

The Power Behind
Anger Resolution

**Eight Prerequisites
of Anger Resolution**

Session Two

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In the century before the birth of Christ, the nation of Israel came under the domination of the Roman Empire. Deep hatred developed over the years because of the cruel treatment by the Romans. By the time Jesus began His public ministry, the true meaning of the Old Testament Law was corrupted because it was used to justify wrong responses to the Roman government; the debates between conflicting rabbinical schools only added to the confusion.

In His first discourse to His disciples, Jesus unscrambled the meaning of the Law. It is significant that He began with the topic of anger.

Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire (Matthew 5:21–22).

Before teaching his disciples about the real meaning of a spirit of anger, Jesus gave eight attributes that are essential for all members of the kingdom of God to demonstrate. These eight attributes embody the attitudes that, if developed, will resolve anger. We will discuss each attribute, along with the related character qualities. Specific positions in prayer that are identified in Scripture will also be included in this study. Each position has significant symbolical meaning, and there is a striking relationship between the positions of prayer and the eight attributes Jesus identified.

First Attribute: Being Poor in Spirit

The Greek word for *poor* portrays a beggar sitting by the side of the road, earnestly looking for daily sustenance. A beggar realizes that he does not have resources within himself, nor is he worthy of requesting help from those who pass by. All he can do is maintain the position of humble acknowledgement of his personal needs and hope others will have mercy on him. Whatever is given to him is more than he deserves, and he is grateful for it. Based on this outlook, there are two character qualities that are foundational for being poor in spirit.

- **Humility vs. _____**¹

Humility is acknowledging our total dependence upon God and seeking His will for every decision. It is learning the character of Jesus Christ. He said, “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart” (Matthew 11:29). This one quality will do more to conquer a spirit of anger than any other, because it is through pride that contention comes. (See Proverbs 13:10.)

God appeals to us to humble ourselves under His mighty hand so that He can exalt us in due season. (See I Peter 5:6.) If we fail to humble ourselves, God will raise up people or circumstances to do it for us. Rather than recognizing that these agents are instruments of

God to humble us, we tend to react to them as intrusions and become upset. James counsels us to not resent as intruders the trials and tribulations that crowd into our lives. He encourages us to welcome them as friends, realizing they have come to test our faith and produce in us qualities such as endurance, patience, and longsuffering. (See James 1:2–4.)

Practical ways to humble ourselves can be to welcome our critics, to ask others to point out our blind spots, to confess when we are wrong, and to ask forgiveness for our offenses. Some practical questions to ask when discerning if you demonstrate this important quality are listed below.

- When people disagree with me, do I listen from my heart or argue my position?
- In my spirit, do I tend to cut off those who ignore me?
- Do I find it extremely difficult to admit when I am wrong?
- Do I give my opinions before I am asked for them?
- Am I quick to correct others when they make mistakes?

We must become nothing in our own eyes before we become something in the eyes of others. “A man’s pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit” (Proverbs 29:23).

• **Gratefulness vs.** _____²

Gratefulness is expressing sincere appreciation to God and others for the ways in which they have benefited our lives. This is the opposite of pride, because pride causes us to believe that we have achieved what, in reality, others have done for us and through us. Gratefulness is recognizing those who have benefited our lives and thanking them for what they have done.

People who are truly grateful cannot murmur or have an angry spirit, because they realize that everything comes from the hand of God and is designed for their good. We are to give thanks in all things because this is the will of God for our lives. (See I Thessalonians 5:18.) The absence of gratefulness will produce murmuring.

Most people do not realize the nature of murmuring or its serious consequences. When the nation of Israel left Egypt and journeyed through the wilderness, they brought their needs to Moses but did so with a murmuring spirit. (See Exodus 15:23–26.) The same thing happened when they asked Moses what they were going to eat in the wilderness. Moses said, “This shall be, when the LORD shall give you in the evening flesh to eat, and in the morning bread to the full; for that the Lord heareth your murmurings which ye murmur against him: and what are we? your murmurings are not against us, but against the LORD” (Exodus 16:8).

Murmuring may be directed toward a leader, but in reality, it is mumbling against God about the things we thought we deserved. The problem with Israel was not that they were concerned about a need, but that they brought it to the wrong person. Rather than telling Moses, they should have cried out to the Lord, Who brought them out of Egypt when they cried out to Him and provided food when Moses cried out to Him. God brings us to impossible situations so that we will cry out to Him for the things He wants to give us. If we fail to cry out, we tend to get frustrated, upset, and bitter at God and others.

Prayer Position for the Poor in Spirit

□ On Our Faces Before God

There is no position that symbolizes humility better than being on our faces before God. Jesus described himself as “meek and lowly in heart.” (See Matthew 11:29.) The Greek word for *lowly* means “not rising far from the ground.” This position was expressed for the following purposes.

- An expression of total _____³

When God made a covenant with Abraham, Abraham recognized his total unworthiness and “fell on his face” before the Lord. (See Genesis 17:1–4.)

- A recognition of needing _____⁴

When the leper came to the Lord, he recognized God’s holiness and his own deplorable condition and need for mercy. Therefore, he fell on his face before the Lord. (See Luke 5:12.)

- A response to a serious _____⁵

When the leaders of God’s people faced an impossible situation and knew that only God could deliver them from a great disaster, they fell on their faces before Him and He delivered them from their distresses. (See Numbers 20:6 and Joshua 7:6.)

A wise way to begin each day is to get on our faces before God and acknowledge our unworthiness, inadequacy, and inability to accomplish His will and to ask for His mercy.

Second Attribute: Mourning Over Sin

To mourn is to lament and grieve over our own sinful condition. It is to be sorrowful for our willful transgressions. A person who mourns is so preoccupied with personal failures that there is no place to be angry over the comparatively minor offenses of others.

This deep anguish of soul begins inwardly but expresses itself outwardly as we recognize our bankrupt spiritual condition—not only for salvation but also for living out the will of God. After his salvation, Paul continued to remind himself and others that he was the chief of sinners. (See I Timothy 1:15.) A true spirit of mourning will involve the following two character qualities.

- **Reverence vs.** _____⁶

Reverence involves humbling ourselves in the presence of a God-given authority and expressing honor with a gift. We honor the government with taxes; we honor God with tithes and offerings; we honor aging parents with financial assistance.

True reverence and the fear of the Lord are closely associated because God works through human authorities to accomplish His will. By the fear of the Lord, men depart from evil, including manifestations of anger and wrath.

There are three aspects of the fear of the Lord. The first aspect involves a fear of punishment. Both believers and nonbelievers should experience this type of fear. If we relate this to anger, it would be a fear of the consequence of not resolving anger or of showing wrath.

The second aspect is a fear of damaging God’s reputation. If people consider us to be believers in the Lord and they see us demonstrating a spirit of anger, they will react—not only to us, but also to the Lord Whom we represent.

The third aspect is a fear of breaking an intimate relationship with the Lord. This relationship involves a fellowship of suffering that is the opposite of being bitter over offenses. Paul speaks of this relationship by saying, "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death" (Philippians 3:10). This third aspect of fear is the beginning of wisdom and brings riches, honor, and life. (See Proverbs 9:10 and Proverbs 22:4.)

- **Truthfulness vs.** _____⁷

Truthfulness is earning future trust by accurately reporting past facts. A truthful person will recognize his faults in a situation that caused an angry outburst, and he will also trace this unresolved anger back to past circumstances that were not properly handled and will clear them up. Hiding the truth produces tension, which only contributes to a spirit of anger. On the other hand, truthfulness produces freedom from the guilt and tension that cause a spirit of anger. When we become angry, we should ask ourselves the following questions: To what degree did I cause this situation? Is God disciplining me for other things that I have done wrong? Is my anger a result of past offenses that I have not cleared up?

Prayer Position for Grieving

Kneeling Before God

If we are sincerely repentant over our sins, including the spirit of anger and the bitterness caused by it, we will appeal to the Lord for His mercy and forgiveness. The position for such an appeal would be to kneel down before Him.

- It is _____⁸ the Lordship of Christ.

One day every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God. (See Philippians 2:10–11.) Meanwhile, everything that happens in the life of a believer is designed to conform him to the image of Jesus Christ. By taking His yoke upon us and learning of Him, we become meek and lowly in heart, which is the opposite of having a spirit of anger.

- It is a sign of earnest _____⁹.

Solomon knelt before the Lord when he asked God to bless the Temple and the people of God. (See I Kings 8:54.) Elijah also knelt down in earnest prayer when asking the Lord to restore the rain upon his nation. (See I Kings 18:42.)

- It is a sign of personal _____¹⁰.

The psalmist humbled himself before the Lord and encouraged others to do the same: "O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker" (Psalm 95:6).

Third Attribute: Meekness of Heart

The perception that is often given through the word *meekness* is that of a weak individual who is easily influenced by others; however, the true meaning of meekness is expressed in the Greek words *praus* and *prautes*. *Prautes* denotes strength that is under the control of God's Spirit, thus producing a gentle person.

Meekness toward God is described as “that disposition of spirit in which we accept His dealings with us as good, and therefore without disputing or resisting. In the OT [Old Testament], the meek are those wholly relying on God rather than their own strength to defend them against injustice. . . . Gentleness or meekness is the opposite to self-assertiveness and self-interest. It stems from trust in God’s goodness and control over the situation. The gentle person is not occupied with self at all. This is a work of the Holy Spirit, not of the human will” (from the Online Bible Concordance). (See Galatians 5:22–23.) Meekness involves the following two qualities.

• **Deference vs.** _____¹¹

Deference is limiting my freedom in order to not cause others to be weakened or offended. The Biblical word *defer* means to put off for oneself, to postpone words, attitudes, or actions that would cause others to be offended. Such deference involves discretion, and Solomon observed, “The discretion of a man deferreth his anger” (Proverbs 19:11). Indulging in anger may bring a moment of satisfaction but a lifetime of regret.

• **Gentleness vs.** _____¹²

Gentleness is supporting others during their times of weakness so that they can achieve their full potential in the Lord. Harshness reacts to their weaknesses and hinders them from achieving the purposes for which they were created.

When James described the characteristics of wisdom, he included gentleness: “But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy” (James 3:17). A practical expression of wisdom and gentleness is to speak evil of no one and to seek peace and harmony with everyone.

Prayer Position for Meekness

Bowing Ourselves Before the Lord

• Bowing is a sign of _____¹³.

In some cultures, one who wants to express reverence and respect for another will bow before him—the deeper the bow, the greater the respect.

• Bowing is an expression of _____¹⁴.

When God answered the prayer of Abraham’s servant, the servant “worshipped the LORD, bowing himself to the earth” (Genesis 24:52). One who bows before God acknowledges that all things come from His hand and that there is therefore no basis for a spirit of anger or wrath. When Job suffered deep loss, he said, “Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?” (Job 2:10).

Fourth Attribute: Longing for Righteousness

The importance of righteousness is indicated by the words of Jesus, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:33). Righteousness is the fulfillment of the Law of God. The only One Who fully accomplished this is Jesus Christ; therefore, it is only through His righteousness that we can approach the heavenly Father.

Righteousness can also be defined as the perfection of character. All true character is personified in Jesus Christ; therefore, the more we are conformed to His image, the more we demonstrate true character. Unresolved anger and wrath are opposite to the righteousness of God. James affirmed this when he said, “The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God” (James 1:20). Righteousness involves the following qualities.

• **Wisdom vs.** _____¹⁵

Wisdom is seeing and responding to life from God’s point of view, whereas foolishness is reacting to life and life’s situations from our perspective. A wise person is a peacemaker, but a foolish person stirs up wrath.

A wise person will love one who rebukes him, but a fool will react to reproofs. (See Proverbs 9:8.) A wise person learns from his mistakes and also from the mistakes of others. A foolish person fails to see a cause-and-effect relationship between his offenses and the reproofs of life.

A wise person controls his tongue, but a foolish person speaks whatever is on his mind. (See Proverbs 10:19, 29:11.) A wise person listens to counsel and instruction, but a foolish person despises the instruction of wisdom. (See Proverbs 1:7.) Wisdom builds up; foolishness tears down. (See Proverbs 14:1.) “Anger resteth in the bosom of fools” (Ecclesiastes 7:9).

• **Faith vs.** _____¹⁶

Faith is recognizing God’s will for a given situation and acting upon it. The Greek word for *faith* comes from a root word that means to be persuaded, to convince by reason, to agree with evidence, to rely with inward certainty, to be confident.

Faith is based on the promises of God. These promises are so sure that waiting for them is not discouraging, and acting upon them is natural. We need to determine by the guidance of the Holy Spirit how specific passages directly relate to situations in our lives. These special passages are called *rhemas* of Scripture, and they are the sources of our faith, because “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word [*rhema*] of God” (Romans 10:17). *Rhemas* override adversity and leave no need for anger.

Prayer Position for Righteousness

Standing Before the Lord

- Standing represents our position in _____¹⁷.

“Stand therefore . . . having on the breastplate of righteousness” (Ephesians 6:14).

- Standing symbolizes our preparation _____¹⁸.

“Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness” (Ephesians 6:13–14).

- Standing shows readiness to _____¹⁹.

Serving another person, especially a sovereign, is referred to as “standing before” that person. “The king appointed them a daily provision of the king’s meat, and of the wine which he drank: so nourishing them three years, that at the end thereof they might stand before the king” (Daniel 1:5).

- Standing is our legal position for God to hear our _____²⁰.

“Then the king held out the golden sceptre toward Esther. So Esther arose, and stood before the king” (Esther 8:4).

Fifth Attribute: Being Merciful

Mercy is withholding the punishment that a crime or an offense deserves. A reward for showing mercy to others is that mercy will be shown to us. (See Matthew 5:7.) One who has a spirit of anger over an offense is already punishing the offender for it, and therefore is not showing mercy. There are important distinctions related to mercy that become blurred when a person is wrathful.

- Mercy should be _____²¹.

A merciful person is always ready to forgive an offender; however, the offender should request mercy to receive its full benefit. Jesus taught that if someone offends you “seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him” (Luke 17:4).

- Mercy should follow _____²².

Until a person acknowledges that he was wrong and deserves a just punishment, he will not appreciate any mercy given to him. Joseph understood this factor when he sought to bring his brothers to repentance. Only when they acknowledged that their mistreatment of Joseph had brought them to their present difficulties did Joseph have mercy on them and release them from prison. (See Genesis 42:17–21.) The following character qualities especially relate to mercy.

- **Compassion vs.** _____²³

Compassion is responding to a deep need with a longing to do whatever is necessary to meet it. Compassion is a sudden yearning to meet an obvious need. One illustration of compassion is found in the examination of several synonyms. A sympathetic person responds to the victim of an unfortunate accident: “I am sorry you are hurt.” An empathetic person would respond by saying, “I hurt with you.” However, a compassionate person rushes over and exclaims, “I will help heal your hurt!”

The people who make others angry have deep needs in themselves, which are revealed in their wrong actions. A compassionate person will look past their faults and see the hurting people on the inside. He will then act to help heal those hurts.

- **Forgiveness vs.** _____²⁴

Forgiveness is responding to offenses in such a way that the power of God’s love can work through us to heal our offenders. Forgiveness is based on the fact that God will judge the offender and use the offense to benefit our lives if we truly love Him, because “all things work together for good to them that love God” (Romans 8:28). When Joseph’s brothers wronged him by selling him as a slave, he could have become very bitter. Instead, he cheerfully served his new master. Later he was able to tell his brothers, “Ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good” (Genesis 50:20).

- Granting a pardon requires _____²⁵.

If a person steals an item that belongs to me, I have the jurisdiction to show mercy to him and forgive him. However, if a person’s offense toward me involves a crime against

the state, I do not have the authority to release him from the consequences of his actions. I can still forgive him by releasing him emotionally and erasing the debt from my account, but pardon must be granted by a higher authority.

- Forgiveness is based on God's _____²⁶ of me.

It is only as we see the magnitude of our own transgressions against God that we will have the proper attitudes and emotions to forgive our offenders. Jesus described this contrast in a parable about a servant who owed a huge debt and was forgiven of it, but then he arrested a fellow servant who owed him a small debt and had him thrown into prison. When the king heard what this wicked servant had done, he reinstated the original debt and put him in prison until he paid the last penny. Then Jesus said, "So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses" (Matthew 18:35).

Prayer Position for the Merciful

Sitting Before the Lord

In Scripture, the position of sitting is the position of authority. Often when an honored rabbi spoke or taught, he would sit down and all the people would stand. When the king or rulers of a city are seated in their official places, they are in the place of power to judge and to have their judgments carried out.

- All believers are seated with _____²⁷ in heaven.

When we recognize our sinful conditions before God, repent of our sins, and believe on Jesus Christ, we are supernaturally transformed into sons of God and given an official standing before our heavenly Father. That position involves being seated with Christ at the right hand of the Father. (See Ephesians 1:20, 2:6.)

- All believers have authority to _____²⁸ offenders.

Jesus told His disciples, "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained" (John 20:23).

Sixth Attribute: Purity of Heart

The purity of heart referred to in Matthew 5:8 is described by the Greek word *katharos*. It means "clean, pure, clear." A related English term, *cathartic*, involves the purging of impurities from the body. The body has its own natural cleansing mechanism that is a continuous process of purifying the body through the excretory systems of the kidneys, bowels, lungs, and skin.

Removing moral impurities and secret sins from the heart is necessary in order to demonstrate genuine love. Any impure motives will damage the integrity of a person's actions and also hinder his relationship to God and others. James writes, "Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double-minded" (James 4:8). The following two character qualities relate to being pure in heart.

- Sincerity vs. _____²⁹

Sincerity is being as genuine on the inside as we appear to be on the outside. Many people appear to be kind and gentle in public but are harsh and cruel when they are at

home. This hypocrisy is especially damaging when it is manifested by a father. It not only damages relationships in his family, but it can also cause his children to reject God.

The Hebrew word for *sincerity* means “complete, whole . . . having integrity” and has been translated as “without blemish.”

A person who is not sincere before God will pervert his ways, and then when consequences come, he will get upset with God and others because things do not go his way. “The foolishness of man perverteth his way: and his heart fretteth against the LORD” (Proverbs 19:3).

• **Virtue vs.** _____³⁰

Virtue is the power of a life that is in harmony with the holy standards of God. One Greek word for *virtue* is *dunamis*. It is translated only three times as *virtue*, but over one hundred times as *power, might, miracle, strength, mighty, and mighty work*. A person with unresolved anger is hungry for power and uses an angry spirit to get it. A virtuous person desires to benefit others and is given power by the Holy Spirit to do so. Ironically, the hurts and offenses that cause a spirit of anger are the same experiences that will produce *dunamis* (power) if they are responded to in the right way.

Prayer Position for the Pure in Heart

Looking Up to Heaven

• Looking up is enjoying intimate _____³¹ with God.

It is hard to look up to God without a clear conscience and a pure heart. Jesus was in perfect fellowship with His heavenly Father. When Jesus prayed at the tomb of Lazarus (see John 11:41), before feeding the five thousand (see Mark 6:41), and for His disciples (see John 17:1), He looked up to His heavenly Father.

Seventh Attribute: Establishing Peace

A peacemaker is one who initiates reconciliation between people who are in conflict with each other or who are in conflict with God. God’s wisdom is required to make such reconciliation. (See James 3:17–18.) In order for a person to be successful in helping others make peace, he must also be at peace with God and with others. A peacemaker is actually following the pattern of Jesus Christ, Who came into the world to make peace between man and God. Therefore, it is fitting that peacemakers are called the “children of God.” There are two essential qualities that a peacemaker must have.

• **Discernment vs.** _____³²

Discernment is the ability to distinguish between good and evil in order to make wise decisions. One Greek word for *discern* is *diakrino*. It means “to separate, make a distinction . . . to determine, give judgment.”

A great deal of wrath results from trying to convince God or others that what God declares as evil is actually good. This was the case when Cain murdered Abel because God would not accept Cain’s offering. The need to discern good and evil is particularly important in the area of moral choices. God’s standards are holy and just. When anyone breaks them, there are predictable consequences.

Solomon asked God for a discerning heart, and we are also able to ask God for such wisdom. Along with discernment, we must have genuine love, so we do not speak the truth with harshness and cause alienation rather than peace.

- **Persuasiveness vs.** _____³³

Persuasiveness is guiding vital truths around the mental roadblocks of other people. To persuade is to convince by sound reasoning. It is to guide another person's thoughts by a sequence of convincing statements. It also involves the skills of admonishing, convicting, and correcting. Persuasion is necessary to help others recognize where they are wrong and decide to do what is right. One who is unskilled in persuasion will often resort to arguing, which only increases a spirit of anger and resentment.

The Apostle Paul was skilled in persuasiveness. Through persuasion, he turned multitudes to righteousness. The key to his success was appealing to a person's conscience rather than the mind, will, or emotions. Those who are wrong are usually convicted by their consciences, and even though they argue with their minds, their consciences still condemn them.

Prayer Position for the Peacemaker

Stretching Forth the Arm

Significant acts of God were accomplished throughout Scripture when a person under God's direction stretched forth the arm.

- It was used for _____³⁴.

"It came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed" (Exodus 17:11). (See also Joshua 8:18, 25–26.)

- It was used for _____³⁵.

When Pharaoh pleaded with Moses to stop the hailstorm, "Moses said unto him, As soon as I am gone out of the city, I will spread abroad my hands unto the Lord; and the thunder shall cease, neither shall there be any more hail; that thou mayest know how that the earth is the Lord's" (Exodus 9:29).

- It was used to free from _____³⁶.

"Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments" (Exodus 6:6).

- It was used to create a _____³⁷.

"Hath God assayed to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation, by temptations, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm?" (Deuteronomy 4:34).

- It was used to conquer _____³⁸.

"Thou shalt not be afraid of them: but shalt well remember what the Lord thy God did unto Pharaoh, and unto all Egypt . . . and the stretched out arm, whereby the Lord thy God brought thee out" (Deuteronomy 7:18–19).

- It was used to gain God’s _____³⁹.

“Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven” (I Kings 8:22).

After instructing believers to pray for all those in authority, Paul states, “I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up [an outstretched arm] holy hands [clear conscience], without wrath [the absence of bitterness] and doubting [possessing *rhemas* of faith]” (I Timothy 2:8). Bitterness can damage the effectiveness of a person’s prayer. (See I Peter 3:7.)

Eighth Attribute: Rejoicing in Persecution

Suffering for doing what is right and rejoicing in the midst of persecution is an important attribute for conquering anger. This requires us to be in the will of God and to be doing things that will advance His kingdom. Then, if an offense comes, it should not be seen as an attack against us personally, but rather as rejection of the standards or ways of the Lord. Two qualities are essential for this prerequisite.

- **Joyfulness vs.** _____⁴⁰

Joyfulness consists of the bright spirit and radiant countenance that comes with being in full fellowship with the Lord. It is an inward delight that results both in true happiness and spiritual prosperity. It is important to realize that both joy and sorrow can be experienced by a person at the same time, because joy is a function of the spirit and sorrow is an expression of the emotions or the heart.

We are told that all who live Godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. (See II Timothy 3:12.) To rejoice in persecution is opposite our natural inclinations, yet it has an immediate benefit of the joy of the Lord being our strength (see Nehemiah 8:10) and a long-range benefit of great reward in heaven (see Matthew 5:10–12).

- **Endurance vs.** _____⁴¹

Endurance is experiencing the power of God’s love by rejoicing in trials and tribulations. Endurance involves long-suffering as well as not being quick to manifest a spirit of anger. There are several specific things we are to endure: hardness as a good soldier, afflictions, persecutions, tribulations, grief, chastening, and temptations.

One who lacks endurance will give up and get frustrated, upset, or bitter. Therefore, Scripture warns, “Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not” (Galatians 6:9). One reward we will reap is the power of genuine love given by the Holy Spirit to those who thank God and rejoice in the midst of trials, and do good rather than evil to offenders. “We glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us” (Romans 5:3–5).

Prayer Position for the Persecuted

Leaping for Joy

Rather than being discouraged and defeated by trials and persecution, we are to “rejoice, and be exceeding glad” (Matthew 5:12). This phrase in the Greek indicates the outward action of leaping and skipping, as an expression of great inward joy.

- Leaping for joy expresses _____⁴² in God's faithfulness.

In a sports event, the fans do not leap for joy until the last seconds have run out in the game and they are assured of the victory. It is significant, therefore, that God tells us to have this same confidence of victory (reward) in the midst of the persecution that comes as a result of doing His will.

- Leaping for joy confirms that our _____⁴³ are based on eternal riches, rather than temporal things.

Personal possessions, reputation, or health may be lost as a result of persecution. However, compared to eternal rewards that will be given to us for such suffering, these things are insignificant. Paul said, "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18).



Personal Evaluation of Eight Prerequisites for Anger Resolution

1. Am I poor in spirit?

- Do I acknowledge my total dependence upon God each day?
- When people disagree with me, do I argue with them?
- Is it extremely difficult for me to admit I am wrong?
- Do I give my opinion before I am asked for it?
- Am I quick to correct others when they make mistakes?
- Do I express gratefulness to those who have benefited me or my family?

2. Do I mourn over anger?

- Am I truly grieved over outbursts of anger, wrath, or bitterness?
- Do I honor those who are in positions of authority?
- Do I respond with humility when people accuse me of being angry?

3. Do I have a meek spirit?

- Do I get angry when someone violates my rights?
- Do I deal with people harshly?
- Do I hold others to my expectations?

4. Am I committed to mature character?

- Am I determined to conquer anger and lust?
- Have I asked God for wisdom?
- Do I love those who reprove me?
- Do I keep God's commands before my eyes?
- Do I realize that I'm always in the presence of God?

5. Am I merciful?

- Do I compare my offenses toward God with others' offenses toward me?
- Do I interpret offenses as cries for help?
- Do I see offenses as opportunities to demonstrate Christ's love?
- Have I received God's mercy for my offenses against Him?

6. Am I pure in heart?

- Are there moral impurities in my heart that I cherish?
- Are there secret sins that I am unwilling to surrender?
- Am I a person of integrity?
- Am I on the inside what I appear to be on the outside?
- Do I have the power of virtue in my life?

7. Am I a peacemaker?

- Am I at peace with God and others?
- Do I cut off offenders, or try to restore them?
- Have I cried out to God for a hearing heart?
- Have I learned the skills of persuasiveness?

8. Am I joyful during times of persecution?

- Do I react to irritations, or welcome them as friends?
- Do I thank God for every situation?
- Do I endure trials, or do I give up?
- Do I understand the rewards of enduring tribulation?