

FORGIVENESS AND BITTERNESS

Eph. 4:30-32 "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice. And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

INTRO

Life is often unfair because we live in the devil's world and he does not fight according to anyone's rules. The devil often works through selfish people and difficult circumstances to challenge us to accept bitterness. But God has never told us to take vengeance on the people or circumstances that hurt us. When we allow the injustices of life to make us bitter we lower ourselves to the level of our circumstances and the people who hurt us.

I. What Is Bitterness

- A. Bitterness is a choice because we're told we can put it away (Eph. 4:31).
- B. Bitterness is often from a refusal to release or forgive (Eph. 4:30-32).
- C. Bitterness can be a root that causes other things to surface (Heb. 12:14-15);
- D. Bitter roots produce things that show up (James 3:11-14):
 - v. 11
 - a. If the water in the fountain is bitter, it sends forth bitter.
 - b. If the water in the fountain is sweet, it sends forth sweet.
 - c. It all depends on the source beneath the surface.
 - v. 12
 - a. If the root is a fig, it doesn't produce olives.
 - b. If the fountain is fresh, it doesn't yield salt water.

-If what is showing up is bitter, don't deny it's there. There is a root. Don't lie against the truth.

- E. Bitterness won't go away by itself, it must be put away and let go of.
- F. Bitterness often comes out as complaining (Job 7:11; Job 10:1) or pouting (which is silent complaining).
- G. Bitterness is one of the marks of a heart going toward apostasy to the Lord (Dt.29:18).
- H. Bitter waters cause the curse (Nu.5:11-31).

II. Bitterness In The Natural

- A. Def. Greek word is pikria, which means to cut, prick, pointed, sharp; pungent to the sense of taste.
- B. The natural reaction of our taste buds is to spit out what is bitter.
 - 1. The only time a person will keep something bitter in his mouth is when he is challenged or is in competition with others where pride is involved. (ie. use example of eating a chili pepper when in California).
 - 2. Bitterness comes from a root of arrogance and a spirit of competition.
- C. Bitterness is used of a condition of extreme wickedness (Ac.8:23); evil speaking (Rm.3:14); bitter hatred (Ep.4:31); a root of bitterness (Heb. 12:15); a bitter fountain (Jms.3:11).

III. Causes Of Bitterness

- A. Jacob was bitter at witnessing the blessing of another (Gen.27:34).
- B. Hannah was bitter due to barrenness (1 Sam. 1:10).
- C. The challenges of raising children can cause bitterness (Pr. 17:25).
- D. The challenges of marriage can cause bitterness (Col. 3:19).
- E. Witnessing the prosperity of the wicked can lead to bitterness (Ps.37).
- F. Bitterness can come from a wrong response to adversity (Jms. 1:2); disappointments (Heb. 12:1-3), the Lord's correction (Heb. 12:5) and offence (Jms 3:11-14).

- G. Bitterness can come from hard bondage, heavy burdens, and the hardships of life (Ex.1:14).

IV. The Defeat Of Bitterness

Is. 38:17 "Behold, for peace I had great bitterness: but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back."

A. The defeat of bitterness comes from God's love for us. The supernatural burden of bitterness can only be supernaturally lifted by God.

1. Recognize bitterness is a sin forgiven through Jesus' shed blood. Once confessed, the Lord will throw it behind you.

B. Ex. 15:22-25 "And he cried unto the Lord; and the Lord showed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them."

- When they came to the bitter waters, God's answer was a tree to make the bitter waters sweet.

- The tree didn't help the bitterness it healed it.

- The same cross that saved us is the same cross that beat the devil's brain in.

- God has an answer for every bitter thing.

- Calvary's tree was a bitter experience. The bitter herbs eaten at the Passover feast eaten with the Lamb, symbolized the bitter suffering of the cross. Remember He did it in our place. What He substituted for us we don't have to suffer

C. Heb. 12:15 "Looking diligently lest any man fail of the Grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled."

- There is grace at the moment you face an opportunity get bitter. You can choose to let all bitterness go and be put away from you. Grace won't fail you; you can only fail it.

- Just as bitterness is a decision, so is forgiveness. There is grace to help in life's bitter moments. By grace you can get better and not bitter.

- God's love, Calvary's tree, and the Grace of God will defeat bitterness.

- Learn from Jesus Himself when Judas betrayed him (Mark 14:43-50). He didn't get bitter. Bitterness is more devastating than betrayal. Betrayal is external. Bitterness is internal. Betrayal is something that others do to you. Bitterness is something you do to yourself. Thousands survive betrayals. Very few can survive the poison of bitterness.