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## How Satan Gains Access to Work in our Lives Part 8: Anger and Hate

As we continue to examine ways in which Satan can gain access to our lives, we will now consider the issue of anger and the potential sins it can engender. Anger in itself is not a sin; nor does it automatically open the door to Satan (Eph. 4:26-27). Anger is the natural emotional reaction when one personally suffers a wrong or sees or hears of another suffering wrong. God often displays this kind of anger. When the flesh is in control of one's life, anger can also erupt out of jealousy, pride, or selfishness (Gen. 4:3-8; 2 Kings 5:10-12; Gal. 5:19-20). This is not a righteous anger.

Even when the root of one's anger is righteous, it still puts one on a slippery slope during which time the temptation to sin becomes much greater. I believe this is why God tells us not to let the sun go down on our anger (Eph. 4:26-27). It is not that being angry for more than one day in itself gives Satan a foothold but that it prolongs our period of intensified vulnerability to a sinful reaction that *would* do this. Anger is not a benign force; it is the arousal of oftentimes powerful internal energy that yearns for expression. If we give in to it, it is unfortunately much more likely to lead us to ungodly responses than to godly ones (Prov. 15:18; 29:22; 30:33; Ps. 37:8; James 1:20). This is why we are instructed to resolve our anger quickly (Eph. 4:31; Col. 3:8).

When its source is fleshly, we must learn to step back and try to view the situation as God would view it. When it is righteous anger, God's intention is for us, through the strength of the indwelling Holy Spirit, to extend forgiveness and love to our offenders, treating them with goodness rather than evil (Lev. 19:18; Luke 6:27; 1 Cor. 13:5; Gal. 5:22-23; Col. 3:13; 1 Thes. 5:15;) while we leave with God the responsibility for taking vengeance (Lev. 19:18; Deut. 32:43; Rom. 12:19). This is true spiritual maturity (2 Tim. 2:24; Titus 1:7-8; 1 Peter 2:1; 2 Peter 1:5-9).

Regardless of how righteous its origin, anger always becomes spiritually dangerous if we allow the flesh to take over. Under the direction of the flesh, it can easily fester into hatred, the mental attitude of wishing ill on the offender or desiring revenge against him (Gal. 5:19-20). This, in turn, can lead to strife (Prov. 10:12; 15:18; 29:22), violence, murder, and other cruelties (Gen. 27:41; 49:6-7; Mark 6:19). When anger moves in this direction, the door to Satan is truly opened. In the Old Testament, God decreed a curse on those who would strike out against their fellowmen, seek revenge, commit murder, or in any other way violate His commandments (Deut. 11:26-28; 27:24; Lam. 3:60-66).

While acting to harm another person may more readily be seen as sin (Ex. 21:12; Lev. 19:16), God's ultimate concern is actually with the state of one's heart. What comes out of a man's heart is what defiles him (Mark 7:20-23), making the attitude of hatred as evil as the acts to which it may or may not lead (Lev. 19:17; 1 John 3:15), and God's curse is upon anyone who crosses this threshold in his heart (Deut. 7:15; 30:7). In the New Testament, John clearly states that the one who hates his brother walks in darkness (1 John 2:9, 11).

Although our knowledge of how curses are carried out is somewhat limited, we do know that at times God Himself directly sends evil spirits to bring punishment or misfortune into a person's life (Judges 9:23; 1 Sam. 16:14-15; 18:10; 1 Kings 22:20-23). Perhaps at other times He merely steps aside or removes His protection or favor from an individual or allows a sign (Gen. 4:15; Ezek. 9:4; Rev. 7:4), or a "welcome mat," to be put on the person's spirit to attract evil beings. Often these curses can extend over many generations (Ex. 20:5; Deut. 28:45-46; Luke 11:49-51).

On the Cross, Jesus took onto Himself all the curses that had and would come against any person (Gal. 3:13). This does not mean, however, that curses have no effect on us today (1 Cor. 16:22; Rev. 22:3). It means that we have the opportunity to claim the power of the shed blood of Jesus to nullify any curse we recognize as having legitimately come into our lives because of either personal sin, parental sin, or generational sin in our family line. When we do this with genuine repentance, they will be removed (Num. 21:6-9), but it is no more automatic than obtaining salvation is automatic since the Cross.