

Freedom from the giant of resentment

(PART 1 of 2)
April 12, 2021

PROVERBS 19:11 NLT - (11) Sensible people control their temper; they earn respect by overlooking wrongs.

Ressentir is an old French word, literally meaning "intense feeling." In English, it is *resent*, and it refers to feeling pain and indignation due to injustice or insult. People may feel resentful when they are cheated on, stolen from, or lied to. Resentment is often a reaction to being insulted or having one's errors or weaknesses exposed.

Resentment can be directed at an action, a statement, or a person—often, an authority figure, such as a parent, a teacher, or God. Resentment is the cheapest and least legitimate form of anger. It is all emotion and no strength.

Resentment can be sparked by perceived unfair treatment by another person. It could be an injustice, like not getting a deserved promotion, or it could be an insult. Either way, resentment stems from a love of the things of the world and a lack of faith in God and His plan. It is legitimate to recognize unfair treatment, and even to do something about it. But it is not helpful to wallow in feelings of self-righteous anger. The Bible is not concerned with the honor of human pride. An intense emotional response to an otherwise harmless insult may show a lack of spiritual maturity and a love of self (**Matthew 5:38-39**). As David fled Jerusalem, he faced the curses and insults of Shimei (**2 Samuel 16:5-8**). Rather than respond with resentment towards Shimei—and instead of killing him, as was the king's right (**verse 9**)—David chose the path of humility. His words are amazing: "If he is cursing because the LORD said to him, 'Curse David,' who can ask, 'Why do you do this?'" (**verse 10**). David avoided feelings of resentment by viewing the situation as from the Lord.

Other times, people feel resentment when God allows or arranges an injustice in the course of ministry. If we're serving God, we should be treated fairly—or so the logic goes. But then we have the example of Elijah, who faced many hardships although he was a faithful servant of the Lord (**1 Kings 19:10**). Not to mention Job. Jesus warned us of injustice in this fallen world: "If the world hates you, you know that it has hated 'Me' before it hated you" (**John 15:18**). Knowing injustice is a fact of life that we should avoid resentment in our hearts, as should keeping our eyes on the goal. Being treated unfairly is painful, but our heavenly rewards will more than reimburse (**Matthew 5:11-12; 6:19-21**).

Another situation that can foster resentment is when we are dishonored because of personal sin. Being accused of a failing we're innocent of is injustice. Being accused of sin we are guilty of can bring overwhelming shame and a large amount of denial. Sometimes the only way God can draw our attention to our sin is to expose our faults in public. As the saying goes, "He loves us too much to leave us where we are." We may dislike what God is speaking into our lives, but resentment isn't going to help. Instead, when our sins have found us out (**Numbers 32:23**), it's vital to admit we're wrong. Human pride is nothing compared to the true honor we receive when He sanctifies us (**1 Thessalonians 5:23**). Next week, we will look at the ways of conquering resentment.

SCRIPTURE READING: JAMES 1:19-20

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: Resentment is like taking poison and waiting for the other to die.

"A JOURNEY OF THE HEART"