

3. How can we obey this verse?

a. We must admit our anger.

- 1) If a parent, spouse or friend tell you to calm down or to stop getting angry, **you have an anger problem.**
- 2) If your words and actions cause others to cry or shy away in fear, **you have an anger problem.**
- 3) If you respond sharply with unkind remarks or a raised voice when you dislike something, when your child spills something, or when your property gets damaged, **you have an anger problem.**
- 4) Every forest fire begins with a tiny spark. All anger begins with a tiny irritated spirit. Quench the spark and the forest fire will never begin.
- 5) Admitting an irritated spirit that leads to anger is humbling and difficult. It is far easier to make excuses and justify ourselves, **but admission is essential for victory.**

b. We must watch and pray.

- 1) Watch for sparks of irritation. We must constantly be on guard to quench the tiniest spark of irritation in our spirit in order to avoid all anger.
- 2) We must let God settle all injustices. (Romans 12:19) "*Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.*"
- 3) We must overcome selfishness by cultivating service, (Romans 12:21) "*Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.*"
- 4) We must ask God daily to help us conquer our quickly irritated and angry spirit.
- 5) When we fail, we must make it right with God and man. Be aware, confession **does not erase the scars** we cause with anger. (Psalms 37:8) "*Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.*"

Conclusion: I admit it is not easy to nip an irritated spirit in the bud. It takes determination, humility and God's help, but we can do it. This applies to every one of us, young and old.

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Better Choice – A Ruled Spirit

18 October 2020 PM – Proverbs 16:32 – BC20 – Scott Childs

Introduction: On March 16, 1980, the first sign of activity at Mount St. Helens occurred as a series of small earthquakes. It was not until May 19, 1980 that the mountain exploded. The volcano was slow to explode, but when it did, it was devastating.

Being slow to anger is more than delaying the explosion; it is ruling the spirit.

Transition: As we look at this verse, I want us to answer **three questions** that ought to help us rule our spirits.

1. What did God say?

In this verse, God gave us two comparisons.

a. He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty.

- 1) The word translated "*slow*" is found 15 times in the Bible. It means to be long, particularly long in patience.
 - a) Four times it is translated *longsuffering*, which means, Bearing injuries or provocation for a long time; patient; not easily provoked.
 - b) However, nine times it is translated *slow* and in **every case**, it modifies **anger** or **wrath**.
- 2) Your nose reveals your *anger*. The Hebrew word literally describes the nose. When angry, the nostrils expand and often breathe heavily through the nose.
- 3) **To be slow to anger is thus to be longsuffering, patient and long in getting roused to anger.**
- 4) The *mighty* were the strong, brave, powerful soldiers in a battle. In OT times, battles were common as enemy countries frequently attacked. Hand-to-hand combat was the method the day. Survival of the fittest was the usual result. The mighty lived; the weak died. To be a mighty soldier was the ambition of nearly every young man. The mighty soldiers were the heroes of the day, and rightly so.
- 5) Knowing this must have given the original readers a shock when God said that being slow to anger was **better than** being a mighty soldier.

b. It is better to rule your spirit than to take a city.

- 1) The word translated *ruleth* means to have dominion over. It is to govern or to rule with authority.
 - a) God rules the raging sea (Ps 89:9).
 - b) Kings rule with superior authority.
 - c) A good ruler governs all that takes place.
 - d) A good ruler keeps things in line.
- 2) The word *spirit* refers to one's disposition, inner spirit, or temper. It is the part of us that may get stirred up, agitated, irritated, roused or fired up when circumstances oppose us. Our reaction shows our spirit. The more selfish we are, the more likely we will struggle to rule our spirit.
- 3) Perhaps we could compare our spirit to a fire. Fire is good when it is ruled. We can use it to cook our food, to warm our homes, and to run our car. However, when fire is not ruled, it burns massive forests, destroys homes, and causes great pain to a body that gets too close to it.
- 4) To take a city meant to be a mighty soldier who by his strength, wisdom and leadership leads his army in breaking down the gates of a city and conquering the people within. This was a dangerous and heroic task. Only the bravest and strongest of men could take a city. Those who did were held in great honour.
- 5) This too must have shocked people as God said that ruling one's inner spirit was better than taking a city.

2. What did God mean?

a. He wants us to put away anger.

- 1) Just like uncontrolled fire, anger can cause great harm.
 - a) Anger causes us to say things that we later regret.
 - b) Anger causes us to do things that cause great pain, emotionally, mentally, and physically.
 - c) Anger has destroyed countless marriages and friendships.
 - d) Parental anger has driven millions of children to become provoked, bitter, rebellious young people.
 - e) Most of all, anger displeases God.
- 2) I do not believe that to be *slow to anger* just means to

slow it down. Here are my reasons.

- a) If you currently explode in anger within 5 seconds of being irritated by something and you slow it down so that you do not explode for 5 minutes, that may help some, but it still causes great harm and heartaches.
 - b) The parallel phrase "*he that ruleth his spirit*" does not make allowance for any explosion.
 - c) All anger stirs up strife. (Proverbs 15:18) "*A wrathful man stirreth up strife: but he that is slow to anger appeaseth strife.*"
- 3) I believe that God wants us to be so slow to anger that it never crawls out of its cage.
 - 4) We must not use the excuse that God got angry with people. God's righteousness and holiness rouse His anger toward sin, not sinful selfishness.

b. God wants us to govern our spirits.

- 1) In Hebrew poetry, this second phrase restates the first in a slightly different manner. Ruling our spirits is the same as being slow to anger.
- 2) He who is slow to anger and rules his spirit is **better** than the mighty who takes a city **because** he has accomplished a more difficult task. Any fool can let his emotions go and get angry. It takes no discipline to quarrel and fight. Wardlaw concludes, "But to lay passion under restraint, to keep down the risings of pride, not to be "overcome of evil, but to overcome evil with good," demands a vigour of mind, and decision of character, far more difficult of acquisition than the thoughtless courage that can stand the fire of an adversary."
- 3) He who stays calm and controls his spirit does a far better and more useful thing than the mighty soldier. ^{Wardlaw}
- 4) Jesus admonished, (Matthew 5:44) "*But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;*"
- 5) To conquer self is a far nobler task than conquering a fortified city.