

Grabbing Rattlesnakes

Inspired By Benjamin Franklin

A person who harbors unforgiveness always loses. Regardless of how wrong the other person may have been, refusing to forgive means reaping corruption in life. And that corruption begins in one relationship— including the relationship with God, and works its way into all the rest of your life.

Holding onto hurt is like grabbing a rattlesnake by the tail; you are going to be bitten. As the poison of bitterness works its way through the many facets of your personality, death will occur—death that is more far-reaching than your physical death, for it has the potential to destroy those around you as well.

Have you been hurt? Has somebody, somewhere in your past, rejected you in such a way that you still hurt when you think about it? Do you become critical of people in your past the minute their names are mentioned? Did you leave home as a child or a college student with great relief that you were leaving, swearing you would never return?

Whatever your situation, whatever has happened in your past, remember that you are the loser if you do not deal with an unforgiving spirit. And the people around you suffer, too.

Challenging questions to ponder:

1) Stop and think about it for a moment: are there any areas of resentment and unforgiveness in your life?

Explain _____

2) A suggestion is to pray a simple challenging prayer, asking God to gently show you any possible pockets of any resentment from the past. If a thought or impression comes up now or in the future, this is sign that you might have some resentment built up and this is nothing to take lightly. Does anything come to mind? Explain _____

Talking Points

God's Righteous Judgment---*You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge another, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things. Now we know that God's judgment against those who do such things is based on truth. So when you, a mere human being, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God's judgment? Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, forbearance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance?*

But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed. God "will repay each person according to what they have done."

Romans 2:1-6 (NIV)

Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God.

Roman 8: 5-8 (NIV)

I encourage you to reflect and deal with any resentment or built up anger in a healthy manner. Suggestions might be to talk about it with a Christ-centered counselor or in a safe men's group, or with other healthy safe men. This is a choice to ASK God for HELP to release any built up resentment or anger, which can keep you stuck in your pain and frozen in this season of resentment and possibly carried on with you for years to come. Psalm 139: 23-24 are a good guideline to use: *Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me and lead me in the way everlasting!*

Know you're NOT going to grow emotionally until you FIRST DEAL with ANY BUILT-UP resentment and BEGIN to move towards God's HEALTHY ROAD of peace and contentment. Like so many of us have learned, there is a better way if you just let go and trust God in the process to HEAL the pain and suffering of the past!

For additional scripture readings study: Matthew 18:21-35, Ephesians 4:25-32

Notes: _____

