



We head into the new year with fresh hope that something will be different, peace will come at last, joy will be the steady beat in our heart, but this can never be when we are hanging on to the bitterness that has welled up within us over what was said, what was done, what wasn't said, or what wasn't done. When we live in the reality that life is not what we expected, life was not suppose to be like this, that is when our mind whirls us into a pit of despair and dysfunction.

What if, bear with me, what if instead of holding on to the false hope of what we thought life was to be and instead we fully accept that God, knowing all things, has allowed the things, or the people in our life to be the very thing that would make the puzzle fit together like it was meant to from His perspective?

What if our mind was changed? What if our bitterness was given over to the only One who could exchange it for something pure, something honest, something actually lovely? What would our life look like then? What?

I can tell you. It looks much brighter, the colors return where only gray loomed, the dynamics of recognizing that God is working bring that joy and peace we long for, and once we experience it we can only wonder at why we held onto our bitterness for so long. If you have found yourself with any kind of bitterness burgeoning, I can tell you from past experience, run to God and drop it at His feet. Ask Him to help you be rid of it, every last vestige of it. And when the situation continues (as most likely it will), and bitterness tries to take root again, yank it out. Cast it at His feet. For it is one of the most insidious things that Satan's minions will use to distract you from the true sweetness of walking in fellowship with the Lord.

Bitterness, in any form is sin, and any kind of sin separates you from walking with God. It doesn't have to be eating at you for it to be there, sometimes it's quiet, sometimes it just lays there, not asking for attention, but the longer it lays, the longer the tendrils of roots wrap around your mind until it begins to squeeze every thought through the lens of bitterness. It can start as easily as a comment about another that you disagree with. It can develop when you dwell on unmet expectations. It all must go, and there's no better time than NOW. A new year, a new start, a new mindset.

***"Watch over your heart with all diligence,  
for from it flows the springs of life  
Put away from you a deceitful mouth and put devious speech far from you.  
Let your eyes look directly ahead and let your gaze be fixed in front of you."  
Proverbs 4:23-25***

Just where should your gaze be? What should be in front of you? Certainly not what is being thrown in the way, instead,

Bitterness or Joy - (Proverbs 4:23; Hebrews 12:2)

***"fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith,  
who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame,  
and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."***

*Hebrews 12:2*

Did you notice that Jesus endured the cross WHILE despising the shame? He had every right, every circumstance, to be bitter. He deserved none of it. But He wasn't bitter, at all, in fact, He prayed for their forgiveness. For His eyes were fixed straight ahead as well. He was only interested in doing the will of the Father.

Please, if this has tugged at you at all, if you have felt the prick of bitterness in any form, take the time right now, wherever you are, lay it at His feet. Trust Him with it. Release it and let Him carry it, not for you, for if you give it to Him you have no claim on it any more. And thankfully it will have no claim on you either.

Start the new year off right. Right with God, and right with your perspective of life around you. I pray that for you, because I know the sweet release of it. I've been there, and knowing the juxtaposition of His joy, I never want to go back.

*Father God, please help this one to release her bitterness to you. Every last bit of it, Lord. Bless her with Your peace and joy in its place so that she sees the stark difference and never wants to take it back. Make a change in her life today, I pray in the name of the author and perfecter of our faith. Help her to keep her eyes on Jesus and let her see the person, the circumstance in her way through His eyes. To You, Lord, be all the glory as she lays it at Your feet. In the precious name of Jesus, amen.*