

Bitterness: Rid Yourself of the Poison Inside You

Offenses will come. People will hurt you. These are simple facts of life.

Unfortunately, we can't shut ourselves off from the world. God knows we certainly do try. We have put up self-protective walls and made internal oaths to ourselves that this will be the last time we get hurt. We say we don't need friends and we only need God.

However, we are all also created to want to coexist with other human beings. Even though we have been hurt repeatedly, no matter how many times we attempt to shut down, close ourselves off and promise not to allow anyone to ever hurt us again, it happens.

Relationships are part of our existence. If relationships didn't exist, we would all have our own desert island on which to live. God created us because He wanted companionship. Think about that. The Creator of our universe wanted to have us talk to Him.

He knew when He created us that we would betray Him and get mad at Him. He knew there would be times we wanted to yell at Him and wouldn't think great thoughts about Him. Yet, He still created us and chose to be in a relationship with us. He chose to be in a relationship with us even though He knew it wouldn't be a perfect relationship. He didn't give up on us. He didn't put up self-protective walls against us. He didn't say, "This will be the last time you hurt me." He doesn't treat us like humans do. He desires to be in a relationship with us, despite our faults.

Aren't we supposed to be like Him? Aren't we supposed to be better than what we were in the past? Aren't we supposed to be

forgiving?

The bottom line is people are going to hurt us. We are going to get hurt, and then we are going to deal with the emotions of what they did. We are going to deal with the fact they lied to us, betrayed us, abused us and deeply wounded our emotions. What we need to ask ourselves is what do we do next? Do we harbor the grudge? Do we take in the offense? Do we allow our flesh to rise up and tell people what we really think? Do we allow the anger to take root? Do we seek revenge?

Do we simply forgive? Do we move on? Do we apologize even though we did nothing wrong in order to start the healing process? Do we choose to say, "Enough is enough" or "It is what it is"?

It really "is what it is." We can't change people, but we can choose how we respond. We can't change the fact it happened. Most likely it will happen again someday in some city or some town with some person, friend or relative. When it happens, you need to ask yourself, "Do I shut the whole world out?" If I do, I will be living in a pretty lonely place tucked inside my physical house and my head of feelings and my heart with stone walls of self-protection built around it.

The best thing to do when someone has hurt you and has wronged you is to acknowledge that Jesus Christ died on the cross for that person's sin and for your sin. Acknowledge that He took the sins and offenses to hell so we wouldn't have to. Acknowledge that you haven't been perfect in your life either and have that same grace and mercy that people extended to you when you messed up to extend to others.

Otherwise, the only walls you will be building will be bitterness, resentment and offense. They will build up and kill you internally. They will produce such a poison inside of you that people won't want to be around you and you won't have to worry about isolating yourself on purpose, because it will

naturally happen.

People are going to hurt you. Just when you think you are healed from all the hurts, it will happen again or God will show you another area of hurt. It is OK to let it go. Allow God to heal you and allow yourself to release it. No person, no thing, no incident is worth hanging on to so much that it internally kills a piece of you every day. Let it go. You can't change people, but you can change yourself.

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