

The Other Part of FORGIVENESS

BY BECKY DASTRUP

I was struggling to forgive some acquaintances who had hurt me. Each time I thought of the situation and how sad I was, I felt angry all over again. I decided to talk with a friend, a fellow Christian of a different faith, about my struggle.

I told him that I wanted to retain the lessons I had learned but not the pain or anger. I asked, "How can I let my bad feelings go—not just ignore them but actually let them go?"

He responded with another question: "What did Jesus tell us to do with our enemies?"

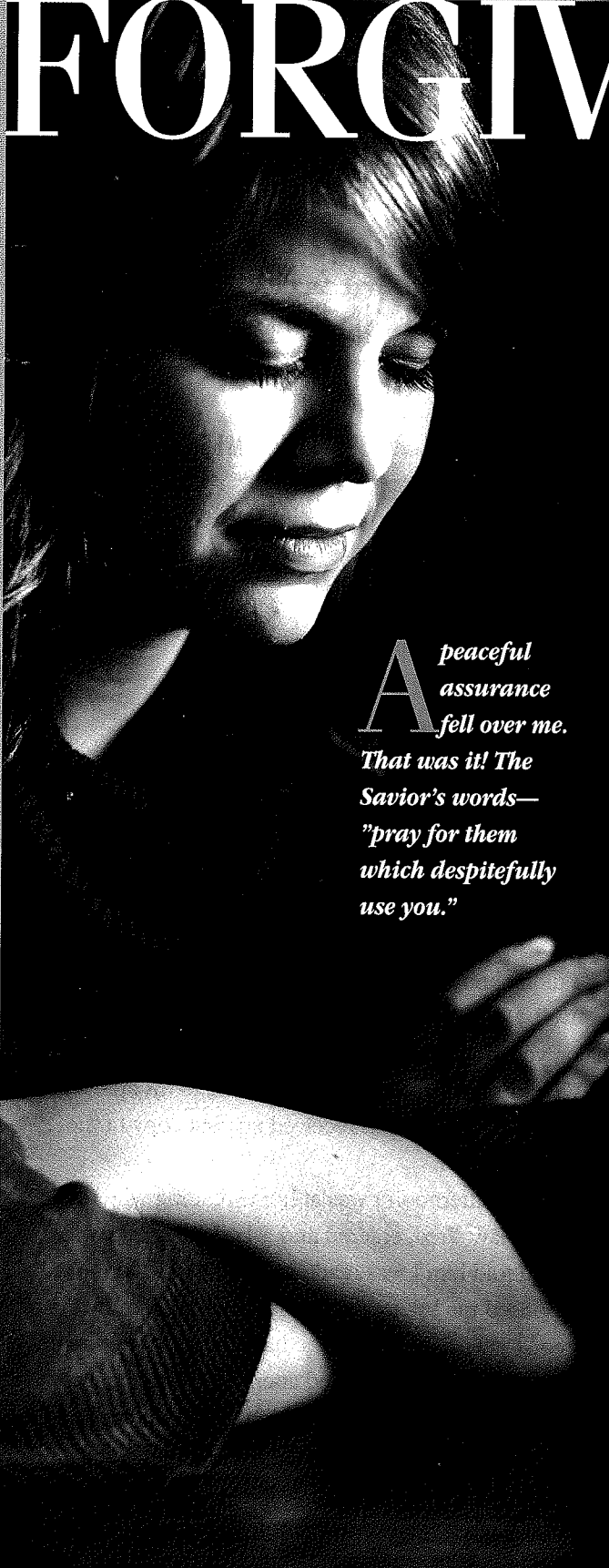
"Forgive them," I said, "but I can't seem to follow through with that, even though I want to."

"Yes," he agreed. "Jesus did teach us to forgive, but He told us to do something else, something that I think makes it possible for us to forgive."

My mind went blank. I couldn't think of anything. My friend reminded me that the Savior taught us to pray for our enemies. He then pointed out that if others are having a bad enough time that they are ready to hurt us, they too must be hurting inside. When we pray that they will be able to resolve their difficulties, that they will be able to find happiness, he said, we can't help but feel kindness and love toward them.

A peaceful assurance fell over me. That was it! The Savior's words—"pray for them which despitefully use you" (Matthew 5:44)—were the answer I was searching for. I took those teachings to heart. I found that in praying for the people who I felt had wronged me, I was able to feel peace rather than anger or resentment. Each time I remembered my hurt feelings, I said a prayer in my mind for my acquaintances, and I immediately felt better. In time, I actually started to feel concern and compassion for these people. I even had a desire to help them if I could.

I am grateful to have had this gospel-centered conversation with my friend of a different faith. It increased my desire to openly speak about my beliefs so that I could have more enlightening experiences like this one. I had been guided and comforted and was blessed to find an answer to a challenge. ■



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