

Peace Is Better Than Bitterness

Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. –Hebrews 12:14

When we are bitter, we delude ourselves into thinking that those who hurt us are more likely to be punished as long as we are set on revenge. We are afraid to let go of those feelings. After all, if we don't make plans to see that justice is done, how will justice be done? We make ourselves believe that it is up to us to keep the offense alive.

That the devil's lie. We only hurt ourselves when we dwell on what has happened to us and fantasize about what it will be like when "they" get punished. Most of all, we grieve the Holy Spirit of God, and this is why we lose our sense of peace.

It is my experience that the quickest way I seem to lose inner peace is when I allow bitterness to reenter my heart. It's not worth it! I made a decision for inner peace. But I found that I had to carry out that decision by a daily commitment to forgive those who hurt me, and to forgive them totally. I therefore let them utterly off the hook and resigned myself to this knowledge:

- * They won't get caught or found out.
- * Nobody will ever know what they did.
- * They will prosper and be blessed as if they had done no wrong.

What's more, I actually began to will this! I prayed for it to happen. I asked God to forgive them. But I have had to do this every day to keep the peace within my heart. Having been on

both sides, I can tell you: The peace is better. The bitterness isn't worth it.

I have come to believe that the only way to move beyond the hurt and go forward in life is through total forgiveness.

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