

March 8, 2002

Irritations

(Based upon Gothard's Irritations in one of his old Basic Youth Conflicts books.)

Romans 8:29 ¶ *For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.*

Irritate? To provoke anger or displeasure. Something that annoys or that disturbs our comfort level.

Illustration: I do not know how it happened, but some time ago, I had a woolly worm drop down my back and get mashed. The irritation was terrible.

There are **three sources** of irritation:

1. **People** personality traits, idiosyncrasies and inconsistencies that are a never ending source of irritation.

Example:

When I was in the service, at one of our duty stations, we lived in large one room barracks one company to a barracks. On one particular deployment, one of the men ground his teeth when he slept. The dentist tried many things to keep the noise down, but nothing worked. It was certainly an irritation to everyone there.

I will have to admit that people and their particular personality traits are probably the biggest source of irritation. And instead of trying to deal with our own hearts in those irritations, we avoid those people.

2. **Environment** inconveniences and undesirable things around us.

When Fay and Christina were here, **three women kept the bathroom tied** up all the time. That was irritating, but could not be changed.

3. **Self** our own weaknesses, illnesses and personal deficiencies which we are unable to do anything about.

A teen-ager was in a hurry to drive to a friend's home and tried to take a new way that he thought might be shorter. He failed to slow down for a sharp turn and skidded off the road. The car crashed into a tree and seriously injured him. Since that time, he suffered from pains in his back and legs which the doctors could not seem to alleviate, even after several operations. These pains became a constant source of irritation to him.

There are **two classes** of irritations: Changeable, unchangeable:

Examples:

Changeable Squeaky door can be oiled, an irritating habit can be changed.

Unchangeable these are the ones God uses to change us into what He wants us to be.

Note that we are not all irritated by the **same** thing. This shows that God has **individual** plans He works on us as individuals **one size does not fit all.**

The unavoidable irritations are God's way of increasing our sensitivity and feelings toward the needs of others. The unavoidable irritations are a way of expanding our own world. The unavoidable irritations are God's way of **developing the inward qualities that He wants in us.**

If we respond to them properly, God then **can** preform his purpose in us He will be able to reshape us into the image of his dear son. Romans 8:29.

After God achieves his purpose through a particular irritation, then He is free to remove that irritation.

Proverbs 16:7 ¶ *When a man s ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.*

If we respond to those irritations in the **wrong** way, we will not get the benefit from them.

If we try to **avoid** or get away from those things that irritate us, we force God to choose between raising up new irritations or setting us aside from His prupose in our lives. In other words, we CANNOT avoid the things that God has put in our path to irritate us without sacrificing His best plan for our lives.

Paul found that his irritation was a **permanent irritation**, and God told him that the irritation had a permanent benefit to mature him:

2 Corinthians 12:7 *And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. 8 For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. 9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.*

Though the irritation was a messenger of Satan, it was God ordained to do a special work in him.

How are we **NOT** to handle irritations?

1. **Defending self:**

"My husband hollered about something I did wrong. He was very tired since he had had a bad day. I had had a bad day, too I was as tired as he was. I tried to defend myself and it seemed to make matters worse. He then tried to cut me down by comparing me to others. It ended up with my trying to explain that I'm not perfect but I am trying to do better. "

Scripture Warns:

Ecclesiastes 3:7 *A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;*

2. **Blame others:**

"My husband went after me again today. I really do not know why. We were simply discussing who does the most work. It seemed to me that he does very little, and I have to pick up the slack. He says a lot of things when he gets angry. I know he does not mean everything he sais, and he is just taking out his frustrations on me, but it does hurt more than I can tell you. Sometimes I wonder why the Lord chose me for him to take out his anger and frustrations on.

Scripture Warns:

Proverbs 30:10 ¶ *Accuse not a servant unto his master, lest he curse thee, and thou be found guilty.*

That is, do not accuse him to the Lord, who is the Master.

3. **Holding in anger:**

"My wife and I were coming home from Wal-Mart. I must have been following the car in front of me too closely and wasn't prepared when he stopped. I realized his car was slowing down, and I braked lightly at first, then harder, to avoid hitting him. My wife then said something to the effect that I was showing off by trying to stop right on his tail. Most of the stuff on the back seat fell to the floor, including the lemon pie we got. I felt resentful, but as usual, I didn't say anything - "

Scripture Warns:

Ecclesiastes 7:9 *Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools.*

The proper response to irritations will enable us to mature in Christ.

There are three things to help us respond to those irritations properly:

First,

We by faith **thank** God for the irritation.

1 Thessalonians 5:18 *In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.*

I belong to God, and therefore I am His responsibility.

His work and reputation are shown by how I respond.

He wants what is best for me.

He is bigger than the source of my irritation.

He has allowed the irritation for my ultimate good

We believe in the divine call of God. Well, God called us to be like Christ, and the further away we are from Christ, the **more irritations** will need to come our way to mold us into his form.

Second,

What is the **cause** of the irritation?

Irritations are **messengers** of God.

They are God-ordained things sent our way for our good. Things people do irritate me, but God is the one who sent them our way.

Irritations are revealing.

Jeremiah 17:9 *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? 10 I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.*

Our hearts deceive us into thinking we have arrived or that we are doing good, but the Lord knows better. So He sends along an irritation, or He puts us in irritating circumstances to reveal the truth to us.

Our hearts are wicked beyond belief. We keep things in it that are **not pleasing** to God things we feel are **unimportant**; things we **enjoy**; **hidden** things we don't even know were there. We tend to **sweep** them under the rug rather than deal with them. God then uses irritations to **pull back** the rug, so we must face up to them and deal with them.

Why is that **person** an irritation? Is that irritation caused by **something I failed** to do or by something I did? Do

I need to ask **forgiveness** of someone?

Is the irritation because a **fault** or lack of character on my part?

Irritations tend to **reflect our character faults** more than anything. Our tendency is to react to those irritations rather than see them as a calling attention to things that need to be dealt with on our part.

Our tendency is to avoid those who irritate us, rather than deal with our attitudes.

Irritations are **reminders** to make past things right; to clear up past offenses which hinder our being what He wants us to be.

Finally, we **tend to forget the unpleasant** things that come into our lives. However, those whom we have offended have a very good memory, so when they do things that irritate us, we need to **look for a cause**.

Third,

What must be done to **deal with those things** that irritate us?

We saw from our text in Romans 8:28, 29, that from the very beginning, God decided that those who would come to Him should be made like unto His Son.

The process that the Lord God uses could be compared to a file or even a diamond cutting tool. Those things cut off the rough edges, and make the object into a thing of beauty, or into something useful.

If that **finger nail** you file off could speak, what do you think it would say? But what is the result of the filing?

What qualities does God want to develop in me?

Ph. 3:2, Win Christ

Ph. 2:5, mind of Christ

1 Pet 2:21, the steps of Christ

1 Pet 2:23, able to commit all things to the Father

We want to be like Christ, but we sure don't want to go through the GRINDER that it takes in order to be smoothed out like He is.

What are we being taught by irritations?

IRRITATIONS

From temptations of wrong desires

From one who is hard to love

From circumstances of sorrow

From conditions of confusion

From irritating inconveniences

From obvious needs of others

From unwelcome responsibilities

From people who intrude upon what we consider personal rights

QUALITY TO BE PRODUCED

Genuine love based on the word of God

Continuous joy even in the midst of constant difficulties

Inward peace based upon confidence in Christ

Flexibility

Wise generosity

Consistent trustworthiness

Surrender of personal rights (the phone always busy)

Self control

"The procedure of responding to sources of irritation was clearly illustrated by the example of Jesus Christ:

1 Peter 2:19 For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. 20 For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. 21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: 22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: 23 Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: 24 Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.