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Does Your Fuse Burn Quickly?

Warm hellos friends, brethren, co-workers, spiritual family, and scattered children of God, from here in Spanish Fort, AL.

My wife and I pray and hope this finds you all doing well, and that again your week has been blessed.

For those who follow the Gregorian calendar, today begins a new calendrical year. Many will make New Year's resolutions to try to change habits or ways of life. I recall someone mentioning that "I'm going to turn a new leaf and stop getting angry this year".

As mentioned last Sabbath evening, we'll now examine Scriptural instructions directed to any of us if we have a "quick or short fuse" and a have a tendency to get angry quickly. Some of us tend to become angrier more quickly than others.

You may have seen the "Snickers" commercials on TV where the catch phrase is "you are not you when you are hungry".

When people get hungry, they make mistakes and they're not themselves – Snickers used this situation to claim they could prevent this from happening with its candy bar full of peanuts. Snickers' challenge was keeping its classic message, "You're not you when you're hungry," from getting old by relying on only one form of storytelling.

In human interaction and often in marriages things erupt more often than they should. In society today we see more and more an attitude of anger instead of peace and stability.

Some will claim they have a right to be angry and unleash how they respond to situations. In the last year we have seen many who were angry cause harm and destroy without having any thoughts of doing anything wrong.

If we are honest, most of us have lost our temper or have let anger get the best of us at some time in our lives. There have been times in the past when I have let anger get to me such as when I smashed my finger while building something! When I was a young boy I used to unleash some angry words when I was exasperated or frustrated. Because I was smaller than most kids,

I was picked on a lot. This caused me to develop a short fuse, and willing to fight if needed. These can be challenging habits to overcome and to bring under control.

Those who have suffered abuse will often be on the defensive, and when becoming angry withdraw from contact with anyone perceived as a threat.

Those who suffer from chemical imbalances, and blood sugar instability know what it is like to feel angry when levels drop.

If we have a problem with controlling our anger, we first have to admit that we have a problem. We have to see that letting our anger get out of control and resulting in saying or doing something that we regret is hurting us and may be hurting relationships with others.

If others see us unleashing an ugly display of anger, our reputation will be damaged and we may repel others and cause them to avoid us. There are a number of Scriptures that condemn a wrong display of anger. "*Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; Do not fret-it only causes harm.*" (Psalm 37:8) How true. Harm comes from uncontrolled anger and wrath - sometimes serious harm. "*For as the churning of milk produces butter, and wringing the nose produces blood, so the forcing of wrath produces strife.*" (Proverbs 30:33).

We need to develop an awareness and sensitivity to how we are affecting others and when we are provoking anger in someone else. We need to back off and not precipitate an angry argument. What is more important - winning an argument or being a peacemaker?

Here are several instructions from Proverbs. "*He who is slow to wrath has great understanding, But he who is impulsive exalts folly.*" (Proverbs 14:29)

Similarly, "*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)

How do you develop the quality of being "slow to anger?"

First, if we are quick to anger we have to admit that. We then need to determine the triggers that set off your anger and be on guard to resist responding to them. Someone who is stressed often or a good part of the time will be more vulnerable to displaying anger. Some stresses can be eliminated and some can be reduced. Each one of us has to make choices and recognize what affects us.

When anger is triggered by a conflict with another person, the book of James gives some good advice. "*So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.*" (James 1:19) This goes contrary to human nature and the usual dynamic, but one can make progress in developing new habits and moderating one's usual response. It takes time,

practice, and humility. But, if we are damaging relationships and hurting people because of our giving in to anger, then it becomes a priority to make changes.

As human beings, we'll struggle to control the emotion of anger when it arises, but we can make effort in responding to the anger more appropriately. Notice the instructions from the apostle Paul. "*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) If we do become angry we need to make the effort to resist the impulse to say or act on it inappropriately. We must choose our words and actions to be peacemakers - not war-makers. We must turn loose of the anger and not nurse it along into rage.

Some people pride themselves on their anger and ability to stir up strife. This is not the way of God. I remember having a friend growing up that claimed "it's in my blood, my people, to be angry!"

Jesus praised and complimented those who work to make peace. "*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.*" (Matthew 5:9) Finally let me quote from the apostle Paul. "*If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.*" (Romans 12:18).

Living peaceably with all requires yielding to God's Spirit. That power, and of love and a sound mind helps us become more like the Prince of Peace that lives within us. (Phil 2:5).

Arms up friends! Our prayers and thoughts are with you daily. Please do pray for us as well.

-Scott Hoefker

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