

Uprooting Bitterness

When teaching or thinking about people's problems and the issues of bitterness, that often develops in a person's heart, when having troubles with people, I usually refer to four things in regards to dealing with a bitter heart... and the process of healing its deceptive and deadly poison:

1. God has to be the one who reveals the bitterness for what it is.
2. Grace is how that bitterness must be removed.
3. Goodness is the seed that must replace it.
4. Gratitude is the fruit that will make reconciliation enjoyable.

It's fundamental for us to recognize how our attitudes and actions will always "hinge" on what we know and who we believe. My understanding of who serve, why I serve and how to serve I love what Jacob shared when he said,

"...but the God of my father has been with me. And you know that with all my might I have served your father. Yet your father has deceived me and changed my wages ten times, BUT GOD DID NOT ALLOW HIM TO HURT ME." (Genesis 31:5-7)

And because he knew and believed this truth...we find a man who was not angry or bitter with his father-in-law.

Problems with people and how we view them will always be a reflection of what we know and truly believe. Believing the right thing will not keep us from having problems with certain people... but the problem we have will not become a problem with anger, animosity, and bitterness toward those people. Understanding who we are, who we belong to, and who's guiding our "rudderless ark" as He did with Noah, helps us look past the people and trust His promises. It's inevitable, people are going to cheat us, abuse us, misuse us and take advantage of us... but with the right understanding and trust in the One who can use their evil intent and work it together for our good and His glory... can't help but free us from rendering evil for evil.

Paul, in 1 Corinthians 6, rebukes the believers in Corinth when he asked them "why can't you be wronged?" Our attitude and actions toward being wronged will always reflect our hearts.

Sara Groves, in her song "He's Always Been Faithful", hit the nail on the head...when she penned these words...

"I can't remember a trial or a pain He did not recycle to bring me gain. I can't remember one single regret in serving God only and trusting his hand."

What we know and who we believe do make a world of difference... in how we handle the tough issues of life and the people we meet on our journey...

When we take things personally... the flesh is involved! And when the flesh is invoked, it demands honor, respect, and fair treatment and it will not tolerate being mistreated. It dwells on wrongs and digs its claws deep in conflict... and it's gritty and ruthless for gratification. The problem can never be satisfied. Whereas the man/woman operating from the work of grace or the Spirit is not easily offended... because they don't take things personally. We're all feeble and prone to run to self-perseveration to defend or justify our motives and actions and the works of the flesh or the fruit of the Spirit are manifested best when heat is applied to our lives. We fail... often because we think we're supposed to forget but some who we can't. The Scripture never says we'll forget how people treated us... we'll remember it for sure! But it shouldn't manipulate our actions... that's what it's referring to about not letting the sun go down on our wrath. It's simply saying, don't give the enemy a foothold on you to manipulate your life... don't let their actions control you, let God's love, His mercy, and His truth govern your attitude and actions. I fail... at this often but I'm grateful for God's loving discipline that reminds me I am His, also of my inability and His unwavering faithfulness. I can't do it... but He can do it in and through me. And that is grace... the life He lived then, He wants to live in and through us today. And He endured the hostility and hatred of His people because He utterly trusted His Father and the joy/God's will for Him to never let Him be ashamed for running His race. (Isaiah 50:4-7; Hebrews 12:1-5)

I often have to ask myself... Nick, are you defending your pride in this situation or the promises of God?

"Jacob has taken away all that was our father's": (Genesis 31:1)

It wasn't that Jacob had taken anything belonging to Laban. Rather, it was that his wealth was increasing in proportion to Laban's wealth. The problem wasn't that Jacob stole; it was that Laban's sons were filled with envy.

Envy will distort the truth. Jacob had not taken anything of Laban's, but envy will lie.

The countenance of Laban...was not favorable toward him: (Genesis 31:2)

Envy and jealousy are some cruel rascals. [They] delight in torturing [their] victims by starving the joy in them --- quenching the joy in others, through them --- and providing a banquet for anxiety, anger, and bitterness to feed and manipulate their feelings until they consume every ounce of life they once had.

Both jealousy and envy, will direct all attention on ourselves and make life about us... but they disguise it with false attention on someone else, that we avoid seeking God's insight, to either diminish or pridefully exalt how we view ourselves.

Jealousy will shame us for being or having less than another.

Envy will demand we be treated better because we deserve better from everyone but it will not hold us accountable to treat others better.

Both will cause us to either underestimate or overestimate our value and vision of the things we see, hear and know.

Jealousy and envy are two nasty spirits that make a seriously big deal about coddling and pitying themselves, to purposely derail the believer's focus on the things that matter, now and for eternity, that they may be stranded on the journey and wallowing in their self-seeking interest.

Don't fall into [their] trap and be consumed with [their] ugly spirit. The sad thing is [they] disguise themselves as wisdom so [their] subjects will ignore or overlook the damage [they're] causing in their relationships.

The envy of Laban's sons poisoned Laban's heart and placed a wedge between him and Jacob. For Laban was in full agreement with their prior arrangement.

Envy is bad not only on its own but also for the company it keeps:

"For you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men? (1 Corinthians 3:3)."

"For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there (James 3:16)."

"[It] suffers long and is kind; [It] does not envy; [It] does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. [It]

never fails..." (I Corinthians 13:4-7)

"For we also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. [4] But after that, the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared, [5] Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy, He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; [6] Which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; [7] That being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. (Titus 3:3-7)

Envy is no small sin. It put Jesus on the cross: For he knew that they had handed Him over because of envy (Matthew 27:18).

(Gen 31:3) God tells Jacob to go back home.

Then the Lord said to Jacob, "Return to the land of your fathers and your family, and I will be with you." (31:3)

Return to the land of your fathers: Even if Jacob never knew it, God prepared him for this time.

(1) God gave him the desire to go back home (Genesis 30:25).

(2) Jacob's present circumstances were becoming more and more difficult. (31:1-2)

(3) The Lord graciously came and spoke and made the path clear. He directed Jacob (31:3).

"And I will be with you" (Genesis 31:3)

This was the most important aspect. If God were with Jacob, he could be at peace and confident in any difficulty — or at least had the opportunity for peace and confidence.

We need God's favor... you NEED His favor!

Favor with the Lord always makes a difference... Sometimes it multiplies, sometimes it overcomes and other times it overrides the simple or complex things family, friends, or foes use to bless or limit our lives.

Jacob understood this... he said,

"...but the God of my father has been with me. And you know that with all my might I have served your father. Yet your father has deceived me and changed my wages ten times, BUT GOD DID NOT ALLOW HIM TO HURT ME." (Genesis 31:5-7)

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Favor with God has a way of making a servant stand out...without needing them to show out!

Praise God!

He keeps showing us favor... again and again! Thank You, Jesus...

Recognizing the seed of bitterness and its poisonous fruit of wormwood.

"so that... there may not be among you a root bearing bitterness or wormwood, and so it might not happen when he hears the words of this curse, that he blesses himself in his heart, saying, "I shall have peace, even though I follow and walk in the imagination of mine heart..." Deuteronomy 29:18-19

They continually say to those who despise Me, 'The LORD has said, "You shall have peace" '; And to everyone who walks according to the dictates of his own heart, they say, 'No evil shall come upon you.' " Jeremiah 23:17

Fighting For Their Rights

But not what is right or seeking to be right with God.

Esau is a man who sought what he thought was his rights or what was rightfully his, even with tears, but never found room for seeking to be right with his Maker.

Sound familiar?

When someone fights for their rights, more than fighting to be right with God, it's inevitable that the rights they are fighting for will always be from the wrong perspective.

We're all going to be held accountable for the things that we fight for. Because the things that we fight for will be the things that we value most in life. And if what we are fighting for is our rights but we're not fighting or valuing to be right with God our motive no matter how popular they may be will

always be subject to and questionable. The Bible says that every way of a man is right in his own eyes but it's the Lord who weighs the spirit. We could be right in our motive but what is right to seek is not to be right with God we devalue

The question is not, am I right? The better question is, is God right? And if God is right, do I believe that He is right and does what's right? And if I believe that He is right, do I act on what He says is right and righteous for me to trust? Am I more concerned about my so-called rights or being right with God through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ?

Chew on these things and ask for clarification as needed.

#nestingwithjesus #genesis #genesis28 #genesis31 malachi1 #hebrews12 #genesis25 #genesis26 #genesis27 #romans9 #deuteronomy29and18thru19 #jeremiah23and17 #philippians3and17thru21 #psalm49and16thru20 #psalm36and1thru2 #esau #jacob #rights #rightwithGod #prioritytoberight #prioritytoberightwithGod #priorityofrights #jacobandesau #repentance #tears #blessings #rights #love #hate #hatred #envy #jealousy #favor