



DON'T LET ANYONE "GET YOUR GOAT"!

¹In 1776, Dr. John Hunter was appointed pioneer surgeon to King George III. The doctor unfortunately suffered from attacks of angina brought on by his uncontrolled fits of anger. He complained, **"My life is at the mercy of any scoundrel who chooses to put me in a passion."** One day he got into a heated argument with a member of the board at St. George's Hospital in London, had an attack and dropped dead! **His idea was that he had no control over his response to being provoked. His life & in this case his death was dictated by someone because he refused to control his response to provocation! ANYBODY COULD GET HIS GOAT!**



The origin of the phrase "got his goat" came from a racehorse owner who kept a goat with his horse because it calmed the horse & made it sleep well. His horse was to race the next and was sure to win, but at midnight someone stole the goat. The horse so pined for his mate that he lost heart, & when the time came for the race he didn't want to run! "What's the matter with that horse?" someone asked. **"Why, somebody's got his goat," the owner said!**

EVEN TODAY GOATS ARE USED TO CALM RACEHORSES.. because having a goat makes them relax and rest. They grow very attached to their goat, and if the goat isn't with them, they pace the stalls, refuse to eat and won't sleep. A horse trainer at Arlington International Racecourse said "Racehorses are by nature very nervous animals & a goat is a necessity for many of them. It really affects their performance. They just can't relax unless that goat is nearby!" When a horse she was training was sold, she always sent its' goat along ... "that was the humane thing to do", she explained!

TODAY "GETTING SOMEONE'S GOAT" HAS COME TO MEAN THAT SOMEONE HAS DONE OR SAID SOMETHING THAT PROVOKES US TO LOSE OUR COMPOSURE.

**God calls us to not allow ourselves to be easily provoked
- to not let someone "get our goat"!**

HOW CAN WE AVOID BEING EASILY PROVOKED?

A. LET THE GOATS OUT! REFUSE TO HAVE TRIGGERS THAT SET YOU OFF! SOMEONE CAN ONLY GET YOUR GOAT, IF YOU'VE GOT A GOAT TO GET. A friend of mine used to get upset when people talked about his lack of hair. He decided to just "let that goat go" by choosing to not react to bald jokes. He just laughs them off and even makes them himself because he feels there are more important things in life than how much hair he has or doesn't have!

¹Today in the Word, June 8, 1992.

B. DON'T BE SO QUICK TO LIGHT THE FIRE! CHOOSE NOT TO RESPOND TO EVERY PROVOCATION!

Long ago, England used fire beacons to warn of invasion. Those responsible for watching the waters would light wood piles in assigned places. The neighboring areas would see the fires and light their own. Using this method the entire coastline would be warned. They would then launch a defensive team to fight off the incoming ships.

In 1544, over zealous watchman repeatedly lit fire beacons but there were no invasions...instead, it was just a couple fishing boats coming home, or ships off course, The problem was that once the fires were started, they caused a chain reaction. Men dropped what they were doing, some coming great distances to rush out to sea, only to find that they were false alarms!

So in 1545, the English authorities sent a decree to the defenders of the South Coast that beacon fires were not be lit frivolously! Fires should only be lit if it was clear that there were at least ten hostile French ships on the coast with intent to land!
This reminds us that we should be careful not be "too quick to light the fire"!

C. RECOGNIZE THAT BEING EASILY PROVOKED ESPECIALLY WITH ANGRY OUTBURSTS IS UNHEALTHY FOR FAMILIES & RELATIONSHIPS. THEY FRIGHTEN CHILDREN & CAUSE THOSE AROUND US TO FEEL INSECURE.

Once in a church we pastored there was a little boy in Sunday School who was withdrawn, fearful and overly shy because his father would "fly off the handle" screaming & shouting at the slightest provocation. The wife told me that she was afraid to even talk because she never knew what would "set off" her husband. Eventually the couple divorced and in a few months away from the environment of anger and outbursts...the boy no longer walked on eggshells but instead opened up!
The Lord calls us to keep ourselves in check & "under control" even when provoked!

D. REMEMBER HOW SLOW TO ANGER GOD IS WITH US & CHOOSE TO BE THE SAME!

God is always ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, abundant in kindness, and refuses to forsake even His rebellious children!

Because God's love is in us, we can choose to be slow to anger & quick to forgive!

Let us pray,

Father God, help us to walk in the Spirit that we might not allow ourselves to be provoked to anger with those around us. Give us grace that we can love and forgive as You do us and in our obedience bring glory to Your Name. Amen

Blessings,

Pastor Michael & Mary

Please call to set up a home visit for communion or prayer.

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