



## Love is not provoked

1 Corinthians 13:5

### Breaking the Ice:

How can you detect when someone is “getting under your skin?” How can you tell when you are beginning to irritate another? Is there a way to use these warning signs to intercept a sharp encounter?

### For Reflection:

There are some people who simply provoke us, not perhaps deliberately or knowingly, but consistently and uncontrollably. It is tempting to blame such people for their impact upon us, instead of facing honestly the reality of our own touchiness. Jesus once more shows us the way by his patient forbearance towards those twelve disciples, whom he ‘loved to the end’. -- David Prior

### Definition: **provoke** (*covered in intro video*)

**Παροξύνω***paroxúnō*;

to sharpen, incite, irritate. To sharpen or whet. Metaphorically, to sharpen the mind, temper, or courage of someone, to incite, to impel. In the NT, it means to provoke or rouse to anger or indignation<sup>1</sup>. Only used here and in Acts 17:16.

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<sup>1</sup>Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

### Provoked provoking

1. to arouse to a feeling or action
2. to incite to anger
3. to call forth (as a feeling or action)
4. to stir up purposely
5. to provide the needed stimulus for

The Greek term (paroxuo) comes from two words, the first (para) implying movement toward a certain point and (oxuno,) meaning to sharpen, incite, or irritate. In essence it means to allow someone else to control your actions in a negative way that results in your being irritated or angry. Love so values the person and the relationship that we are not moved away from a patient, gentle demeanor by the actions or inaction of another. Perhaps we could say this: we should only take responsibility for our own actions and realize we cannot control the actions of another. If we, with God's help, realize this we can focus on controlling our actions or reactions to others. – JPW

How can finding a different way to look at someone help in being less irritable with them?  
Imagine and share how this may work in life.

What other practical strategies can you think of to help you not be provoked?

Read: *Luke 6:45*

What does this passage tell us about the controlling nature of our hearts?

What are some ways we can keep our "hearts right" in order to speak and act the right way?

**Response:**

Seek to allow God to change your heart through daily time spent with Him.

**Bottom Line:**

Do not allow the actions of others to be the cause of a poor reaction by you.