

WHAT PROVOKES YOU? Acts 17:16

R.S.V.: "HIS ~~SPRIT~~ WAS PROVOKED ~~AT THE SIGHT~~ ^{within him}"
 MOFFATT: "HIS SOUL WAS IRRITATED AT THE SIGHT"

I. How God is often provoked with his people.
 1. When his people broke his covenant and turned to other gods and served them. DEUT. 31:20

2. When his people harden their hearts, as in the day of temptation in the wilderness. Ps. 95:8

3. When his people fail to trust him for deliverance as did the Jews of Jerusalem.

A. In Jer. 32:28, he had said, "Is anything too hard for me?"

B. Their unbelief and iniquity provoked the Lord to anger.
 Jer. 32:30-33.

II. What should not provoke us.

1. Fear.

A. Basil King says in his book Conquest of Fear:

"There is not a home or an office or a factory or a school or a church in which some fearful apprehension is not eating at the hearts of men, women, and children who go in and out."

B. Most fears are unfounded, and should not be tolerated.

"Then take your fear

By the ear,

And say, "See here,

If the thing I fear

Were already here,

It could not cause a tear

So scalding, nor could it sear

My soul as much as you, the fear,

So, now and forever, out of here!"

2. Worry

A. Once Ty Cobb and "Shoeless Joe" Jackson were running neck and neck in baseball batting averages, and each wanted the championship. When the two teams met in an important series, Cobb refused to speak to Jackson. As they had been good friends, Jackson was worried, afraid that he had offended Cobb. He worried so much that he went into a batting slump; worry had taken away his "batting eye", and Cobb's morally questionable strategy won for him the championship.

B. Sunshine Skyway bridge pilings founded on the solid rock.

We need not worry when our faith is founded on the solid rock
 of God's eternal promises and faithfulness

3. Impatience.

A. ~~8xxx2xxxxx27x22~~ "Let go, and let God have his way."

B. Colored maid who told her mistress, "When you sit, you sit tight and tense inside. Look at me. When I work, I works hard; but when I sit, I sits loose."

4. CRITICAL JUDGMENT OR RESENTMENT OF OUR BRETHREN.

A. GA. 6:1, RESTORE ONE ANOTHER, NOT CRITICIZE.

B. WHEN DR. GEO. WASH. CARVER WAS ASKED WHICH UNIVERSITY IT WAS THAT HAD ACCEPTED HIM AS A STUDENT, THEN HAD REFUSED HIM ADMISSION WHEN THEY LEARNED HE WAS COLORED, HE SMILED GRACIOUSLY AND REFUSED ALL HIS LIFE TO TELL, TAKING IT AS A LITTLE THING.

C. LOOK FOR THE GOOD IN PEOPLE.

D. THE ARMENIAN GIRL AND THE TURK WHO HAD KILLED HER BROTHER.

5. PRIDE OR ENVY, AND ANGER.

A. GAL. 5:26, "LET US HAVE NO VANITY, NO PROVOKING, NO ENVY OF ONE ANOTHER."

B. CONSIDER THE EFFECTS OF ANGER ON THE PHYSICAL BODY,

(1). ON THE STOMACH.

(2). ON THE NERVES, CAUSING ARTHRITIS

(3). ON THE EYES, DIMMING THE VISION.

6. "LOVE IS NOT EASILY PROVOKED", 1 COR. 13:5

"NEVER IRRITATED" (MOFFATT)

III. WHAT SHOULD PROVOKE US.

1. THE PREVALENCE OF SIN, ACTS. 17:16

A. WE SHOULD FEEL A RIGHTEOUS PROVOCATION AT THIS.

(1). THERE IS SUCH A THING AS GOOD ANGER, LIKE THE EXPLOSION IN THE ENGINE OF YOUR CAR — UNDER CONTROL.

(2). "JESUS LOOKED ON THEM WITH ANGER, BEING GRIEVED AT THEIR HEARTNESS OF HEART." MK. 3:5

B. WE SHOULD DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT, AS PAUL DID.

(1). HE DISPUTED WITH THEM. V. 17

(2). HE PREACHED UNTO THEM. JESUS, V. 18, 22-31

(3). HE WON SOME OF THEM TO FAITH IN CHRIST, V. 34.

2. THE INSPIRATION OF CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP, HEB. 10:24

A. LOVE,

B. SERVICE, GOOD WORKS

11 COR. 9:2, "YOUR ZEAL HAS PROVOKED VERY MANY."

C. WORSHIP, NOT FORSAKING THE ASSEMBLING OF YOURSELVES TOGETHER.

D. MUTUAL ENCOURAGEMENT,

(1). EXHORTING ONE ANOTHER

(2). THAT'S NOT A BURDEN; HE'S MY BROTHER"

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