

Have you ever felt betrayed and lost in a cloud of deception, doubt or confusion. I have, and it is not a pleasant pill to swallow. I have seen my best friend from Grade school take advantage of the liberties of our friendship. Befriend my wife and then use intimate information or twist it. Causing me deep hurt, and confusion in relationships. Then try to look like he is a clean and a perfect Christian example. Never apologizing for what he has done, and taking what's dear to me for himself.

Now I know we all have sinned, and I know I have not helped myself at times. Leaving myself open for questioning and doubt. Yet, I have been man enough to apologize or deal with it. Even if its not dealing with it the way some people desire. For some folks don't want you to just apologize, they want to bury you in guilt, or some sort of personal emotional hell. To say the least this is non-productive and is not the way to restoration and healing.

I know I made my mistakes in my relationship with my love. However, I also know that we are suppose to respond to failures, or mistakes with God's overflowing Grace, because that is how He responded to our shortcomings through the cross. " We have been ransomed through his Son's blood, and we have forgiveness for our failures based on his overflowing grace, " Ephesians 1:7 CEB. Notice that our forgiveness for our failures are based on His overflowing grace. His grace has the ability to give anyone with the right heart, an ability to respond with mercy, restoration and love. The problem is we get in the way with our flesh dictating so often. We want that pound of flesh, with that person's guilt bathing them in their past failures. Because of that, people go around constantly never healing from the wounds they have suffered, so never resolving their relationships. Never finding that inner healing through the Holy Spirit, which is available in the springs of God's love.

I have to forgive my best friend and my love for their relationship. Its not going to change the natural, as courses of heart have been set. However, it will allow us to see a healthy tomorrow, by the grace and mercy of Jesus Christ.

One of the things that was discussed in our personal struggle with our relationship was the " apology ". We both looked for apologies for past failures. I was willing to forgive and forget and move on. Yet, in her case she said I never properly apologized. Her idea was that every single item in her mind was not satisfied, and there wasn't enough " pound of flesh " in my apology. She said if I truly had apologized she never would have moved away with my former best friend. I beat myself over and over with those " what ifs ". However, in the midst of it, my christian counselor told me that her heart was already set with him. She went on to say, and quite wisely, " Unless the heart is willing, healing can never come ". Its up to us! Each one of us, and its a choice or a decision we make consciously or unconsciously. The question for us is, am I going to allow God to change my heart, or am I not.

In 3 Maccabees 5:42 in the CEB it says " At that point the king, a Phalaris in every way, was filled with madness and gave no thought at all to the change of heart that had come about in him concerning the punishment of the Jews. He firmly swore an irrevocable pledge that he would send these people to the grave without delay, mangled by the knees of the feet of the beasts ".

The story here in 3 Maccabees 5 and 6 is quite remarkable to read. It talks of Ptolemy, and his discourse with Hermon about his desire to wipe out the Hebrews by taking them into the arena and allowing mad elephants to trample them to bits. Then relates to us the prayers of God's people, and the change of heart

that finally takes place after three unusual circumstances. Ptolemy three times planned for the Hebrew Children to be killed. The first time God's people pray and God gives Ptolemy a long and peaceful sleep. Time passes by and no parade in the arena. Next, his bitter heart tells Hermon to get things ready again, but this time God gives Ptolemy all sorts of confusion and the event is cancelled again. Finally, Ptolemy takes matters into his own hands arranging personally to get the job done. Eleazar and others pray a very special heartfelt prayer as Ptolemy goes down to the arena to make sure this all is going to come about. God sends two angels who bring about the destruction of Ptolemy's men in the arena as the elephants trample them to death! Ptolemy looks over to the praying Hebrews, and is stricken in his heart. He has them released, makes a flowing statement about their faithfulness and gives them all they need to go back home and start their lives over.

What a tremendous story about God's intervention in the hearts and lives of men. Our hearts can be changed, our minds can be renewed. We just have to give God a chance. Don't be so stubborn, or so unwilling to listen to God. Otherwise, He cannot do for you what He has done for others for centuries. The Impossible, The Supernatural! It might seem the pages have already been set and the dye cast between you and your love. However, if God's will is for restoration. There will be restoration and renewed hearts. Just don't get trampled standing in the way of the mercy of God. No matter how much time has gone by. Nothing is too difficult for God, yet if He wills something better for you, He will see it through just as he did for Job, after his difficult trials. Remember always that God sees the Big Picture clearly. Try to get into to his vision for your life. You'll be glad you did.

1 Peter 5:10 CEB " After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, the one who called you into his eternal glory in Christ Jesus, will himself restore, empower, strengthen, and establish you ".