

Resentment - A Killer of Contentment

Intro: At Thanksgiving we're supposed to feel thankful. At Christmas we're supposed to feel joyful and at New Year's we're supposed to feel hopeful. At birthday parties we are supposed to feel happy. At funerals, we are supposed to feel sad. But the truth is we don't always feel like we're supposed to feel.

Maybe part of our problem is, we run on our feelings and, if you think about it, our feelings can change about as fast as a yo-yo on a string. But never the less, we still have to deal with them and one of the crippling feelings many people suffer with is the feeling of resentment. Is resentment killing your contentment in life? Together, let's try and learn a little bit about resentment.

I. Resentment for us, and in us, may be some of the following: Maybe

- It is the harboring of animosity against a person or group of people whom I feel has mistreated me.
- It is living with unresolved anger over a negative event which occurred in my past life.
- It is the seething, aching emotional turmoil I feel whenever a certain person or event is discussed.
- It may be a lack of forgiving, the inability to let go and forget.
- Resentment is the root of distrust and the suspicion I have when dealing with people or events that brought me pain in the past. OR
- It could be the unresolved grief I experience when I find it difficult to accept a loss.
- It may also be the result of being heartbroken after exerting a great deal of effort and energy to achieve something that eventually was lost to me.
- Or possibly the result of feeling that I was unjustly victimized with no resolution to the problem.
- It may well be the long-term suffering in silence when an open expression of hurt is unwanted and uninvited.
- Or it may be a cancer robbing me of general contentment in life.
- Maybe it is a grudge I hold against a person or group of people whom I feel has kept me from achieving.
- Or feeling offended but silent when I believe that a person or group of people have ignored or denied my rights.

Is it any wonder we do not have contentment if even half of those things come to mind about our life? And let's not forget, all of our resentment ultimately involves people doesn't it??

II. How my resentment may manifested? Maybe we

- Pout or fume silently in their presence or at the mention of their name.
- Or we get upset when music, a movie, or a TV show reminds me of the unpleasant interactions I have had with them.
- Maybe we speak in a derisive or demeaning way about them.
- Or we have nightmares or distressing thoughts or daydreams about them.
- Maybe we become stuck in our efforts for personal growth and we don't even know why.
- Or we get furious for no apparent reason.
- We may get depressed, despondent, and find ourselves going in circles in our attempts to overcome these negative feelings.
- We avoid mentioning or discussing anything that relates to our past anger or upset with them.
- Or we grit our teeth and smile when we really want to scream and yell when these people are mentioned to us.
- Or finally, we may even fake enthusiasm and excitement about being with these people when we'd rather have nothing to do with them.

You have probably discovered by now, that life isn't fair, although God never said it would be. People do things to us and we do things to others in this fallen world. But a person can still be happy and enjoy contentment even in an imperfect world. Millions of people do it. But many others, and maybe some of you, suffer from great resentment and it shows in your lives and interactions with others

The Bible tells us in Job 5:2 *"To worry yourself to death with resentfulness would be a senseless foolish thing to do."* In other words, when we're always resenting the past we're just wasting our time and killing our future happiness and contentment. Or when we are resenting the people who irritate or mistreat us, we are just missing the joys and contentment of life with the people who do not irritate us.

These reactions and actions are not going to change the past and besides, it's not going to make the future better either. I want to point out three things we need to do when we feel life is unfair and resentment floods our soul. In order to maintain our happiness,

contentment, and avoid the sickness of resentment we need to do three things: First, we need to

1. REALIZE

We need to realize God has a good plan for our life. That's the first antidote to resentment. Job 36:13 *"The godless are full of resentment."* Why are people without God more susceptible to resentment than those people with God? Why is it that unbelievers have more trouble with bitterness than believers do? They don't know there is a God. They don't know He has a plan. They don't know that He is a good God and that He has a good plan. So why not be resentful, it's better than nothing.

Doesn't it make sense that if there is no God, then nothing matters in life. Nothing makes sense. It's every man for himself, dog-eat-dog - because there is no grand scheme, no grand plan and God is not good. But as believers we should know better. God says everything fits into His plan. God weaves even the bad things we suffer, and even the bad things we do to others in to His good plan for all believers.

Romans 8:28 *"We know that all that happens to us is working for our good if we love God and are fitting into His plans."* If we can once grasp the fullness of this verse, we will find that it is the single greatest antidote to bitterness and resentment we will ever find.

Psalms 139:13, 15 reminds us *"You, God, created every part of me. You put me together in my mother's womb, and You saw me before I was born and you scheduled every day of my life before I began to breathe."*

Before we took our first breath, God already knew everything that was going to happen to us - the good and the bad, the highs and the lows, the mountains and the valleys, the intentional and the accidental - the people who would hurt us and the ones we would hurt.

And because God saw it all before we took our first breath He decided to weave it into His plan for good. And He will use it in our life and we can enjoy contentment in the midst of whatever swirls around me.

Have you ever tried to try to figure out why you had problems in your life and tried to figure out what the source was? Like, "Where did this problem come from? Did I cause this problem myself? Or is this problem caused by somebody else, for example, that person I don't like? Did the devil cause this problem in my life? Did God cause this problem in my life?" I am afraid many of us spend, and have spent, fruitless hours trying to figure out the source of our problems.

But in the end, it really doesn't matter anyway. It really doesn't matter whether we caused them, somebody else caused them, the devil caused them or God brought them into our life intentionally. **WHY??** Because in any situation God will still use it for good in our life, regardless of the source. And when we hit bottom, guess what? There we find God.

God's at the top of the mountain and God's at the bottom of the mountain. And God is everywhere in between, as we climb the steep slopes of life. When we realize this, we can begin to get a handle on that resentment and start enjoying life a little bit more.

That's the first antidote to resentment. Realize God has a good plan for our life. Jer. 29:11 again reminds us *For I know the plans I have for you," says the LORD. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. A future and a hope. A future filled with contentment. And a hope of victory. Not a hope that we never have to deal with those people again*

2. REJOICE

Rejoice in what we've been given. We need to be grateful for what we've got instead of worrying about what we don't have, instead of looking at what other people have, we need to rejoice in what we have been given. Instead of looking at the people who frustrate us we need to rejoice in the many wonderful people we have been given to enjoy.

The problem here is, we often take God's goodness for granted in our lives. We forget how much God has already given us and the truth is, everything we have is a gift from God. The Bible says in 1 Thessalonians 5:18 *"Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."*

Is contentment eluding you because you are so filled with resentment over the bad things you have encountered, that you have forgotten all the blessings and good folks the Lord has given you to help you through life? *"It is better to be satisfied with what you have than always to be wanting something else."*

What are you waiting on to be happy? Is it when life slows down, when life gets simpler, or when so and so begins to like you and treat you good? **The key is to remember:** Happiness is not a result of getting whatever we want. Happiness is a result of enjoying whatever we have. We are as happy as we choose to be. No more and no less. And if we're not happy it's our fault.

We've all seen people who had every legitimate reason to be unhappy. They've gone through terrible, horrific experiences of life, one pounding after another. But they choose to avoid resentment and enjoy contentment

On the other hand, we all know of those tiny, whiny people that have really had life pretty easy but they are filled with resentment over little things and they simply won't let go. And they complain and they're cranky and they whine about everything. And they wonder why they have no contentment or enjoyment in life. That's not you is it? If it is, and you want to change that resentment and have some contentment and enjoyment in its place, first, realize God wants you to have it and secondly, rejoice because it certainly could have been worse.

3. REFOCUS

If we really want contentment and enjoyment we need to refocus on helping others. That's an antidote to resentment and jealousy and envy and unhappiness.

Instead of focusing on ourselves, our problems, our complaints, our aches, our pains, our limitations, the injustices in our life, we need to turn the focus off ourselves and onto **God's purpose and plan behind those problems**. We need to focus on how we can help other people. Maybe even the people we hold resentment towards!!

II Corinthians 1:4, In (The Message), says *"He comes alongside us when we go through hard times and before you know it He brings us alongside somebody else who's going through the same hard times so we can be there for that person as God was there for us."*

So if we are filled with resentment and we would like joy and contentment, stop focusing on hurting and start focusing on healing and helping. Healing and helping others. Stop focusing on receiving, or what can we get for us, or on, what does the world owe me, and start focusing on giving and watch what happens in our life.

Romans 6:13 *"Give yourselves completely to God, every part of you, to be tools in the hands of God to be used for His good purposes."* Say, "God, I know that everything isn't perfect in my life but what I've got I'm giving to You. I want You to use it to help others.

If the problems I've gone through, the pain I've gone through can help somebody else, God, I want You to use me." **Remember**, God never wastes a hurt. Some of the most resentful people are also the most selfish people. *Actually Jesus said, 'There is more happiness in giving than in receiving.'*

You may be discouraged and filled with resentment by the things that have happened to you in the past or are possibly happening to you right now. The good news is you're not alone. Welcome to the human race.

The second thing you need to do to get victory is to focus on **what you have left, not what you have lost**. Don't worry that your plans haven't gone as you planned. I'm trying to give up planning my life. Has anyone in their entire life had one full day go exactly as planned? I doubt it don't you?? I know I haven't!! So don't worry about it. Don't be filled with resentment to the point that you cannot enjoy life or contentment

Instead, Make the most of what you've got. Go with the flow. *Just make sure it is God's flow*. Stop resenting God for allowing it. Stop resenting the people who hurt you and instead, start realizing that God has been there all along and He's wants to help you and He'll bring good out of it if you'll love Him and act according to His plan and purpose.

Yes, you may be in a bad situation right now but it's not over yet. The end of the story has not yet been written. You don't know what God's going to do from it. As the Bible says in Philippians 1:6 *And I am sure that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on that day when Christ Jesus comes back again. And we could add, Even using the things, people, and situations you presently resent*

God has not given up on us and we need to be sure not to give up on Him. Anything that we are using to keep us from facing our pain and the purpose God has behind it, is not a good thing. It would only be a quick fix, just a band-aide that won't last. We need to give our hurt, our resentment and bitterness to God. Then we need to receive His comfort. We need to realize that He has a plan for our life and rejoice in what we have and not what we don't have.

And finally, we need to refocus on **God's plan on helping others**. Or we're going to be miserable the rest of our life. It's your choice. Why not choose today to kick resentment out the door and, for a change, bask in the joy and contentment that the Lord wants us to have.

The real secret to the crisis control, over resentment that killer of contentment, is realizing and accepting that Christ is in control. Because of that May you have great victories in the coming weeks of your life.

One last thought, Maybe your life is filled with resentment because you have been battered by many in your life and you see no end in sight. If you will read just a few more lines and follow the directions you will be introduced to the only one who can give you the

contentment you so long for instead of the resentment that is destroying your life and happiness

Realize you are a sinner Romans 3:23

Understand that the payday for sin is death or eternal conscious separation from God. Romans 6:23a

Know that there is a way of escape for you. Romans 6:23b and John 1:12

Desire to escape and pray this or a similar prayer.

"Dear God, I know I am a sinner. I am truly sorry for my sins, and I confess them all to You [name them]. Lord Jesus, forgive all my sins and come into my heart as my Saviour and Lord. I receive You right now. Help me from this time forward to live for You. Thank You for hearing and answering my prayer. In Jesus' name. Amen."

On the _____ day of _____ I became a Christian by inviting Jesus Christ into my life to forgive my sin.

Signed: _____

If you have further questions or have chosen to do this, be sure to let us know so we can help you, pray for you and encourage you in your new life.

You can reach us at lapeerchurch@gmail.com Subject line: (Salvation)