

Be Angry and Do Not Sin

In previous “*Briefs*” we have seen the various instruments that Satan uses to deceive mankind into disobeying God’s word. However, the exact mechanics will now be examined.

Because Almighty God created mankind with the freedom to make choices, Satan is able to exploit this to his advantage. Cain’s freedom to spare or kill his brother Abel was not challenged. However, his personal responsibility toward the will of his Creator was brought to his attention,

So the Lord said to Cain, “Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen?⁷ If you do well, will you not be accepted (by your Creator)? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it.” (Genesis 4:6-7; NKJV used throughout unless otherwise noted; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Being angry “*of by and by itself*” is not sinful, but if it is not dealt with expeditiously it can lead to sin,

“Be angry, and do not sin”: *do not let the sun go down on your wrath,²⁷ nor give place (an opportunity) to the devil* (Ephesians 4:26-27; cf. Ps. 4:4; 37:8; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).



Repent Therefore of This Wickedness and Pray

Peter said to him (Simon), “*Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money!*” (Acts 8:20; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray (to) God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you.²³ For I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity (sin; cf. 1Jn. 3:4) (Acts 8:22-23; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

These same mechanics were going on in Cain’s mind. He had been harboring hatred toward his brother Abel; while trying to justify it. The Lord was pointing out that if he did not repent, which means changing course and moving in the opposite direction, things would not work out well. By fixating on some supposed wrong that Abel was guilty of, Cain was opening himself up to Satan’s influence, which resulted in Abel’s death,

But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.¹⁵ Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death (James 1:14-15).

So we do have control over our thoughts, but if we do not exercise self-control sin is usually the outcome. And, unrepentant sin earns us everlasting death,

But I (Paul) discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified (1Cor. 9:27; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Often anger toward someone, or some group, is based on self-righteousness. In other words, you believe you would never do what that other person or group is doing. Maybe not, but you are capable of doing something equally sinful,

Harboring anger over a period of time entrenches it, making it very difficult to resolve. When things get that bad, repentance toward God is the first step. Simon Magus had a deeply entrenched problem requiring repentance,

Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly (have a different perspective) to remove the speck out of your brother's eye (Matthew 7:5; Ed. note in parenthesis).

In the next “*Brief*”, we will examine further how our attitudes can give Satan a foothold in our lives or, conversely, make it very difficult for him.

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