

Love Is Not Provoked

I Corinthians 13:5

This morning we come to one of the more practical helps in our study of I Corinthians 13. We are going to see a solution to those times when we feel utterly out of control when it comes to our emotions.

I. Love doesn't allow another person to control our emotional reactions.

The word translated *provoke* (paroxynomai) means “to make sharp, sharpen” as in stir up, or stimulate, stir up, irritate, provoke, arouse to anger, exasperate—any number of emotions. This verse is translated “is not *easily* provoked” (KJV), “is not provoked” (NASB, NKJV), “is not irritable” (ESV), “does not get upset with others” (NCV). It's used **only 4** times in the NT. The other three texts describe provocations to (1). avoid (2). to admire (3). and to accept. Our text falls into the first category so let's look at the other verses to see how the word is used.

(1). *There was such a **sharp disagreement** that they separated from one another* (Acts 15:39).

(2). *While Paul was waiting for them at Athens, **his spirit was being provoked within him** as he was observing the city full of idols* (Acts 17:16). Jesus feels this in the Temple.

(3). *Let us one **provoke** one another to love and do good works* (Hebrews 10:24-25).

What I hope to show is that when *people* get you bent out of shape you aren't loving them.

II. Whenever we allow another to control our emotions, something is revealed in us.

So what does it say when we are out of control? What is going on when we are yelling and screaming (or smoldering) at another? What is being revealed when we angrily and often abusively insult? It reveals quite a bit—not about the other person, but about you and me!

(A) A lack of knowing we are loved and enjoyed by our all-powerful Father above.

Cain's anger with Abel illustrates Cain's out of kilter relationship with God (Gen. 4:15).

(B) A lack of contentment in the eternal and a longing for significance in the temporal.

Joseph's brother's anger over Joseph's coat illustrates *their* neediness (Gen. 37:4).

(C) A lack of strength to be a giver and a healer and a neediness that makes us takers.

When the people rejected Saul in favor of David, Saul sought David's life (I Sam. 18:7).

III. When our emotions are out of control, there is a way for us to get them under control.

One of the points we have emphasized in our study is that “love” describes who a Christian is. There may be some listen to the words of Paul and say, “Could I not be at all saved?”

“Beyond all these things **put on love**, which is the perfect bond of unity” (Colossians 3:14).

(1). Determine your most vulnerable point – that place where one can “push your button.”

“*What is desired in a man is steadfast love*” (Proverbs 19:22).

(2). Develop the habit of always turning to the steadfast love of God (Psalm 33:20-22).

“*God hand-delivers a bouquet of love to your door every day. Open it! Take them! Then, when rejections come, you won't be left shortpetaled.*” Max Lucado

(3). Delight in knowing and understanding other people – put your focus on them, not you.

“*He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that rules his spirit than he that takes a city*” (Pr. 16:32). *The Lord heals all our diseases even our anger* (Ps. 103:2)

You can't keep people from rejecting you, but you can keep rejections from enraging you.