

Principles from Proverbs: Taming the Temperament

Containing Negative Emotions—Hatred and Anger

Introduction: God created man with an array of emotions. Each emotion has its proper place and none is inherently sinful. However, if an emotional response dominates one's life, that emotional response becomes a besetting sin. Anger and hatred are perhaps the most common besetting emotional sins.

I. Anger and hatred lead quickly to an array of other sins.

A. Sinful Words and Deeds

An angry man stirreth up strife, and a furious man aboundeth in transgression. (Proverbs 29:22)

He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly: and a man of wicked devices is hated. (Proverbs 14:17)

1. Because anger finds expression in overt demonstration, it influences others who come in contact with it. Angry people always seek to make converts to their anger, thereby engendering strife.
2. Extreme anger ("furious") is an indicator of additional sins. Someone who is characterized by a "furious" attitude has deep spiritual problems.
3. People who frequently lose their temper do not make wise decisions. Their decisions will be rash, illogical, and frequently unbiblical.

B. Dishonesty

He that hateth dissembleth with his lips and layeth up deceit within him. (Proverbs 26:24)

He that hideth hatred with lying lips, and he that uttereth a slander, is a fool. (Proverbs 10:18)

1. Those who possess deep hatred frequently seek to disguise it by their speech. Therefore, one can not trust the words of a hateful man. His effort to hide his hatred by deceitful speech is the tip of an iceberg of bad character.
2. Because expressing hatred is not socially acceptable, those who hate frequently cover it with lies. However, people typically indulge the temptation to occasional slander, thus revealing their inner character.

C. Conflict

A wrathful man stirreth up strife: but he that is slow to anger appeaseth strife. (Proverbs 15:18)

Hatred stirreth up strife: but love covereth all sins. (Proverbs 10:12)

1. Observe in life how anger and strife go hand in hand. When controversy continually swirls around an individual, he may be characterized as “wrathful.” Peacemakers tend to have longer fuses! Associate with peacemakers.
2. Remember that hatred is the core of strife. Real love tends to overlook faults and exercise mercy. See I Cor. 13:7; I Pet. 4:8; Rom. 13:8, 10.

D. Violence

Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous.... (Proverbs 27:4a)

1. The wrathful (hateful) man expresses his wrath in cruelty—abusive actions and words. Association with hateful people invites abuse.
2. The word “outrageous” literally means “overflowing.” Anger frequently overflows the banks of restraint—resulting in a flood of abuse and harm.

II. Keep anger and hatred under control.

The discretion of a man deferreth his anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression. (Proverbs 19:11)

He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding: but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly. (Proverbs 14:29)

III. Neutralize anger in others.

A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger. (Proverbs 15:1)

The wrath of a king is as messengers of death: but a wise man will pacify it. (Proverbs 16:14)

IV. Avoid angry People.

Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go: Lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul. (22:24, 25)