

- ↳ Looking at Joseph who is an excellent example of our fifth step in dissolving anger. Looking for what good has come out what was bad in Genesis 50:17-20, also see Romans 8:28; Romans 5:3-5; James 1:2-4.
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**1. One of the key differences between us taking an offense and getting either, bitter, or better, is looking for the good that has resulted from it**

- ✓ No need to look for the bad, in fact, looking for the bad is a great definition of unforgiveness. Gary Smalley calls it "pearl counting," think of your offense as sand and the good that God has brought from it as pearls. Quite often it isn't just the offense that is causing us problems but our reaction to the offense. Mark Twain: "I am an old man and have known a great many troubles, but most of them never happened." Sometimes it's our perception of the offense that does the most damage. We assign motives to whatever was done, which is always a false perception, not to mention a sin, and this adds to our troubles.
- ✓ **Things to do:**
  - 1) Avoid extreme thoughts: "This is absolutely the worst thing" "this has never happened to anyone else," neither are true. It's not the worst thing because the worst thing is God throwing you into Hell. Anything short of Hell is a good day!! It is not something that has never happened before because, "History merely repeats itself. It has all been done before. Nothing under the sun is truly new. Ecclesiastes 1:9".
  - 2) Focus on Jesus, change your thoughts from "all I'm losing" to "all that I'm going eventually gain as a result of this", 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 4:17, Philippians 4:8. Ask the question, "How has this offense benefitted me?" Am I closer to God? More appreciative of others? Of life?

**2. Four things to do in finding the pearls, take an inventory.**

- 1) My lifelong strengths, what you are grateful for in yourself? What do you do well? People skills? Hobbies? What do you bring to a relationship that others appreciate? Ask someone you trust to help you with this.
- 2) My most Painful trials, like sandstorms they blind, sting, irritate, and anger us. Number them in order of severity.
- 3) My Support people, who has God brought into your life to help you? Sometimes in a really big sandstorm we say, "where is God" God is well known for sending people as answers to prayers. Who has God sent to support you through the storms?
- 4) The Pearls I have gained from each sandstorm. Start with the top of list of Sandstorms, list the personal strengths you have gained from them. Are you more: patient, kind, tender, forgiving, perceptive, appreciative, empathetic, simpler, responsible, spiritually mature? Or less jealous, arrogant, fearful, materialistic, judgmental, etc.?, 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 12:7-10. Bitterness will hurt you if you let it go, the Scriptures don't say what they say for nothing, Ephesians 4:26-27.

**The devil has a vested interest in keeping you angry; he can't disinherit you, but he can get a foothold in your life, take you captive, and devour you according to 1<sup>st</sup> Peter. You don't need any of that to be sure. So enough is enough with regards to unresolved anger and bitterness, don't let it do any more than it has.**

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