

Self Pity

Fruit of Self Pity root.....I recently went through some difficulties that got me so discouraged that I found myself wrestling with feelings of self-pity. Years ago, I might have played some sad songs and cried my eyes out, deriving a sort of perverse satisfaction from my misery. But this time, I prayed and asked the Lord to help me resist these negative emotions. That's when He reminded me about some teaching I heard years ago about self-pity. I once heard a godly man say, "God is concerned about your hurt, but He doesn't want YOU concerned about it." This man went on to say that the reason self-pity is so destructive is that pride is at the root of it, and it causes us to focus too much on ourselves. I looked "self-pity" up in the dictionary and found the following definition: "A self-indulgent dwelling on one's own sorrows or misfortunes."

Psychiatrists have an interesting name for people who habitually indulge in self-pity--it's "injustice collector." These are the folks who are constantly dwelling on their hurts and hardships - whether real or imagined - and they enjoy thinking about them and talking about them. They lovingly collect and number each and every offense that others commit against them, and they search out people who will sympathize with them and commiserate with them. All this keeps the focus on themselves, which is what they want most. But this isn't God's way. He instructs us to walk in the God-kind of love, which is "not self-seeking," and which "keeps no record of wrongs." (1 Corinthians 13:5 NIV) This is not to say that we should ignore or deny when we're being mistreated, but that we should take constructive action to see that we're treated with proper respect, or remove ourselves from harm's way, rather than sit idly by, feeling sorry for ourselves.

Self-pity isn't just nonproductive - it's destructive. It can lead to bitterness, unforgiveness, and resentment. It doesn't bring people together - it divides them. And these are some of the reasons why Satan works so hard to get us to focus on our wounds, rather than the cure - which is the love and wisdom of God. Throughout the pages of the Bible, God tells us again and again that He wants us to bring our hurts and sorrows to Him, so that HE can comfort us. He not only wants to be our Comforter, but our Vindicator. (Psalm 135:14) If we'll let Him, He will defend us and fight our battles for us, leading us to victory every time. He tells us in His Word: "I, the Lord, love justice. I hate robbery and wrongdoing. I will faithfully reward my people for their suffering..." (Isaiah 61:8 NLT)

A good antidote for self-pity is forgiveness. As we forgive those who offend us, we can let go of our negative emotions and ill-feelings toward others, and we can receive the comfort and healing that can only come from God. Scripture says: "In all their suffering He also suffered, and He personally rescued them. In His love and mercy, He redeemed them. He lifted them up and carried them through all the years." (Isaiah 63:9 NLT) God hurts when we hurt, and He wants to be our Deliverer. But we can block His efforts to comfort and rescue us when we insist on holding on to our feelings of resentment, bitterness, and unforgiveness. As we choose to forgive, we open the door to God's involvement, and all the blessings and provisions that entails. Another good antidote for self-pity is thankfulness. The Bible says: "Thank [God] in everything [no matter what the circumstances may be, be thankful and give thanks], for this is the will of God for you [who are] in Christ Jesus." (1 Thessalonians 5:18 AMP) No matter what is going on in our lives, we always have reason to give thanks to God and praise Him. Nothing is more offensive to God than our dwelling on our misfortunes and losses, and neglecting to recognize and enumerate all of the blessings He bestows on us daily.

Helen Keller said, "Self-pity is our worst enemy and if we yield to it, we can never do anything good in the world." We have been chosen by God, not just to live eternally with Him in heaven, but to make a difference for Him while we're still here on earth. Let's not allow self-pity to neutralize all the good we can do in this world in the name of Jesus.

Prayer: Lord, please alert me whenever I begin to feel sorry for myself. Keep me from being overly-sensitive and self-absorbed, and teach me to bring all of my hurts and hardships straight to You. When I do, heal and comfort me the way that only You can. Give me the grace I need to forgive others quickly and thoroughly, and to praise You in all things. Thank You that as I resist self-pity in the power of Your Spirit, I will be rewarded by a gracious and grateful God!

- J. M. Farro