

God's Simple Remedy for An Angry Relationship

For some reason, I'm going through old prayer journals today. I often stick things in my journals, like notes. I came across a note my dad, the late Don Kennedy, wrote to my son Brantley when Brantley was a college student. Brantley must have been going through something in particular, and my dad imparted his rich wisdom. You will be enriched by it. The text of the note is as follows:

Dear Grandson,

"... pray for them which despitefully use you." (Luke 6:28 b, KJV).

This raises the question whether one can pray for what he doesn't want, and in fact wants the opposite. The Lord knew that would be a problem, but still He prescribes it, so the answer must be "yes."

The Lord is interested in two people: the offended and the offender. (Which is not always perfectly clear. The offender may consider himself the offended. But that's another issue.) The Lord addresses Himself to the offended believer: "pray for the offender," He says. He knew that the offended person's rancor, his anger and his bitterness, were corrosive. They would upset his peace and quiet, his happiness, his concentration, his personality and finally his mental and physical health.

The Lord knows the remedy. He prescribes the therapy. "Pray for the offender," He says. The flesh resists the prescription. But the patient tries it, somewhat unwillingly and somewhat doubtfully perhaps. He finds to his surprise that his spirit begins to conform to his prayer. His anger subsides, his tension relaxes, his hostility fades and turns

to goodwill. Peace and quiet return to his mind.

At the same time, something is happening to the prayed-for offender. Since his “despiteful using” of the believer is not met with anger and hostility on the believer’s part, his own attacks have nothing to feed on, and they wither on the vine. Perhaps what happens is only in the eye of the sinned-against believer. In any case, reconciliation is not far off. {eo}

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