

Being Honest About Bitterness

If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. —1 John 1:6

One way we walk in darkness is by holding bitterness in our hearts toward others—bitterness that creates confusion in our minds and oppression in our hearts. You may say, “Oh, but I am having fellowship with God.” No, you’re not. You just claim you are having fellowship with God if there is bitterness in your heart. And if we claim to have fellowship with God but walk in darkness, we lie.

Walking in darkness is the consequence of unforgiveness. When I don’t forgive, I might spend hours a day in prayer, but I am not having genuine fellowship with God. If I can’t forgive the person who hurt someone dear to me, I am walking in darkness. If I can’t forgive the person who lied about me to others, I have lost my intimate relationship with the Father. I can even continue to preach, and people can even say, “Oh, what a wonderful sermon! You must be so close to God!” I could put on such an act that you would think that I am the holiest person in the church. But if I have bitterness inside or am holding a grudge against someone else, I am a liar.

Jesus tenderly shows us in the Lord’s Prayer that we will be hurt, and we will be hurt by people we never dreamed of. We might think, Well, yes, I can imagine so-and-so hurting me, but I never thought it would be you!

Some people do wicked things with their eyes wide open, and these people surely have to know they have done something wrong. You may say, “Do I have to forgive even that?” The answer is yes.

There is a wonderful consolation, however: the greater the sin you must forgive, the greater the measure of the Spirit that will come to you. Welcome the opportunity to forgive the

deepest hurt, the greatest injustice, and remember that a greater anointing is waiting for you.

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