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God gives man the freewill ability to choose what he will think and what he will do in any situation. No matter the circumstances, we can exercise our free will and choose to elevate our thoughts and actions to the highest level—the love of God. This allows for the greatest profit to our lives spiritually, now and in the future. When faced with situations that could challenge us to respond negatively—and we all face them from time to time—we can freely and willfully choose rather to change our thinking and to manifest the love of God. I Corinthians contains the phrase, “is not easily provoked.”

I Corinthians 13:4,5:

Charity [the love of God in the renewed mind in manifestation]

suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,

Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil.

What does it mean that the love of God in the renewed mind in manifestation “is not easily provoked”? The words “is...easily provoked” mean figuratively “is exasperated.” The word “not” means “absolutely not.” And there is no word for “easily” in the Greek text. The love of God is simply not provoked. Other translations render this as “is not irritable or resentful,” “is not quick to take offense.” Jesus Christ is the prime example of a man who did not allow himself to be provoked, or exasperated, in any situation. He elevated his thoughts and actions to the highest level—the love of God.

God gave us the spiritual ability to love with His love when we were born again (Romans 5:5). We have the freewill ability to choose to renew our minds to God’s Word and put that love into action. We humble ourselves to God and His Word and allow God to work in us.

Philippians 2:13:

For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

In John, chapter 8, the Judean religious leaders—opposed to what Jesus was teaching—brought a woman “taken in adultery” and placed her in front of him while he was teaching people in the Temple. They stated that according to the law of Moses she should be stoned, put to death. In response to that pressure, “...Jesus stooped down, and with *his* finger wrote on the ground, *as though he heard them not*” (John 8:6). This action allowed him time to go to God and wait for His guidance. By slowing down and going to God, he was not provoked to a hasty reaction by his enemies. He responded by saying, “...He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.” He then stooped down again and wrote on the ground. The result of his statement was very effective. The accusers were “convicted by *their own* conscience,” and they left one by one.

Jesus took control of the situation and chose to elevate his thoughts and actions to the highest level and displayed the love of God to the woman in this most austere situation. By not being provoked, he was successful in blessing the woman with God’s love.

A record in the Gospel of Luke informs us of a situation where Jesus was teaching and had the undivided attention of one person. Luke 10:39 tells us that Mary “sat at Jesus’ feet, and heard his word.” Sitting at his feet was the position of a student with a teacher. Luke 10:40 conveys a rather impolite interruption in this intimate setting as Martha, Mary’s sister, came to him and said, “Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone?...” Jesus could have been insulted and quick to take offense to this interruption as well as to the fact that Martha was seemingly not interested in what he, the Messiah, was teaching. But Jesus replied, “Martha, Martha, thou art careful [are anxious] and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.” Jesus dispelled this potentially awkward situation and chose to elevate his thoughts to the highest level and treat Martha with the love of God. He did not allow himself to become irritated, which could have made Martha feel foolish, but rather Jesus encouraged her to a more worthy endeavor with loving instruction.

Jesus Christ was subject to many challenges that required him to select the most beneficial thoughts to avoid being provoked. He was selfless in his endeavor to elevate his thinking to the highest level—God’s love. I Corinthians 13:5 tells us that the love of God is absolutely not provoked. In any potentially exasperating situation,

we can exercise our free will, choosing to actively engage our spiritual ability to love instead of becoming irritated or resentful. Only we can control our own minds, but we are not without assistance: God works in us. By understanding what it means to not be provoked and seeing that quality clearly manifested by our Lord Jesus Christ, we are fortified in our choices to manifest God's love more and more. Let's choose the most effective and enduring course of action, the one that brings us the greatest profit spiritually, by choosing to always love with God's love.

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