

How does love overcome bitterness?

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Introduction: How does Satan work to destroy us?

- A. As a young Christian I did not understand the dangers in the works of the flesh. Consider the “anger family.” **(Gal 5:19-21)**
 - 1. I was surprised to see how many would fall over time.
 - 2. These works can cause you to lose your mind!
- B. God tells us that we must major in guarding our hearts! **(Prov 4:23)**
 - 1. We win the battle of the mind when we allow God’s word to produce the fruit of the Spirit in our hearts. **(Gal 5:22-23)**
 - 2. This says fruit and not “fruits.” We are to possess all!

I. The Love of God teaches us how to think

- A. When we are emptied and transformed by God’s love, then we will respond to all things differently! **(1 Cor 13:4-7)**
 - 1. In the things that we experience we can choose to *emotionally react* or *thoughtfully act out of love*.
 - 2. This is very difficult and requires *diligent* teaching and thought.
 - 3. God’s love teaches us that God knows what happens to us and we should give God those things that we cannot change. **(Mt 11:28-30; Lk 12:6-7)**
- B. When anger gives way to bitterness men can lose the ability to reason!
 - 1. When men are stirred emotionally they can easily forsake sound men. **(Gal 4:16-17)**
 - 2. When men are stirred to anger they can easily forsake sound teaching. **(Gal 5:8-10)**
 - 3. You can see the rash, unmerciful way they speak and act. **(Gal 5:13-16)**
- C. Have you ever had to deal with an angry man, a “spear-thrower” in your life?
 - 1. We have a great example of this situation in King Saul and David.
 - 2. How can we keep from becoming like the unreasonable angry man?

II. We will be tested in life by angry and unreasonable people.

- A. God will let you be tested by unfair people!
 - 1. There are many things and many people that we cannot change! We must know our limitations! **(1 Cor 3:5-7)**
 - 2. Some work by intimidation and guilt to get their own way.
- B. It is not uncommon to have an enemy without a cause! **(Ps 35:19-21; 69:4)**
 - 1. A Christian’s effectiveness can be blocked to one who has listened to gossip! Unjust people will believe it.
 - 2. The man who loves will believe all things and be just. **(Prov 18:17)**
 - 3. A person can do you wrong and then hate you! **(Prov 26:28)**
- C. Saul became David’s enemy because of envy. **(1 Sam 18:7-9)**

1. David would do anything for Saul! Even though David tried to help, this was something completely beyond David's ability to change.
2. David has God's love as his foundation. He kept his eyes on the Lord!
(Ps 17:1-2, 7-8)
3. Paul asked to be delivered from unreasonable men. (2 Thess 3:2)

III. Bitterness can overtake a child of God

- A. When bitterness overcomes a person, Satan takes control of the heart.
(Eph 4:26-27)
 1. You must let the desire for personal vengeance go. (Rom 12:19)
 2. When you fail to do this it will take over your heart like a cancer.
- B. A bitter man will hide his motives! He will also lie to himself. (Prov 10:18)
 1. Sadly, some will come to you as a friend and have a heart of bitterness. Some will view you as a competitor. (Prov 27:6)
 2. Saul pretended to care for David but actually wanted to harm him.
 3. He pushed for David to marry one of his daughters as an "honor" to him. His real motive was for David's harm. (1 Sam 18:17, 20-21, 25)
 4. David learned the difference between what Saul said and his motives.
 5. An angry man will blindly sacrifice his family for his anger. (Eph 6:4)
- C. Many "unsolvable problems" among God's people are a result of bitterness.
 1. When you are angry you can easily accept false doctrine because of your hatred of "legalistic brethren." (Deut 29:18-19)
 2. You become poison! If you stay like this *it is just a matter of time* before you leave "sectarian brethren" and take others with you. (Prov 14:10)
 3. Please do not closely associate with an angry man. (Prov 22:24-25)
- D. The heart of bitterness will slander and gossip. (Psa 64:2-5; 35:19-21)
 1. We need to be careful who we open our ears to! (1 Jn 3:14-15)
 2. Anger is easily spread. If you lose control of your heart you can easily change your doctrinal beliefs! (Prov 29:22; 15:1)

IV. How love overcomes bitterness

- A. Jesus is love and he showed us how to overcome angry men. (1 Pt 2:19-23)
 1. God's love helps me keep my hurts in perspective. (Heb 12:3-4)
 2. I want Jesus in control of my life! Love lets me let go and move on!
- B. Love lets me see the terrible fruits the angry person will experience.
 1. They will have problems with relationships. (Prov 25:21-24)
 2. They will tear down what they work hard to build up. The ones most affected by anger will be your family. (Eph 6:4)
 3. We gain wisdom in how to defeat it. (Prov 16:32; James 1:19-20)
- C. Love lets adversity draw us closer to God. (Psa 27:11-14)
 1. While your enemy frets and plots in his self-defeating bitterness, you can move on and rejoice in the manifold love of God. (Psa 23:4-6)
 2. You also will draw closer to Christians! God's love will not let you down! (2 Thess 3:5)

Conclusion: Let God's love free us from the bondage of bitterness. (Eph 4:31-32)