

Matthew 5:25-26—Agree Quickly

Agreeing with Thine Adversary

[Audio MP3](#)

He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.—Proverbs 16:32

Jesus said, “Agree with thine adversary quickly, while thou art with him in the way; lest haply the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou have paid the last farthing” (Matthew 5:25,26, *ASV*). The adversary, in this case, is not the Devil but someone whom we have wronged, and who rightly has a case against us. Jesus tells us to willingly do more than a bare minimum to make restitution: “Agree with thine adversary quickly.”

A principal barrier to agreeing with another is not controlling temper. Losing temper is only the symptom; the disease is pride: “By pride cometh only contention” (Proverbs 13:10, *ASV*).

Pride is a deadly enemy. It captured Lucifer when as yet there was no sin in the universe (Ezekiel 28:17; Isaiah 14:12-14). Left to fester, it will kill us. Let each of us excise it as we would a cancer of the eye or of the hand.

There is one good thing we can do with it. We can swallow our pride; it’s non-fattening.

If our argument is weak, pride causes us to try to compensate by getting angry. Perhaps shouting louder can silence the other party. But bystanders can see our failure. And, still more importantly, so does our Lord.

It is well said, An angry debater is as a sword that has lost its temper. (An angry man may think he is strong, but he risks cracking on impact.)

It is bad to have a temper, and it is worse to lose it. He who rules his spirit is better than he who conquers a nation’s capital (paraphrasing Proverbs 16:32).

How can I learn to consistently control my temper? If someone’s words might be taken to mean I am guilty of something, is my first reaction to accuse him of something else first? Such impulses are most commonly a result of guilty conscience. But let me remember that the Lord gave me two ears and only one mouth. I can benefit more from criticism (and then correcting myself) than from flattery.

Am I temperamental? ‘Temperamental’ is 90% temper and less than 10% mental. So I need to develop self-control. And self-control is developed only by exercise.

If someone disagrees with me, do I take it as a personal rejection? If I must sometimes conscientiously differ with another without rejecting him as a person, then I must allow others to differ with me without assuming that I am personally being rejected.

Do people often hurt my feelings? I need to know what the enemy is before I can defeat it. Hurt feelings are usually synonymous with hurt pride.

Adversaries and Accusations

Commonly, when there are two adversaries, one does most of the accusing. The accuser is almost always the guiltier party, as the innocent does not feel driven to justify himself. (The literal meaning of the word 'Devil' is 'Accuser.')

Thus, we may use evil-surmising and evil-speaking as an index of our own hearts.

If an opponent (adversary) has a legitimate case against us, how should we react? But how do we react? If we reply, 'Well, you're not so great yourself,' we may speak a truth, but the matter will escalate to our disadvantage. Better it is to inquire what he would like us to do to set the matter right. Then it is better to do more than the minimum to set it right, that it may reflect the character of our God.

"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called sons of God" (Matthew 5:9, *ASV*).