

## Poisonous People

Some people are, maybe even without knowing it, poisonous. Rather than exude the sweet fragrance of kindness, love, and hope, these people give off a bitter, acrid odor. They may try to cover up their poisonous smell, but a discerning person will detect it anyway.

I am thinking of a woman I met recently. The first time I saw her, I automatically stopped dead in my tracks. She was a perfectly pleasant-looking woman, well-groomed and attractive in an artsy way. But waves of poison were rolling off her into the surrounding atmosphere.

A few weeks later, I spent the day with this woman. Within hours, she had spilled out her story: unhappiness, divorce, rejection by a lover, old hurts, confusion about her future, illness...she went on and on.

She didn't want my advice; she wanted only to relieve herself of some of the poison she was carrying. I was a new person in her life, so she showered it on me.

The result? I came down with the flu, then a bronchial inflammation. I was very sick for three weeks. Now I'm feeling better and can analyze what made me so sick. It was that dose of poison she gave me.

NOW...I am not blaming her at all. She's a person who God made, who's suffering. My role as a Christian is to pray for her, maybe help her if she'll let me. I am the one who "failed" in this personal interaction, as I am supposed to pass on the poison (which I can't handle, being human) to God, in

prayer, rather than internalize it and get sick.

But I admit to being weak in this regard. I don't have whatever it takes to be around poisonous people without getting hurt. I know this about myself. That's why I'm not a psychological counselor, even though I'm intuitive and compassionate enough to be attracted to

that profession.

So when I encounter a poisonous person, I usually turn around and walk the other way. I believe I should be able to withstand their bitterness and malice, because I can do all things through Christ.

But my experience shows me that I cannot be around poisonous people.



- Words kill, words give life;
- They're either poison or fruit—you choose.

~Proverbs 18:21