

**HANDLING WHAT HANDLES YOU
HOW TO HANDLE BITTERNESS—PT 2
EPHESIANS 4:30-32; HEBREWS 12:14-15**

Introduction

Last week we began to look at the matter of HOW TO HANDLE BITTERNESS that tries to handle us. We said that most of the time bitterness doesn't even touch the person that we are bitter toward!

But it sure will harm us!

We saw how that other emotions—such as anger, guilt, and grief—may or may not be sin! However, we saw how that BITTERNESS is always a sin!

We said that we need to have the attitude of forgiving others even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven us!

We began to look at the effect that bitterness has on people. We looked at four things that bitterness will do to your life:

I. BITTERNESS WILL UPSET YOUR SPIRITUAL LIFE!

A. *Because Bitterness Necessitates That You Walk In The Flesh, And Not In The Spirit!*

B. *Because Bitterness Halts Spiritual Growth Altogether!*

II. BITTERNESS WILL UPSET YOUR PHYSICAL LIFE!

Medical doctors say that bitterness affects the body and its physical health. Bitterness has been medically linked to all kinds of physical maladies. Not all sickness is caused by bitterness, but it's impossible to be bitter, and it not affect your body.

III. BITTERNESS WILL UPSET YOUR EMOTIONAL LIFE!

Where there is bitterness, there is discouragement and depression. Bitterness not dealt with leads to paranoia. You start to develop a victim's mentality. It causes you to become negative and critical.

IV. BITTERNESS WILL UPSET YOUR CHURCH LIFE!

If you want to kill any Church, if you want to destroy the ministries a Church, if you want to harm the cause of Christ in a community, then just harbor bitterness in your heart! *Galatians 5:9 "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump."*

We need to grow up, and get over things that have hurt us and move forward for Christ. We need to remember that we don't deserve God's forgiveness, and even if the other person doesn't deserve ours, it's still the right thing to do—so we should forgive them!

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Today I want us to look at four more things that bitterness will do:

V. BITTERNESS WILL UPSET YOUR OTHER RELATIONSHIPS!

There is, more often than not, a spill-over effect with bitterness. What I'm saying is that we can become bitter in one area of our lives, but that bitterness spills over and affects other areas of our lives.

We know that bitterness is a divisive tool used by Satan to drive a wedge between people and destroy relationships.

But please understand, you don't have to be bitter toward your spouse for bitterness to ruin your marriage. You can be bitter toward your mom or dad or their mom and dad, and ruin your marriage! You can be bitter toward someone else and ruin your marriage!

You can be bitter toward the preacher or someone else at Church and ruin your relationship with your children because of the spill-over effect.

Bitterness can destroy your ability to be a good employee or employer! Bitterness can make you a terrible neighbor to have to live by and deal with! Bitterness can drive your family and friends away from you!

Bitterness can make you a terrible person to have to wait on at the restaurant or down at the supermarket! (Think of the poor waitress or cashier that has to endure your bad disposition that stems from your bitterness!)

BITTERNESS WILL UPSET YOUR OTHER RELATIONSHIPS!

VI. BITTERNESS WILL DEPRIVE YOU OF A BLESSING!

Bitterness causes us to have a **negative and critical spirit about us!** If we bring a negative, critical spirit to Church with us, we won't come looking for a blessing, we'll be looking for what's wrong.

And we will be sure to find it, even if it is only in our imagination!

Bitterness will rob us of our J-O-Y!

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Bitterness can cause us to reject the truth of the Word of God that is the very source of blessing in our lives.

Bitterness can cause us to tune out and turn off all communications with God. I'm talking about where we're not talking to God in prayer and God's not talking to us through His Word or His Spirit! Because prayer and the Word of God have taken a backseat to the bitterness that fills our soul!

I'm also talking about when the preaching and teaching of God's Word or even Godly counsel can't get through to us because we are closed to God because of bitterness!

BITTERNESS WILL DEPRIVE YOU OF A BLESSING!

**VII. BITTERNESS WILL GROW AND BLOSSOM INTO FRUIT
THAT WILL DEFILE YOU AND POSSIBLY DESTROY YOU!**

What are some of the fruits of bitterness?

Rebellion – Especially, if the source of our bitterness is someone in authority.

Jealousy – Especially when we see God working in the lives of others but not in our lives. (exp. King Saul's —>> David!)

Envy – To begrudge something in another especially their prosperity or happiness.

Gossip (Ephesians 4:31–Clamour) – Misery loves company. Some will spread the tale of bitterness to anyone and everyone who will listen. Loud talking.

Slander (Ephesians 4:31–Evil Speaking) – Tearing someone down with our speech.

Distrust – The inability to trust others because of bitterness over a broken trust.

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Over Sensitivity – When it doesn't take too much to upset us.

Hatred – Having a malignant disposition toward those who did us wrong.

Profanity – We can cross over the line and begin to use vile language.

Worry – Full of care about everything because of failure to give the matter to God.

Depression – The result of a malignant disposition that harbors long-standing resentment.

Drunkenness or drug abuse – Trying to drown the sorrows.

Unfaithfulness to God – Hit and miss at Church or drop out altogether. When we begin to have no desire for ministry or helping others because we are mired in self-pity.

Pride – Even if one sees their problem, pride prevents anything from being made right.

Lying – The story changes to make the hurt appear bigger than it really is.

Uncontrolled anger – It is called “*wrath*” in Ephesians 4:31 and refers to impulsive outbursts or reactions.

Malice – A spirit which seeks revenge. Enmity of heart that has a disposition to injure.

Murder – To destroy someone's life. (Physically or otherwise.)

*BITTERNESS WILL GROW AND BLOSSOM INTO FRUIT THAT
WILL DEFILE YOU AND POSSIBLY DESTROY YOU!*

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**VIII. BITTERNESS WILL NOT ONLY TROUBLE YOU, IT WILL
DEFILE OTHERS.**

*Hebrews 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;**”*

Bitterness is usually not kept to self. More often than not, the tongue is used to express bitterness. (*James 3:3-18* speaks of the power of the tongue.)

Is someone out of Church today because of a root of bitterness in your life that caused them to be defiled?

Conclusion

When we think someone has sinned against us, if we are not careful, it can turn to bitterness. We wait for an apology, but if it doesn't come, we begin to harbor resentment against that person.

We've gotten the idea that before we can forgive someone, they have to apologize.

Did you know that the word “*apologize*” isn't in the Bible? When someone sins against us, we wait for an apology. However, if we don't get it, we can begin to get bitter toward that person.

What if the person doesn't realize that they have sinned against you? Or, what if they actually haven't sinned against you (but you think they have)? Then, they'll never apologize and you'll be bitter, waiting for an apology that can never come.

Bitterness is a “*root*.” And it is from the root, that the defiling fruits of bitterness eventually spring forth. So, do you remember how we said last week that we are to remove the “*root*” of bitterness?

You either have to kill the root or dig it up and get rid of it, by the grace of God. Spray some heavenly Roundup on it!

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(i.e. forgiveness—only forgiveness can kill the root of bitterness!) You cannot do it by yourself! You need God's help to do that!

You deal with bitterness like any other SIN in your life!

HOW ARE WE SUPPOSED TO DEAL WITH SIN IN OUR LIFE?

If you have never received God's forgiveness for sin, then you don't really understand the grace, mercy and forgiveness that God gives. Which means you don't really know how to forgive.

The precious blood of Jesus was shed to give you forgiveness of your sin against God.

Understand, we don't deserve forgiveness, but it is freely offered to all who will come to God seeking forgiveness through the blood of Jesus Christ.

If you are saved, you must realize that bitterness is a sin against God. Until you do this, the root will continue to grow, and spread and bring forth its vile fruit in your life. You have to quit focusing on the sin of the offender and focus on your bitterness as YOUR SIN!

You must CONFESS your sin. You KILL THE ROOT, DIG UP THE ROOT by God's help and grace. You present this ugly, rotten, cancerous root to God and you CONFESS it as the SIN it is! BITTERNESS is a SIN PROBLEM! YOUR sin problem, not anybody else's sin problem!

Then, RECEIVE GOD'S FORGIVENESS. *1 John 1:9—“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*

Jesus is always listening, waiting to hear the sinner come to Him in repentance. His love, grace, and mercy is waiting to heal and cleanse.

Then, you must FORSAKE your SIN OF BITTERNESS!

Proverbs 28:13—“He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.”

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Ephesians 4:31-32–“Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice. 32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.”

Is bitterness handling you? Why not let the Lord free you today and release you from the bonds that bitterness has on you?

There is nothing more bitter than a sinner—who needs to be forgiven, who can be forgiven, and yet is not forgiven, because he won't accept God's forgiveness. Forgiveness is offered today. Receive it today! Don't delay!

Maybe you are on the receiving end of a bitter person who refuses to reconcile. That's not your problem, it is theirs! Just make sure you've done what you know the LORD would have YOU to do!

In Jesus, you can find rest and peace and healing and forgiveness. Jesus knows all about bitterness. It nailed Him to the cross. On the cross, He made provision for its forgiveness. AND when He rose from the dead, He brought victory over all bitterness.

It's available to you today!