

Keep These Truths in Mind When Dealing With Heart-Wrenching Offense

We all have memories that, if we think about them long enough, make us mad or want to cry.

Mine are no different than most others—the teacher who told me that I would never do anything with my life, the friend who walked out of my world for no reason that I could see, the friend who laughed at me when I told her I was going to write a book, those times when people were just mean and (as I think of it) there are so many other moments I could list.

Truthfully, if I ponder it long enough these brief snippets in my life are like sharp knife thrusts inside me. These moments try to hold me down, depress me and press on top of me until breathing is like gasping. At least they used to, but over the years as healing has progressed, I have learned some valuable truths.

I want to share some of these truths with you, because God wants you to see past all the hurt:

1. When Jesus hung on the cross, He was able to look down and say, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34a). That’s such a powerful statement. Jesus was being brutally murdered and tortured, and He was able to separate that it wasn’t the people doing this to Him, but the plan of the enemy behind the people. Yes, those people didn’t fight what the enemy was doing and yielded to it, and yes, they are accountable for that. But Jesus understood that His battle wasn’t with flesh and blood but with demonic forces (Eph. 6:12).

You have to forgive the offense. I once spent several years

perplexed by the phrase “forgive and forget.” I argued with God that while one could forgive, how could one ever forget? I want to point out that this phrase is not in the Bible. We are humans and we can forgive, but we may still remember the offense. What the Lord finally revealed to me about this is that when we truly forgive someone, we forget the emotions that surrounded the event. We don’t have to carry the anger and bitterness that once enveloped the offense. Forgiveness means you release all of that. If there is something you just can’t seem to forgive and forget the emotions around it, give it to God; let Him take you through that process. If Jesus could do this as He hung on the cross, so can you.

2. To continue the point above, you have to separate the offense and action from the person. The enemy loves to use people, situations and circumstances to drive a wedge between you and God. The devil is the enemy, not the person. I’m not suggesting that you keep those who hurt you in your inner circle, but I do suggest you realize that if the issue is in you, ask God to change you. If it’s in the other person, though, forgive them and pray for them.

Hurting people hurt people. Pray God opens their eyes, and give the emotions to God. Step back. Stop holding so tightly to toxic relationships. Sometimes you have to let go of a situation and let God deal with it. I’ve seen things come full circle in my own life many times.

3. The Bible teaches us how important it is to renew our minds (Rom. 12:2), but sometimes in the body of Christ, this phrase seems to get so overused that most believers forget what that really means. It’s as if it’s become a Christian cliché we like to say, but as a whole, we don’t really know how to use it.

Too many people try to fight the battle in their thought life with their thoughts, and that is not how you win the attack. You have to speak the Word of God out loud. Spoken words are

so very powerful. When Jesus was being tempted in the wilderness, He responded to the enemy by speaking the Word of God (Matt 4:1-11).

When God created the world, He didn't just think about it; He spoke it (Gen. 1). When you feel as if these thoughts and memories are coming at you, find out what the Bible says about your situation and declare those passages of Scripture over your life. I have often joked that your mind is like a wild race horse—you have to keep it corralled. The Word of God is like a lasso. You might have to fight the horse at first, but stand your ground. Keep bringing that race horse back to the corral.

4. Get it into your mind that people's opinions of you do not determine your future. What does God say about you? Throughout the Word of God, you can see easily that God loves to take some of the most unlikely characters and use them for His kingdom. David was the youngest of his brothers and an adulterer. Rahab was a prostitute. Noah got drunk, and Moses was a murderer. I could start listing person after person in the Bible and throughout history. God often uses those you would never think He would use. You are not defined by the opinions of man. What does God say? {eoa}

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