

A Difficult Relationship with Mom

By Jim Elliff



Over many years I have seen that a person who has a rupture in relationship with his or her mother and does not know how to find acceptance and peace with God through Jesus Christ, may be susceptible to many difficulties in this life.

Broken child/parent relationships of any kind very often present in ongoing bouts of rebellion and anger or crippling despair and perceptions of inferiority, outside of God's help. Some carry these attitudes internally while weakening them, and others act out their anger or suffer with periods of despair. With God, however, all this can be changed (at least from your side) and may even become a platform for helping others — and there are many others to help.

I have seen and am seeing presently how bitterness created from strained or nonexistent parent/child relationships can last until the final breath of life.

A Dangerous Bitterness

Jesus taught that living a life of unforgiveness is dangerous and can even bring eternal judgment:

For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions (Mt. 6:14-15).

This is such a startling statement. When a person comes to Christ, things change dramatically on the inside. God replaces a hard heart with a heart of love. But if

this love is not seen in a professing Christian, a deeper look should be taken. If we are not forgiving, we are not forgiven, meaning that we should take note that the transformation of heart has not taken place.

More Reasons

“But she continues to offend me,” you say.

I know. That may happen. Most people can find human reasons to continue to harbor bitterness toward others. Blaming others has been around since Adam and Eve and is a natural response. Blaming others isn't an answer however. Regardless of the wrongs done to us, we must love others — even the unlovely. Knowing Christ truly alters the directions of the heart.

When you become bitter from deep hurts, you put on a new pair of glasses that can see more and more problems in others, especially the one who offended. And, we should know that solving the problem of our own bitterness does not necessarily solve his problem of sin. Yet, we must deal with ourselves and learn to love rather than accuse and increase bitterness.

Mend with God's Grace

Since God will not permit you to continue in your bitterness and you are hurting yourself and others by having it, you must act. Seek to mend that broken relationship with God the Father, and with your human mother. If she has died, prayerfully ask God to transform your attitude toward her regardless of her actions toward you. Perhaps you will want to talk to your father or the other siblings to express your sorrow over failure to love. If there are other difficulties surrounding the relationship, a pastor or counselor or good friend may be able to help. The real issue is the heart. While your mother may have harmed you in very deep ways, God's grace can help you exchange bitterness for pity and mercy and love.

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