qualities which are so essential to successful living.
- If we react wrongly to these irritations, we destroy their potential benefits. If we respond with insight and proper action, we allow God to achieve His highest purpose in us – To reshape our lives as closely as possible to the life of His Son. (Rom 8:29)
- When a specific purpose is achieved through a certain irritation, God is then free to remove that irritation from our lives. “When a man's ways please the Lord, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.” Prov. 16:7

- If we continually retreat from these irritations, we force God to choose between raising up new irritations or setting aside His highest plan for our lives.
- Therefore if some irritations seem to be rather permanent or irresolvable, we can be confident that they have a permanent benefit in our development and ministry.
- Example “Paul’s thorn in the flesh.”

2 Cor. 12:7-10

To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

### **Three wrong responses to sources of irritation**

#### 1. Defending in the face of emotion

Ecc. 3:7 – “a time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak,”

#### 2. Blaming someone else

Prov. 30:10 – “Do not slander a servant to his master, or he will curse you, and you will pay for it.”

#### 3. Holding in anger

Ecc. 7:9 – “Do not be quickly provoked in your spirit, for anger resides in the lap of fools.”

## Right responses to sources of irritation

### 1. Thank God for the irritation (I Thess 5:18)

Since I am dedicated to God, I belong to Him. God is bigger than the irritation. He can stop it. He wants the best for me; therefore, it has a purpose.

- The response of thanking God for every situation frees our spirit to be creatively objective in evaluating every situation and discovering ultimate benefits in every situation.
- In order to thank God for the irritation we must:

#### Commit totally to God:

Even though God has created us, we do not actually belong to His family until we receive Him as Lord and Savior. (John 3:16; Romans 6:23;

personal  
10:9)

#### We must personally commit to His objectives:

God has a purpose for each one of our lives. He wants us to dedicate ourselves to His will and begin building our thoughts, desires and activities around His purposes. (Rom 8:29)

#### Finally, we must thank God for the irritation

- I belong to God, and, therefore, I am His responsibility.
- His work and reputation are affected by my responses
- He wants the best for me
- He is bigger than the source of irritation
- He has allowed the irritation for my ultimate benefit.

## 2. Identify possible causes ( I Cor. 11:31-32)

Did I in any way cause this?

Have I done things in the past to cause this?

Have I neglected to do what I should have done?

### Three purposes for irritations

- Irritations of “reproofs

Since we tend to forget unpleasant events, we often neglect to correct or gain forgiveness for the offenses which caused those unpleasant events. Those we offend, however, tend to remember and review them. Then, when they have an opportunity to irritate us, they quickly do so.

- Irritations of “reflectors”

Those around us tend to reflect the attitudes and character deficiencies which we have. Since we are already sensitive to those deficiencies, they become doubly irritating when we see them in someone else. Our tendency is to react to those who point them out in us rather than use their reactions as motivations to change or improve.

- Irritations of “Reminders”

God wants us to live in the freedom of a clear conscience. Therefore, He uses sources of irritation as painful but helpful reminders to clear up past offenses which he sees will hinder future relationships – with Him and others.

### What are the possible causes?

- Did I cause this irritation by something I did or failed to do?

- Does this irritation reflect a personal fault or lack of character development in me?

3. Determine ultimate objectives (Character goals) (Matt 5, Gal. 5)

What qualities does God want to develop in me?

How is He using this irritation to force me to develop these qualities?

- What is God's ultimate purpose?
  1. From the beginning, God chose that those who believe in Him should become like His Son, Jesus Christ (Rom 8:29)
  2. This process involves the development of basic inward qualities. For this objective, "All things work together for good to them who love God and are called according to His purpose." (Rom. 8:28)

- What qualities does God want to develop in me?

Mt 5:3-12 – Humility, repentance, meekness, spiritual hunger, mercy, purity, peacemaking, endurance in persecution.

Gal. 5:22 – Love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control.

Irritations

Quality to be produced

From one who is hard to love

Genuine love based on mature insight

From circumstances of sorrow

Continuous joy even in the midst of pain

From conditions of confusion

Inward peace and steady confidence

|  |                              |
|--|------------------------------|
| From irritating inconveniences                   | Sympathetic flexibility      |
| From obvious needs of others                     | Wise generosity              |
| From unwelcome responsibilities                  | Consistent trustworthiness   |
| From people who intrude upon our personal rights | Surrender of personal rights |
| From temptations of wrong desires                | Self-control                 |

I Pet. 2:19-21 define the steps of responding to irritations:

“For it is commendable if a man bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because he is conscious of God. But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.”

### **Yielding Personal Rights** (ANGER AND WORRY)

Anger is the opposite of meekness. We cannot have both in our life. Either we have one as our basic nature, or we have the other. The great importance of meekness is seen in the following scriptures.

### **The Cause of Anger: Personal Rights**

- The **meek** will have good judgment  
Ps. 25:9 – “The meek will He guide in judgment.”
- The **meek** will learn the way of the Lord  
Ps. 25:9 – “The meek will He teach His way”
- The **meek** will inherit the earth  
Ps. 37:11 – “The meek shall inherit the earth”
- The **meek** will respond to the Gospel  
Is 61:1 – “He came to preach good tidings to the meek”

- The **meek** will have special joy  
Is 29:19 – “The meek also shall increase their joy.”
- The **meek** will understand Christ’s nature  
Mt 11:29 – “For I am meek and lowly of heart.”
- The **meek** will radiate inward beauty  
I Pt 3:4 – “The adornment of a meek and quiet spirit.”
- The **meek** will have power in witnessing  
I Pt 3:15 – “Be ready to give an answer...with meekness.”

It would not be possible to have a conflict with someone unless personal rights were involved.

- Right to control personal property
- Right to have personal respect
- Right to have to be held accountable for your own responsibilities
- Right to evaluate and pass judgment

### **Steps in yielding personal rights**

- Identify personal rights which you feel were violated
- Transfer your rights to God – Dedicate the rights to God and realize that they are His.
- Transfer ownership of our entire life to the Father. When we do this God may ask for us to give him our most cherish possession.
- Thank God for whatever happens

The concept of thanking God for whatever He allows to happen is the key to yielding rights. It allows for the possibility that God may test our sincerity.

### Rights which we must be willing to turn over to the Lord

- Self-will “Not my will but thine be done” Mk 14:36
- Relationships “Whom have I in heaven but thee and there is none on earth that I desire but thee.” Ps. 73:25
- Appearance “Concentrate on a meek and quiet spirit which are in the sight of God of great price.” 1 Pe 3:3, 4
- Possessions “Set your affections on things above not on things on the earth.” Col. 3:2
- Knowledge “His delight is in the law of the Lord and in His law does he meditate day and night.” Ps 1:2
- Friends “He that receiveth you receiveth me.” Mt 10:40
- Entertainment “Bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” 2 Cor. 10:5
- Future “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you.” Mt 6:33
- Health “My grace is sufficient for you for my strength is made perfect in weakness.” 2 Cor. 12:9
- Reputation “He leads me in the right way because His reputation is at stake.” Ps 23:3
- Schedule – Time “He that will be the greatest among you let him be the servant of all.” Mt 23:11

- Activities “Whether therefore ye eat or drink or whatsoever ye do, do it all to the glory of God.” 1 Cor. 10:31

### **When Rights are yielded**

#### Distinguish between rights and responsibilities

In yielding rights, we must be careful not to yield responsibilities. Example: a student may yield his/her right to good grades and not study as hard anymore. Or a parent may say I give my right to disciplining my children to the Lord and have stopped correcting them. There are responsibilities given by God and must not be confused with personal rights.

#### Learn to develop inward qualities through the loss of rights

The deep inward feelings which result when our personal rights are withheld provide excellent motivation to personally identify with the Scripture.