

# **Men Who Try To Protect Themselves!**

**How Do You React To Life and Those Around You?**

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***How Do WE So Easily Build A Wall***

***Instead of a Bridge To Those We***

***Love So Dearly?***

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***Maximizing Your Manhood:  
learning to react  
in a Biblical way!***

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**Coping With The Inner Self!**

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**INTRODUCTION to the next four lessons:**

We will consider four basic ways by which we try to protect ourselves from exposure to others:

**hiding;**  
**withdrawal from others;**  
**servile attachment to others;**  
**and attack on others.**

*Read and consider this carefully:* Each one of these four ways builds a **wall** between us and others. They offer temporary security for a stiff price -- a person forfeits the possibility of genuine relationship with others. All four of these, which differ radically one from the other, express profound distrust of human nature or distrust of others. They are often based on the axiom: others will hurt me if they can; therefore I must not allow myself to become vulnerable.

**In these four lessons we will look at all four of these protective devices that we as men can so readily fall into as a way of life.**

- You may not be happy to see yourself in these lessons; in fact you may want to deny that which you see.
- If you recognize your own actions in any of these (and they are devices of sinful action) I am sure that the discovery will make you unhappy. Though we use these plays to protect ourselves as men, they add to our own damaged self-image and sense of self worth.
- Many times these schemes are the mechanisms by which we "get ourselves off the hook" when it comes to duty or service as a Christian. They bring a lot of loss and hurt in our lives and the lives of those whom we hold dear to our hearts.

**Note:**

1. When we **hide**, we build our own loneliness and never face the truth of the needs about us.
  2. When we **withdraw**, we realize that we never really face our true selves or the true facts of life as they are.
  3. When we **behave slavishly** (servile attachment), we need to become aware that much of this behavior is a facade.
  4. When we **attack**, we must be aware that we are inflicting hurt and driving important people away from us.
- I think that everyone practices these four methods of coping from time to time or as a way of life.
  - As dads, many of us need to understand something about these devices and how we might be building them into the lives of our own children.
  - We may be practicing some of these methods and our children are learning to follow suit as a way of life -- to cover up, to get their way, to feel better about themselves, or other reasons for the fulfillment of their own purposes. Oh, how easily the heart works to deceive!

# **HIDING FROM OTHERS TO PROTECT OURSELVES**

## **Lesson One**

**The AIM in our lesson** is to examine the problem of hiding, and to try to help each person find better ways of coping with the pressures that come to each one of us.

***Scripture Memorization: Romans 12:17,18***

### **INTRODUCTION TO THIS LESSON:**

So very often, when I am working with people in marriage counseling or some other special kind of counseling, I discover that there is a "wall" between the counselees and some other person important to them. The relationships have been deeply affected, if not totally devastated. That wall is there for many reasons, but a major one is the unwillingness to share their true selves.

Building walls seems to be something that all of us humans are very capable of doing. I think the beginning of wall-building between people took place when Adam and Eve fell into sin and hid from God, and doubtless also hid from each other. They could not have been hiding from God without hiding from one another as well.

Men today find it just as easy to build a wall, unwittingly, between themselves and their family members. I don't think any saved man desires to have a wall between himself and a person vital to his own life and happiness, but it can and does happen all too often. Women probably have their own propensity toward building walls in specific ways that are in keeping with a female's nature, but men have theirs also. A professor of pastoral care at a seminary told the following: Students at the seminary where he taught had a year of internship before their last year of study. They served in various capacities.

A young lady came to the professor and spoke of a certain young intern in a negative way. Seemingly this critical lady perceived that the young intern had been in a lot of counseling and psychology classes and she felt that he read her like a book. Whereupon, The professor needled her a bit as he asked her, *"Why, do you have something to hide?"* Her husband chivalrously came to her defense and said to the professor, *"After all, who doesn't have something he wants to hide?"*

I think that we all know what the professor meant. When we mentally isolate ourselves from others, or are not totally honest about our inner life, there can be at some point some things we hide within ourselves.

1. We hide our fears, our sorrows, our infirmities, our temptations, our failures, our worries, and often carry burdens alone that God planned we would share with someone else. I think that we as men are often prone to carry things alone. In many cases the wife does not truly know her husband.
2. The professor also had gone on to tell of how he hid behind the door when the music teacher arrived to give him his first piano lesson. While this was not a permanent answer to the problem, he was at least postponing the moment of reckoning. As adult men we do that same thing in many varied ways.
3. In working with families who are in marriage conflicts, I have noted again and again that couples build a wall between one another very readily, and rarely consider building bridges.

The tendency to hide has been our first line of defense since Adam tried to avoid God in the Garden of Eden. Regardless of how temporary the security is, we are comforted by the fact that we are not exposed, at least for now.

## **I. WHAT DO WE HIDE?**

1. I sense often in the counseling process that people hide their true feelings, sorrows, lacks, burdens and concerns, as they try to pretend everything is all right.
2. The wife or husband of the home may hide the hurts, disappointments, and concerns about things that desperately need to be solved. While we play the part of an ostrich, we think the problem will go away if ignored. The only thing that happens is -- the problem grows!
3. Hiding becomes a way of life as we speak only of trivia and never come to grips with the things that ought to be dealt with. The years go by and the husband and wife seldom come to grips with important matters.

Since the person who practices hiding does so to escape being hurt or misunderstood, and in order to avoid conflicts-- hiding becomes a way of life. It becomes an unconscious way of coping with life in general. Hiding also takes place because of guilt over unresolved sin in the life; by hiding, the person will not have to face the reality of his sin.

## **II. HOW DO WE HIDE?**

There are so many ways we hide that we could never begin to deal with all of them in this lesson, nor is that our intent. Let me just list some ways we men hide.

1. By glossing over the truth -- just not facing it.
2. By getting very busy so we won't have time to think about the problem, or face it.
3. By excusing ourselves as we blame circumstances, events, people, or whatever will get us off the hook.
4. By pretending we don't get angry, or upset, or face any particular problem that others have.
5. By noting the failures of others and comparing ourselves in a good light so that we come out well.
6. By saying that certain things are not in our realm of concern. Just let the wife take care of it; surely it is her problem, not ours.

## **III. WHAT IS THE ANSWER TO HIDING?**

Basically, we can say that the answer is to:

1. **Provide things honest in the sight of all men.** Be honest with yourself, and those about you. (Study Ephesians 4:15, 25.) Use a concordance and find references to honesty.

2. **Never cover up the wrong.** (See Proverbs 28:13.) When we allow our sin nature to control, we will naturally work at denying sin. The worst deception in the world is self-deception for hereby we deny, ignore, cover up, and pretend that things are what they ought to be when we know, deep inside, that many things are wrong. God commands us to walk in the light as He is in the light. (See I John 1:6, 7.) This means to walk in transparency with God, ourselves, and others about us.
  3. **Bring things to the surface and face them by the grace and power of God.** (Study Psalm 32:1-5 and note that when David kept silence about his sin, there were tremendous physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual repercussions. And study Ephesians 6:10-17 and Colossians 2:6, 7.)
  4. **Trust the Lord fully, totally, in all things.** We need to embrace promises that are meaningful to us. God is at work in your life, so trust Him to reveal your inner soul, mind, and heart to yourself. Ask God to make your inner self known to YOU. (See Psalm 19:12-14. )
  5. **Begin to minister to others in a self-forgetful way.**  
(See Romans 12:9-18.)
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**Applications and Questions:**

1. Why do you think husbands and wives are apt to build a wall between them?
  2. What can they do about a wall of hurts, resentments, and even hostilities they may have between them? What is the Biblical answer?
  3. How significant is it that we hide from others and do not share our true feelings, concerns, and desires? Why do you feel that men are especially prone to do this?
  4. Does hiding help? It is possible for us to think from our point of view that we can hide from God.
  5. What is a good Biblical answer concerning hiding?
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**QUOTES:** (From Quotable Quotations-- no names given.)

One test of a person's strength is his knowledge of his weakness.

What really matters is what happens *in* us, not *to* us!

The great beautifier is a contented heart and a happy outlook.

# WITHDRAWING FROM OTHERS TO PROTECT OURSELVES

## Lesson Two

**The AIM in our lesson** is to examine withdrawal as a protective device and to try to help each person find better ways of coping with the pressures that come to each one of us.

### *Scripture Memorization: II Timothy 1:7*

#### **INTRODUCTION:**

We are still looking at the four ways by which we try to protect ourselves from exposure: **hiding; withdrawal from others; servile attachment to others; and attack on others.** We have looked into the first one; now we want to consider the second of the four.

While possibly we may feel we do not fall into these categories, perhaps there are many other people who do. We need to understand them and seek to help as well. I would remind you that each one of these four ways offers temporary security for a stiff price -- a person forfeits the possibility of genuine relationship with others. All four of these devices, which differ radically one from the other, express profound distrust of human nature or distrust of others. They are often based on the axiom: others will hurt me if they can; therefore I must not allow myself to become vulnerable.

It is easy for people to withdraw from those around them in many varied relationships of life. We begin early in life to practice withdrawal as a protective play whenever someone hurts us. Rather than being hurt again, we withdraw from the person who offended or hurt us. People flit from job to job and even person to person in trying to build friendships as they withdraw for fear of further pain.

#### **I. WHAT IS INVOLVED IN WITHDRAWAL?**

It involves putting a safe distance between ourselves and others. The strategy is that you cannot see me if I do not get close to you, and if you cannot see me you cannot hurt me. Therefore, far too often we men only know each other on the surface, and our conversation with others is in the realm of trivia. I think a high percentage of saved men are actually lonely and have very few, if any, truly meaningful relationships in life because of the distance they have habitually and consistently put between themselves and others.

We married for the purpose of a meaningful, close, and intimate relationship, and instead we continue the withdrawal as a way of life.

Such an individual will share a bit of his inner self at times, but basically remains aloof and is a stranger with his loved ones under his own roof. Often this practice was begun at an early age, learned as a way of coping with hurts as a child in and out of the home.

Although the withdrawing individuals may comment or give advice to those who do share life with them, they never share anything of their true inner selves. When pressed by their wives or others to truly participate, they say they don't have any need to share. At best this creates the impression that they are fully self-sufficient, at worst that they are smugly looking down on others.

In this kind of problem, the spouses grow apart and are farther and farther from each other. What they expected in marriage never comes to fruition, and they are both very lonely while with each other.

Many times the withdrawal is manifested in unwillingness to serve the Lord in the local church. Maybe the person has been hurt at some time in the past, but it need not be a reason for withdrawal from serving the Lord.

If the children or teens faced ridicule, taunts, criticism, put-downs, etc., from the parents and others significant to them, they will either withdraw or fight back as they try to maintain their personhood.

## **II. WHAT TYPE OF PEOPLE ARE PRONE TO WITHDRAWAL?**

1. The person who withdraws is often shy -- he fears being rejected by others.
2. He erects a wall around his inner self so that people think they know him when they do not. This psychological wall permits him to see into others but prevents them from seeing into him. Thus he can safely make contact with others without becoming involved with them. There is no sharing and no participation, only observation of others in daily life.
3. This person has an element of fear and usually does not face the fact that he is a fear-prone person. Few of us consciously withdraw from people as a protection from people. We may regard our attitude toward others as a rightful indifference and speak of *"I don't want to,"* for that sounds better than *"I'm afraid to."*
4. This person walls up his shaky confidence with an air of aloofness, hiding his true need for others behind a facade of self-sufficiency. While laughing on the outside the person may be crying on the inside.

**Note:** The maturing adult may detach himself emotionally from others to compensate for his lack of acceptance. He resists involvement for fear of exposing himself to further hurt. Much of this may have started in childhood from inner reactions in the home or with those outside the home. The parents may have produced some of the hurts and not have sensed the extent of the hurts that came from crude jokes, ridicule, and other unkind actions allowed within the home.

## **III. WHAT ARE THE ANSWERS FOR THE WITHDRAWING PERSON?**

I am sure that among the apostles there was a full spectrum of temperaments and personalities, as there is among men today. I am sure Christ had negative and self-deprecating disciples and at least one or two who normally found it easier to withdraw than to be transparent. Let's look at the following briefly:

1. **Build a close walk and love relationship with the Lord**, whereby He is your sufficiency. (Abide in Him - John 15:1-9.)

2. **PUT AWAY FEAR**, for fear has torment. Fear is there because we are not perfect (or complete) in love. (Study I John 4: 16-19.)
  3. **Consider and enter into your position in Christ.** Note and study Ephesians 1:1-14. Make a list of those things that are yours NOW because of His provision. Find your stability and sufficiency in Him alone.
  4. **Determine to enter into His grace and power** for an outgoing walk toward others as you willingly allow yourself to be hurt, if necessary, in order to meet the needs of others.
  5. **Give the hurts to God; He will meet your need for inner peace.** (Now study II Timothy 1:7 and I Peter 2: 21-23.) Note that Christ committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously. God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and love and a sound mind.
  6. **Trust God for the plans for your life** knowing that hurts can be bridges to maturity and growth in your own life. (Study Psalm 37:4, 5, 23 and consider what it means to "roll the burden upon the Lord, trust fully in Him, and trust Him to bring to fruition all you need for your life and relationships.)
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**Applications and Questions:**

1. Peter withdrew from service and went back to fishing, according to John 21. Why do you think he withdrew from the call of God upon his life? Would we do the same if we were in that kind of circumstance?
  2. Elijah knew the extremity of pressures causing him to withdraw from the scene when probably Israel needed him the most. What caused him to flee in fear? (Think through I Kings 18 and 19.)
  3. What does the Scripture mean when it speaks of "fear has torment"? How can perfect love cast out fear? (Study I John 4: 17, 18.)
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**QUOTES:** (from Quotable Quotations.. no sources given.)

It isn't whether you win or lose. It's how you place the blame.

Don't complain how the ball bounces after you dropped it.

It does no good for a person to sit up and take notice if he keeps on sitting.



# **PRACTICING SERVILE ATTACHMENT TO PROTECT OURSELVES!**

## **Lesson Three**

### **Introduction:**

By which of these four ways do you try to protect yourself from exposure: **hiding; withdrawal from others; servile attachment to others; and attack on others?** We have looked into the first two; now we want to consider the third.

While possibly we may feel we do not fall into these categories, perhaps there are many others who practice these devices. We need to understand these people and seek to help them as well.

Again I would remind you that each one of these four ways offers temporary security for a stiff price -- a person forfeits the possibility of genuine relationship with others. All four of these, which differ radically one from the other, express profound distrust of others. They are often based on the axiom: others will hurt me if they can; therefore I must not allow myself to become vulnerable.

Those who are entrapped in such mechanisms as a device for dealing with life will bring much hurt or misunderstanding to those whom they are close to and love the most. **Then possibly all of we men practice one or more of these four in certain circumstances and in the midst of certain pressures in life. Consider the facts and let God change you!**

**The AIM in our lesson** is to examine this particular device (servile attachment) and to try to find better ways of coping with the pressures which come to each one of us.

***Scripture Memorization: Philippians 4:8***

### **I. WHAT IS INVOLVED IN SERVILE ATTACHMENT?**

Servile attachment is based on the idea that others will be tolerant of my foibles if I make myself congenial and indispensable. This is the method of hiding from my true self, going beyond even my desire to serve others in order to have the compensation of their acceptance, while at the same time I am angry about what I am doing to gain their acceptance.

Here the individual, for reasons of his own making, concentrates on making friendly and helpful overtures to others instead of ignoring them. His motive is not to meet the need of the person he is serving, but to fulfill his own need of acceptance. He may have felt personal rejection for years. Consider the fact that we may unwittingly use this mechanism in order to have someone feel good about us, while at the same time we despise the very fact of our doing the things we do to win that approval.

### **II. WHY WOULD A PERSON PRACTICE SERVILE ATTACHMENT?**

This is not an unusual method of hiding from the true inner self and its needs and true evaluations. Probably as a small child, such a person began working at gaining parents' approval by doing things he was not asked to do and did not want to do, but did it in order to gain acceptance and became angry and felt used in the process.

### *Men Who Try To Protect Themselves*

1. This person has a very low sense of worth and tries to gain acceptance from others in a way that usually drives people from him. But behind the kind facade is a frightened individual who has many serious misgivings about his own worth.
2. The person is one who effaces himself in order to please others and is known as "Mr Nice Guy." He is also regarded as a "lightweight" in accomplishment.
3. Because this person offers no threat, there is no reason to attack him, but there is also no reason to rate him as important, for he is easily taken for granted and his sensitivities -- can be, and often are, ignored by those most important to him.

**Note:** This person will continue to go on smiling while hurting on the inside. Usually such a person tries to always be agreeable, and may be cooperative even to his own hurt in order to have peace. But at the same time the person could well be angry on the inside or eventually become angry because no one understands his true feelings or needs.

The servile person has individuality. He may hide his individuality behind a disarming smile which he wears even when relating bad news. Usually this person is actually depressed, fearful, very alone, and merely copes by playing the act of the good guy. He will have guilt because of not being genuine and will probably grapple with inner anger, for he feels used. But in actuality he helped to bring himself to the point of feeling used.

In marriage it eventually can turn into a deep attitude of hate on the husband's part, as he feels that he is manipulated by the wife; while truly he worked her into such a relationship by his indecisiveness and unwillingness to take oversight of his family. He has played "Mr. Nice Guy" for a period of time because of his own inability to communicate, and all the time he hides his true feelings or desires. This person can be in the process of building an addiction to the practice of servile attachment while trying to gain the acceptance, significance, and security he desires.

### **III. WHAT ARE SOME ANSWERS FOR THOSE PRACTICING SERVILE ATTACHMENT?**

1. **Being honest is so important.** All of we men need to understand ourselves so that we can Biblically deal with our own foibles, needs, inadequacies, and poor methods of handling life and dealing with ourselves.
2. **Since the heart is deceitful and wicked,** we must ask the Lord to help us understand ourselves. (See Psalm 139:23, 24; Jeremiah 17:9; Psalm 1.)
3. **We must make much of the Word of God in our lives,** herein finding our strength, joy, peace, and ability to lead without manipulating people and without demeaning ourselves in the process. (Study Joshua 1:6-10 and consider the importance of the Word of God for your life as set forth in Psalm 119. Enter into the truths of Isaiah 40:28-31.)
4. **We must make much of our position in Christ** and find in Him our total acceptance, security, and significance. He is the one who brings wholeness where there is brokenness. (Again study Ephesians 1:1-14 and Romans 8.) What do you have in Christ? Have you considered what you ARE in Him? Consider the wonderful ministry of the Holy Spirit to lead, direct, empower, anoint, and teach us. He wants to effect healing of our poor personalities as He integrates His person into our lives.

5. **The person who practices servile attachment** must deal with the dishonest handling of life by changing. He must work through the "**put off**" and "**put on**" directives in Colossians 3:8-14 as he faces his facade and lies.
  6. **It would help to practice James 5:16.**
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**Applications and Questions:**

1. When you consider the lives of various people whom you have met, have you seen some who practice servile attachment? If so, have you considered why they do this? (I personally think that there is a lot of this even among Christians. There are some folk who have addictions and obsessions which are manifested in this area.)
  2. In what way might you or others be building this kind of problem in the lives of your children?
  3. Do you think that being totally honest is a major part of what is needed in the life of the person who has propensity toward this?
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**QUOTES:**

A lie is the refuge of weakness. The man of courage is not afraid of the truth.

-- J. C. Macaulay

Beware of half-truths. You may have gotten hold of the wrong half.

-- Seymour Essrog

The chains of habits may be too weak to be felt until they are too strong to be broken. (Servile attachment can easily be a habitual response to people and to some circumstances we experience.)

--Dr. Ed Watke

Many people would learn from their mistakes if they weren't so busy denying them.

-- Harold J. Smith

# **ATTACKING OTHERS IN ORDER TO PROTECT OURSELVES**

## **Lesson Four**

**The AIM in our lesson** is to examine this particular method of reaction and to find better ways of coping with the pressures that come to each one of us.

***Scripture Memorization: Ephesians 4:29***

### **INTRODUCTION:**

If you have recognized yourself in any of the three lessons covered so far, what have you done about it? Do you see the importance of how we cope with life and what happens when we use devices and methods to protect ourselves while we injure others and ourselves as well?

Any contrast between our inner self and outer self registers negatively on our conscience -- even as it blocks our relationship with others. Our consciences make us aware of the devices we are using if we are at all honest with God, the Scriptures, and ourselves.

Although we may be consciously unaware of our self-centered motivations, they nonetheless take their toll of our self-respect and of our relationship with the significant others in our lives.

We can recognize ourselves in the mirror if we stand directly in front of it, but we may resist the direct gaze. When we receive an assist from without, such as we have in this series of lessons, however, we may be really able to see ourselves. The result may be upsetting, yet it can be the beginning of a more honest relationship with ourselves, with God, and with others as well.

## **I. WHAT IS INVOLVED IN ATTACKING OTHERS?**

The idea is "go after others" before they come after us. The aggressive nature of this protective device seems to belie the fact that it is motivated by fear. Actually the person is fearful of leaving results to God and submitting everything to His sovereignty and grace.

Even people who are servilely congenial (the problem of the former point) may attack when their hidden hostility becomes too much to hold back or their strategy of servility encounters humiliating failure.

People who choose the way of attack believe that the best defense is a good offense. For them life is a meanly competitive business. As spouses they live a life of competitiveness which becomes a normal existence. Of course in this kind of life there is great continued hurt.

### **Note:**

1. Such people feel the only way to keep others from putting them in the doghouse is to put others in first, for if you give people the opportunity, they will take advantage of you.
2. Beneath this uncomplimentary image of others lies the hidden uncomplimentary image of the self.

3. If I am this way, then they must be this way also. And if they are -- I am in danger.
4. Therefore the only way to survive in such an arena is by using openly competitive tactics. Thus the spouses learn to argue, hold out, and determine to have their way and protect themselves in order to maintain their personhood.

## II. WHAT ARE WAYS WE ATTACK OTHERS?

1. We make direct attacks. It is done by jokes with a barb in them, by insinuations, evil or unkind remarks, or by pressure put on the other person.
2. We can pick on people and exasperate them. We can do this openly by simply bullying people. It is done by being argumentive, demanding, and difficult, and can be manifested in many ways. (Consider Ephesians 4:29-31.)
3. We can also easily attack in indirect ways. In fact this is probably the way it most often takes place in the Christian home or between Christians in the church.
4. We can subtly make the other person feel stupid and inadequate. How often do men do this to their wives and children, thinking that by this kind of pressure the person will "shape up"?
5. Implications are made in conversation that are subtle put-downs in order to control the other person. Do we men practice this in our homes and in our relationships in the church?
6. Do we work to manipulate people in order to feel better about ourselves?
7. Are we seeking position, power, or prestige by putting others down? (Study Philippians 2:1-4.)

**Note:** The more we know a person, the more we know where his sensitivities lie. This is why brothers and sisters can torment each other so effectively and why husbands and wives undermine each other's confidence so efficiently. No wonder we can complain about not having loving closeness or loving intimacy in our marriages, for we do that which destroys it. Since we know each other so well, it is easy in moments of hostility to abuse the privilege of knowing the other person and take advantage of the knowledge we have of the other person. We can hurt them right where they live.

I think that this is a tragic practice in fundamental circles. I have met some graduates of various Bible colleges and Bible Universities who manifest this kind of conduct in their homes. Why do so many homes of Bible school graduates break up? And why do such a high percentage of God's people allow this kind of conduct to continue in their homes?

## III. WHAT ARE SOME ANSWERS FOR THE ATTACKING PERSON?

In contrast to the person who is servile, the attacker is a poor apologist with proneness to **hostility** rather than to guilt. I know in working with people in counseling that some live in the attacking mode as a means of protecting themselves. Often they do not see this until they are strenuously faced with the fact of it.

Those who attack usually do not want help or do not ask for it, and they are the most difficult to help. They are often hostile, wrathful, bitter people who have used the attack mode to get their way for years. It can become such a part of life that the person does not even see it when faced with it.

At the same time they may know how to hide this kind of action, and they practice it in subtle ways which are not noted by most people around them.

1. **They must face the truth that from childhood** they have used the attack mode as their means to win their way, and usually were allowed to succeed by those around them, and too often by leaders over them.
2. **The person must come face to face with the fact that he attacks in order to get his way.** This must be confessed as a grievous sin before God and a terrible sin against others. (See Ephesians 4:30-32; Colossians 3:8, 9.)
3. **Attacking others is a proof of being an angry, hostile, and maybe a very vengeful person.** The person must work at putting off these characteristics and especially replacing these actions with *"bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering, forbearing, forgiving and walking in love."* (See Colossians 3:10-14.)
4. **The attacking person must sense the pattern of such actions** that may well have come from childhood methods of getting his own way with siblings and others in life.
5. **He must reject this device** as a means of getting his way or of trying to protect himself.
6. **If attacking others is our problem, we need to realize that God has a plan** for our lives and He has allowed certain things in our lives in order to change us and to mold us into a Christlike person. *We must accept those circumstances, people, and events as gifts from Him to bring change in us.* (See Philippians 2:13.)
7. **He must recognize the seriousness of such a continued practice** and realize that it drives away from him those whom he loves the most.
8. **A study of Proverbs with the intent** of focusing on the seriousness of anger would help this person.

**Note:** In the N.I.V. in James 3: 13-16 we read the following: *"Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in humility that comes from wisdom. But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such 'wisdom' does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil. For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice."*

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**Applications and Questions:**

1. What does Romans 8:28 and 29 tell us? How does this apply to our lives presently? What is God trying to do through difficult things about which we can so easily become angry?

2. How do you think confrontation and hurts destroy the levels of communication we greatly need in our lives and in our marriages? How do people normally respond to an angry person?
  3. What are subtle ways of attacking others that you have seen in others? List them, and then think about your own life and what you need to change.
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**QUOTES:**

Our attitude toward the world around us depends upon what we are ourselves.

If we are selfish, we will be suspicious of others.

If we are of a generous nature, we will likely be more trustful.

If we are quite honest with ourselves, we won't always be anticipating deceit in others.

If we are inclined to be fair, we won't feel that we are being cheated.

In a sense, looking at the people around you is like looking in a mirror. You see a reflection of yourself.                      -- Good Reading

Keep your heart right, even when it is sorely wounded.                      -- J. C. Macaulay

Attitudes are more important than aptitudes.

A chip on the shoulder indicates that there is wood higher up, not tenderness, but hardness.                      -- From Quotable Quotations

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