

Satan's Stormtroopers
Sex & Anger: Strategies in Spiritual Warfare

Introduction

There are two particular areas of vulnerability that Scripture identifies with the direct work of Satan. We not only see this in Scripture, the history of humanity demonstrates this as well.

The 1st Stormtrooper is Anger.

What demographic experiences the greatest degree of violent crime, assault & murder? Married couples.

The 2nd Stormtrooper is Lust, or Sexual Immorality.

What has routinely been the number one cause of marital breakup? Infidelity.

Jesus recognized these dangers as well.

Matthew 5:20-30

You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to the judgement.' But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire. So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

Most of us would probably say, "I hope my home is off limits." Your home is not off limits. If anything, it's the primary focus. If you need to have your home off limits to be unscathed, you are doing just what the Pharisees are doing.

The gift on the altar signifies reconciliation between that man and God. Jesus is saying, don't even think about trying to reconcile yourself to God if you are not reconciled to your brother, or your husband or your wife.

Matthew 5:27, 28

You have heard it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

The Pharisees were concerned with the ***outward expression***. Jesus is concerned with the ***inward reality***.

Murder is the sin of anger taken to the *extreme*.
 Adultery is the sin of lust taken to the *extreme*.

Jesus point is this:

Murder is not where sin becomes sin, *the anger of your heart is the sin*.
 Adultery is not where sin becomes the sin, *the lust of your heart is the sin*.

We are guilty before God because of our hearts, even if we never committed murder or adultery. Godliness is not defined by behavioral conformity. Godliness is defined by what takes place in our hearts and minds.

Now, notice what comes next in Jesus sermon:

Matthew 5:31, 32

It was also said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery. And whoever marries a divorce woman commits adultery.

Anger – Lust – Divorce: A coincidence?

Q. *What one thing is unique about each of these sins that is not true of most, if not all, other sins?*

A. Each one has a *legitimate* human expression, and each one has a *sinful* expression.

Anger – sometimes, rarely, justified and useful.

Sexual desire – welcomed and commanded within a marriage relationship.

Divorce – legitimate course of action if the spouse is sexually unfaithful.

What defines us as Christians is not external behavior, but internal struggle and warfare that takes place in our minds. *"We wrestle not with flesh & blood..."*

Satan's Stormtrooper #1: *Sexual Immorality*

God Designed Sex to be
 Procreative.

*Pleasurable
Monogamous
Moral & Righteous*

God Designed Sex to be Protective and a Weapon of Spiritual Warfare.

1 Corinthians 7:1-5

Now concerning the matters about which you wrote: "It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman." But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband. The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

THE CITY OF CORINTH

- Corinth – narrow straight of land between the Aegean Sea and the Ionian Sea.
- A Land Pass. Ships rolled onto logs and towed across the land.
- A very busy trade stop.
- Temple of Aphrodite – employed thousands of temple prostitutes.
- Prostitution was affordable, available, and acceptable in Corinthian society.
- The city's reputation was so infamous, the Greeks coined the word 'korinthianize' to describe engaging in loose sexual morals.

The Corinthian church faced 3 problems.

1st Problem in Corinth: Sexual immorality

Chp. 5 Paul attacks them for tolerating a grossly, sexually immoral church member.

1 Corinthians 5:1

It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife. And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you.

1 Corinthians 5:9

I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people—not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler,

drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one. For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? God judges those outside. “Purge the evil person from among you.”

Paul is not talking about the struggling Christian who stumbles, he's talking about a Christian who is not repentant, and whose life is characterized by this activity.

2nd Problem in Corinth: Prostitution

1 Corinthians 6:13

The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, “The two shall become one flesh.” But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. Flee from sexual immorality.

Our bodies are meant for the purposes of God. We are to glorify God in our body by being sexually faithful.

After almost 2 chapters of argument for sexual purity, Paul turns his attention to some questions. Apparently some correspondence had passed between some in the church and Paul. And this correspondence revealed a 3rd problem.

3rd Problem in Corinth: Demotion of Marital Sex

1 Corinthians 7:1

Now concerning the matters about which you wrote: “It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman.”

Abstinence was elevated to a higher plane of spirituality: *Asceticism*.

Paul caught wind of this in a letter the Corinthian church leaders had written to him. And Paul had to address it.

1 Corinthians 7:2-5

But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband. The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and

likewise the wife to her husband. For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

TEMPTATION

There was no doubt that Corinthian society had an overwhelming temptation to sexual sin. Abstinence was not the answer of spiritual wisdom.

...each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband.

Sexual activity is God's design to **fight** sexual temptation.

Abstinence *promotes* temptation.

Marital sex *protects from* temptation.

In fact, Paul concedes *nothing* to abstinence – not even for the spiritually mature.

Paul could have stopped right there and the point would have been made.

Why doesn't Paul stop?

The Corinthian church was not only overrun with sexual problems, but also with *well-intentioned* exhortations that were *playing into the hands of Satan* – exposing themselves to vulnerabilities in spiritual warfare.

Q. *What does it mean for each man to have his own wife and each woman her own husband?*

4 Facets of Sex in Marriage

FACET 1: Sex is a Conjugal Right

1 Corinthians 7:3

The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband.

To conjugate = gk. *benevolent sexual activity*.

It's not just referring to sex, it carries with it a sense of benevolence, of doing good to another.

When you make a covenant before God in marriage, you enter into an agreement to give yourself sexually to your spouse.

Today we think sex is a *gift*, or it's something to be *earned* in marriage.

There's no gift language here. This is all about relinquishing your rights.

A *right* is a standing principle.

- it does not have prerequisites
- it does not need to provide a suitable reason
- it is a standing order that is unquestionable.
- There are no justified grounds to refuse a right.

In our society, sex and rights *do not mix*.

Q. Is Paul really talking about an *obligation*, but not a *right*?

An *obligation* does not carry the force yielding authority. A *right* commands authority.

1 Corinthians 7:4

For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.

FACET 2: Sex requires you to relinquish authority of your body to your spouse.

Now we're in trouble.

"No man has authority over a woman's body. No woman has authority over a man's body."

- The idea that a husband has authoritative rights over the body of his wife (or vis-versa) in the context of sex is a *scandalous* idea, even in the church.
- Paul clearly transfers authority from one spouse to the other.
- In marriage your body no longer belongs to you but to your spouse. Your body became his or her property – it no longer belongs to you.

Q. **What does this mean? How is this to be applied?**

- You submit yourself to your spouse's sexual desire.
 - God designed your body to please your spouse.
 - When your spouse has desire, your body is to be yielded to them for the purpose it was created for.
 - Honor your marriage bed.
- You have little room to refuse sexual activity.

- Never say 'no.'
- You are obligated to say 'yes.'
- This is shocking to us.
 - Why? Because we think in terms of individualism, even in marriage.
 - ***It's more shocking to Paul that a godly husband or wife would refuse to meet their spouses' sexual desires.***

Paul's point is this: Temptation to sexual sin is so great, and the consequence of falling into sexual sin is so damaging to marriage, that you should do everything you possibly can to satisfy your spouses sexual desire.

- If your motivation is self-interest,
 - You will refuse.
 - You will make demands
 - You will hold sex hostage
 - You will scorn a sexual advance
 - You will make prerequisites
 - You will find excuses.
- Your *motivation* for sex is **not** because your relationship is healthy and vibrant.
- Your *motivation* for sex is **not** that your spouse has fulfilled you in some way.
- Your *motivation* **MUST BE the danger of sexual temptation.**

Warren Wiersbe: *It has been my experience as a pastor that when a husband and wife are yielded to the Lord, and when they seek to please each other in the marriage relationship, the marriage will be so satisfying that neither partner would think of looking elsewhere for fulfillment.'*

That's the key! The purpose of sex is the sexual fulfillment of both husband and wife at all times. Fulfillment so that temptation does not have a hold.

Paul isn't finished. He can't just leave it here. Paul is leaving no wiggle room in this thing.

FACET 3: Sex is not mutual; Abstinence must be mutual.

1 Corinthians 7:5

Do not deprive one another

¹Wiersbe, W. W. 1996, c1989. *The Bible exposition commentary*. "An exposition of the New Testament comprising the entire 'BE' series"--Jkt. Victor Books: Wheaton, Ill.

To refuse sex is not to be seen as a preference. It is a **deprivation**. It is a withholding of your responsibility to the **detriment** of your spouse.

- You are the **only legitimate** place where your spouse can fulfill their sexual desire.
- This makes you either a source of **fulfillment** or a source of **frustration**.
- Unmet desire never just goes away. It can be quieted, but it grows.

To refuse each other is to commit robbery and to invite Satan to tempt the partners to seek their satisfaction elsewhere. ² (Warren Wiersbe)

1 Corinthians 7:5

*...except perhaps **by agreement** for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again,...*

“...by agreement...” – some translations are better “by **mutual agreement**.”

Mutuality does come up.

- Mutuality in the marriage bed is for **abstinence**, not **activity**.
- There are **3 requirements** for abstinence from sex.
 - It must be a mutual agreement (not manipulated or coerced)
 - It must be for a limited time. Don't overestimate your ability to withstand temptation, and don't underestimate the weakness of your flesh or your spouses' flesh.
 - It must be for a very particular purpose for very particular prayer needs.
- Even with this one exception that follows these 3 requirements, there is reluctance in the language. He is saying, “*Maybe you can abstain...but be very careful.*”

FACET 4: Sexual Desire is a Satanic Battleground

1 Corinthians 7: 5b

...that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

There is something particular about sexual desire that makes it vulnerable to spiritual attack.

Temptation is a present reality.

²Wiersbe, W. W. 1996, c1989. *The Bible exposition commentary*. "An exposition of the New Testament comprising the entire 'BE' series"--Jkt. Victor Books: Wheaton, Ill.

- Paul begins this section with “*because of temptation*” and he ends with “*that Satan may not tempt you...*”
- We often think that temptation is something that's inevitable, and cannot be prevented. This is not the case with sex.
 - Temptation to sexual immorality is battled by ***sexual activity*** in marriage.
 - A spouse who yields themselves to the sexual satisfaction of their spouse is God's ***primary means of fighting sexual temptation***.
- The urgency of this instruction is bound up in our lack of self-control.
 - We ***all*** lack self-control.
 - Widows of child-bearing age are instructed to remarry because of their lack of self-control.
 - Paul makes no exceptions. ***Both you and your spouse lack self-control when it comes to sexuality.***

Satan is able to exploit our weaknesses.

- When a Christian falls into sexual sin it is devastating.
 - It is a sin that lingers and reverberates through one's life and family.
 - It can be highly destructive to a marriage, a family or a church.
- Satan preys on those who are sexually neglected, thirsty, frustrated or dissatisfied.
 - If your spouse is in want in any way, Satan has a target. Don't give him a target.

As a spouse, ***you are responsible*** for the sexual satisfaction of your spouse. If your spouse is not fulfilled, you are culpable to their sin.

Men have a particularly virulent form of ***lacking self-control***.

- The pornography industry is one of the largest industries in the world. It primarily caters to men. It out ranks all sports events together.
 - Scripture affirms this. Proverbs routinely admonishes men to stay away from prostitutes and adulteresses. We don't see any Scripture admonishing women to stay away from the gigolo.
 - Surveys of Christian men reveal that between 40% to 60% of Christian men routinely look at pornography. (*Promise Keepers, Leadership Magazine, Christianity Today, Focus on the Family, Covenant Eyes, etc.*)
- Never assume your husband is above this. Always ***assume he is not***.
 - When a man falls into sexual sin, very seldom did the wife see it coming. It's almost always a shock.
 - Never assume because your husband is in ministry he is above it.
 - Never assume because your husband is old he is above it.
 - A sexually satisfied Christian man will not be drinking from the immoral cistern of the world.

- If a Christian man has a wife who he knows he can turn to for his every sexual desire, then the world and temptation has no foothold on this man.
- It is a dishonor for either spouse to have a sexually unfulfilled, and frustrated spouse.

Conclusion: *God requires sex to be freely and unconditionally provided for inside of marriage, in a manner that completely satisfies the spouse so that the outside temptation has no hold on the passions of the spouses flesh nor will Satan have a condition to exploit.*

Proverbs 5:15

*Drink water from your own cistern,
 Flowing water from your own well.
 Should your springs be scattered abroad,
 Streams of water in the streets?
 Let them be for yourself alone,
 And not for strangers with you.
 Let your fountain be blessed,
 And rejoice in the wife of your youth,
 A lovely deer, a graceful doe.
 Let her breasts fill you at all times with delight;
 Be intoxicated always with her love.
 Why should you be intoxicated, my son, with a forbidden woman
 And embrace the bosom of an adulteress?
 For a man's ways are before the eyes of the Lord,
 And he ponders all his paths.
 The iniquities of the wicked ensnare him,
 And he is held fast in the cords of his sin.*

Proverbs, the book of wisdom, describes a healthy sexual marriage relationship as a source of refreshment. It should bring blessing, rejoicing, delight, and intoxication.

When either partner does not find their sexual relationship as a blessing, rejoicing, delight or intoxication, then Satan will have an opportunity for spiritual attack.

Satan's Stormtrooper #2: Anger

Ephesians 4:25

Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members of one another. Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil.

Therefore...what?

Ephesians 4:17

...you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds.

4:17-19 describes ***to walk in futility of the mind*** is to be:

- Darkened in their understanding
- Alienated from the life of God due to ignorance
- Hard of heart
- Callous
- Given up to sensuality
- Greedy to engage in every kind of impurity

Instead of doing that we must...

Ephesians 4:22-24

...put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

Notice the significance of the life of our *minds*.

- We are to put off the *futility of our minds*, corrupt in our old self.
- We are to be *renewed in the spirit of our minds*, made righteous in our new self.

That's the doctrine. What does that look like in practice?

Paul establishes a pattern here: Put off – Put on. Don't behave like the Gentiles, behave like you. And he uses this pattern to give us concrete examples of putting off the futility of our minds and putting on renewed minds of holiness.

Ephesians 4:25-32

Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members of one another. Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil. Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need. Let no corrupting talk come out of you mouths, but only such as is good for building up,

as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

Put off the corrupt manner – the old self	Be renewed in the righteous manner – the new self
Falsehood	Speaking the truth
Sinful anger that lingers	Righteous anger that is free of sin and can be speedily resolved
Thievery	Labor in honest work with your own hands
Corrupt talk which tears down	Gracious speech that builds up
<i>The sinful anger bedfellows:</i> Bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, slander, all forms of malice.	<i>The kindness clan:</i> Kind, tenderhearted, forgiving unconditionally.

Ephesians 4:25

Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil.

What does this teach us about anger?

Anger can be righteous.

Anger can be sinful.

Anger that is righteous can easily turn into sinful anger.

- Anger is vulnerable to sin. The longer you allow it to remain, the greater the chance sin it will.
- Anger is vulnerable to Satan’s spiritual warfare. He can take your anger and easily turn it into sin.

But then Paul ends this application of New Life living with a summation that closes with a look at sinful anger, and it’s accompanying bedfellows.

Ephesians 4:31

Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

How can we tell if our sin is righteous or sinful? Sinful anger usually does not operate alone. The anger bedfellows usually show up:

Bitterness

Wrath

Clamor

Slander

Any forms of malice.

How do you guard yourself from this motley company of anger sins? You choose rather to exercise kindness, tenderheartedness, and unconditionally forgiveness.

In your marriage this means, when anger suddenly flares up in your heart against your spouse, look for the argument, lofty speculation or stronghold that might be causing that anger. Examine yourself first before you release the anger.

Then try to train yourself into responding to your spouse in kindness or tenderheartedness. Remind yourself that God forgave you while you were in sin against him. You didn't deserve it, but you received it. You try to do the same. Don't wait for an apology. Rush to show forgiveness. Don't rationalize, "Well they don't deserve it." That's a stronghold that gives Satan a victory.

A strategy

When you listen to military strategists talk about how they strategize, there are two questions they frequently ask when they size up a situation or manoeuvre: First, if I were the enemy what would I do to beat me? Second, is there any reason the enemy would want me to make this move I'm planning?

When you feel anger coming, ask yourself, does the enemy want me to be angry about this? Am I playing into his hands or giving him an opportunity he wants?

What is your CHARACTER TRAIT with regard to anger?

Do you have a character trait of anger? When anger becomes a character trait you can be sure you have a problem with sinful anger. Begin to uproot the strongholds that support that.

The ***character trait that God desires*** to see in you is the trait of ***slowness to anger and self-control***.

Here are some verses that speak about anger.

Ecclesiastes 7:9

*Be not quick in your spirit to become angry,
For anger lodges in the bosom of fools.*

Proverbs 12:16

*The vexation of a fool is known at once,
But the prudent ignores an insult.*

Proverbs 14:29

*Whoever is slow to anger has great understanding,
But he who has a hasty temper exalts folly*

Proverbs 27:3

*A stone is heavy; and sand is weighty,
But a fool's provocation is heavier than both.*

Proverbs 27:4

...anger is overwhelming,...

Colossians 3:8

But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth.

Proverbs 21:19

*It is better to live in a desert land,
Than with a quarrelsome and fretful woman.*

Proverbs 29:22

*A man of wrath stirs up strife,
And one given to anger causes much transgression.*

Proverbs 30:33

*For pressing milk produces curds,
Pressing the nose produces blood,
And pressing anger produces strife.*

Proverbs 19:19

*A man of great wrath will pay the penalty,
For if you deliver him, you will only have to do it again.*

Job 5:2

Surely vexation kills the fool,...

Proverbs 15:1

*A soft answer turns away wrath,
But a harsh word stirs up anger.*

Psalm 37:8

*Refrain from anger and forsake wrath,
Fret not yourself; it tends only to evil.*

Proverbs 15:18

*A hot-tempered man stirs up strife,
But he who is slow to anger quiets contention.*

Proverbs 16:32

*Whoever is slow to anger is better than the mighty,
And he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city.*

Proverbs 19:11

*Good sense makes one slow to anger,
And it is to his glory to overlook an offense.*

Titus 1:7

For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach, he must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain.

James 1:19

Know this, my beloved brothers: let everyone be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger.

Proverbs 22:24

*Make no friendship with a man given to anger,
Nor go with a wrathful man.*

Qualities of an angry man:

- Foolish.
- Short tempered
- Makes his anger known at once
- Lacks understanding
- Exalts folly
- He's a burden to others
- His anger is overwhelming
- Stirs up strife
- Stirs up more anger
- Repeats his mistakes repeatedly
- Causes much sin
- Drives people away from him
- Lacks sense
- Kills his own body with his vexation
- Will find himself alone, without wise friends.

Qualities of the man who controls anger:

- Prudent
- Great understanding
- Wise
- His speech builds up.
- Turns away wrath
- Quiets contention
- Not easily provoked to anger
- Does not provoke others to anger
- Better than the mighty

Better than he who takes a city.
Good sense
Overlooks an offense, which is his glory.

Compatibility of Love and Anger

The divine character of God moves freely between love and anger. As God is perfect and holy, his display of anger is justified and even necessary to his holiness. Anger and love is compatible in God.

Human nature does not have a similar compatibility, of moving so easily between love and anger. We cannot because we have sinful tendencies. Anger causes us to easily lose control.

1 Corinthians 13:5

...it does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful...

The overwhelming majority of references to human anger in all of Scripture is negative, both in description and prescription.

The godly man or woman is one who exhibits a slowness to anger, who is not easily provoked to anger, who does not provoke anger in others, and who calmly defuses anger directed at him or her.

The foolish, out-of-control person is one who is quick to anger, who is easily provoked, who provokes anger in others and who responds to anger with anger.

Scripture does allow for human anger, but with many cautions. These cautions presuppose that your anger is truly justified, that your anger is under your control and not out of control, and that it is not sin, or associated with the sinful bedfellows of bitterness, revenge, resentment, provocation, violence, insults, name-calling, retaliation, etc.