

I want to begin by describing a person's faith to you. If you would open to Acts 2, we will begin there. This is not an actual person, so don't worry about guessing. Instead, this is a category of person, quite common, and therefore relatable to a great many people. Let me tell you some things about him. Firstly, I sadly must report that he is a lost person. He is outside of the saving grace of God. Now, let me fill in a few details about his life and choices.

He believes Jesus is Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36)

He has repented of past sins and been baptized into Christ (Acts 2:38)

He has since been devoted to important elements of faith (Acts 2:42)

He is evangelistic in his own way, day by day (Acts 8:4)

He is morally committed to godly living (I Cor. 6:9-11)

He lives with a sense of urgency about Christ's return (II Peter 3:10-12)

Okay, so you probably should be asking yourself one question: "how is this guy lost? "I thought you were gonna say he believed but wasn't immersed." Or "he was immersed but wasn't committed to worship" or "he is a worshipper who has immorality in his secret life." Nope. Solid on those things.

You might notice that somewhere along the way in our description, a black line has laid over the top of all of this excellent faithful godliness. It is this black line that mars his relationship with God. And he may not even realize it's there. Or if he does, he'd probably argue it is very thin and lies behind all of this and is therefore irrelevant. But it is now. (**James 2:10; I John 1:8-10**) – For all sin is hurtful to God, no matter how it is categorized or how much righteousness we may have to off balance it.

This is not just a black bar, by the way. It has words written on it. Three words, to be exact, that all relate to a single element of his life that has garnered very little attention. Through the power of computer graphics, we can zoom on this "small bar" with these "tiny words" that make all the difference. Let's look at these words and consider some things our fellow of faith needs to know.

I. ANGRY

- a. He is often an angry man. Not usually towards God. And practically never toward God's people. And for very short amounts of time with loved ones. In fact, he is largely very kind and patient with this inner circle.
- b. No, what has hurt this man's soul is unbridled and unrighteous anger towards those who try his patience, those who oppose or offend him, those whom he simply doesn't like.
- c. In all of his righteousness and faith development, he forgot that ANGER in one's heart toward another person, any other person, is powerful enough to destroy God's fellowship.
- d. *"A strong feeling of displeasure and usually of antagonism" – It is an emotion, often coupled with thoughts, words or acts as an antagonist, relationship damager with others.*
- e. The Bible talks about anger as righteous, like Jesus overturning the money changer tables or being angry about sin for a short time. And he would justify himself with that.
- f. But there is more here. This guy is kind as long as people do what he thinks is right, but as soon as it doesn't go his way or people act against him, he acts emotionally on his own behalf, not in defense of God, and uses words and actions to make things worse.
- g. Sometimes it is YELLING. Sometimes other forms of EMOTIONAL OUTBURST. Sometimes he turns the most powerful COLD SHOULDER. Often times it is SLANDER or GOSSIP. Many times this goes on for days, months or even years. Anger won't let him let it go.
- h. **Ephesians 4:26-32** – If only he'd let this passage govern his life like he does Acts 2.
- i. **Galatian 5:19-21** – Or remember that all of these words are EQUALLY dangerous.
- j. **Colossians 3:6-8, ff** – Leaving the old life is leaving anger, in EVERY relationship!
- k. He has left so much sin behind, but God demands one more be put away with it: ANGER.

II. Unforgiving

- a. Anger produces tangible, ongoing problems, like his inability to truly forgive.
- b. Yes, he'll tell you he's forgiven someone, but the words and attitude lives on. The slight, the action of others, can never be truly forgotten, as some ongoing lesson or something.
- c. *"to give up resentment" "release from a debt"* – Doing both has been hard for him.

- d. **Ephesians 4:32** – God demands a standard of his people. It is NOT EASY, but it does make sense, right? We are a people of peace. We are a people of grace. Those are qualities God lavishes upon us, who sin against him so often, and from us it must be shared to others.
- e. **Matthew 6:12** – Jesus says His disciples pray this way. We take this standard to heaven in prayer. We desire it. We understand it. We pursue it. It is hard, but not complicated.
- f. **Matthew 18:23-35** – Jesus describes the obviousness of a forgiving heart with this parable. One is forgiven so much and is so grateful but can't extend a percent of that fairness to another. And, this affects his relationship with the Master.
- g. Now we love to ask the wrong question – “Am I supposed to forgive someone who doesn't ask forgiveness or keeps sinning against me?” Wrong question. You can't control them. You control you. You do everything in your ability to make forgiveness possible.
- h. **Matthew 5:23-24** – If you have contributed, you go humble and make it right.
- i. **Matthew 18:15-17** – If they have sinned, you go humbly and try to show them the way.
- j. In a perfect world, these two will meet each other on the way and embrace, the offender and the offended. And while sin still exists, we cannot forgive an offense. But we must have a heart that desires it.
- k. Our lost soul is always saying things like “well they didn't ask for my forgiveness” or “they didn't make it right” or “I'm just trying to teach them a lesson.” Maybe you are, but the heart behind that often is failing your own life lesson: be merciful as Christ is merciful.

III. **Resentful**

- a. Ooh, a tough one. The heat of the moment is over. There was hot anger by him and someone else, but that fire died down after a while. There was some outspoken lack of forgiveness, but eventually at least everyone knows where everyone stands. But there is still something there. It's hard to define, but it is definitely there.
- b. He may not have a Scripture leg to stand on to say this issue needs to be revisited and this matter isn't closed. No, it's something else. It's more personal. It's more about himself. He doesn't feel like he was done rightly, or the matter wasn't resolved in a way that gives him the proper respect. So this thing lives on, maybe for years: resentment.
- c. *“feeling or expressing bitterness or indignation at having been treated unfairly”*
- d. So, it becomes like a residue on the relationship. There is an inequity. He lost in his mind and until that's made right, it'll never be a true clean slate.
- e. The problem is: he lives for winning, not for peace. And he misses the examples of faith that precede him, wherein CONCESSIONS were WILLFULLY made, very displeased circumstances where it was about more than getting what they wanted.
- f. Men like Jesus, “*who for the joy set before Him endured the cross*” (**Heb. 12:2**) – What joy? The joy of godliness, of serving His Father, of bearing these iniquities to help save others.
- g. Men like Stephen, who was stern, but then was treated UNFAIRLY. No doubt about it. He did not deserve to die. But, **Acts 7:60** he said, “*do not hold this sin against them.*” Why not? They deserve it. If I'm going down I want to fight it and pronounce trouble for them. No. Stephen served His God and lived and dies as an example of faith. No reluctance.
- h. You see, the begrudging person is missing to key elements of the Christian's Life:
 - i. **1 Thess 5:13b-18** – Peace is the Goal for All. That's the objective. It's not about winning or being justified. It is about peace. But when things don't go your way, and you admonish the unruly but they do not come around the way you want – you are patient, rejoice in who you are, and prayerful. NOT Resentful, or burdened with Displeasure, or Selfish Pride.
 - ii. **1 Peter 4:12-14** – Losing is Winning. If we lose here. It doesn't go our way. People don't do what is right and it affects us. We have to let things happen in a way we don't like. It hurts. There is no doubt. But if we approach it God's way and lean on God for support not acknowledgment from others... in Christ we have all we need!

Conclusion: Sad to think of such tormenting, joy stealing things, even existing in a person. Especially when they would have an otherwise wonderful life, and now this could steal eternal joy as well.

Look at this list – as it sits this is a wonderful, blessed life of favor by A SAVED PERSON. You need this life. It's the best! But don't let the line lay over it. Don't let the devil work through anger, unforgiveness or resentment. It's harmful and fruitless to everyone involved. Lay it aside. Reconfigure your emotions. Find peace.