

"God's Word, Alive!"

A Biblical Teaching Ministry dedicated to "Holding Forth the Word of Life"

FROM BITTERNESS TO FORGIVENESS

SCRIPTURE: Ephesians 4:31, "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice.

OBJECTIVE: To show the destructive nature of bitterness and how to turn from bitterness to forgiveness.

INTRODUCTION

None of us can get through life without offences occurring between ourselves and others. Sometimes the offences are done deliberately and at other times the person may not even know that we have been offended by some action done or words spoken by them. Regardless, scripture tells us that we are to forgive others; no matter what the offense. At times, because of the severity of the offence, it can seem that forgiveness is impossible. But, with the help of the Spirit we can find that grace is available to help us to forgive others.

- **The command has been given by God to His children to "put away bitterness." All of God's commands are given to us out of His love for us. All sin, including bitterness, eventually leads to death, destruction and brokenness. The command to put away bitterness is given for our good.**
 - **Deuteronomy 10:12, 13.** And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all His ways, and to love Him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul. To keep the commandments of the LORD, and His statutes which I command thee this day for thy good.
 - **Hebrews 12:15.** Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God, lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and by it many be defiled.

BITTERNESS

- **Because of the deceptive nature of sin, bitterness is often hidden and disguised. One is often tempted after being offended to become defensive and to justify their actions. Instead of reacting in forgiveness, bitterness often takes root. Each Believer should pray and ask the Lord to reveal to them any possible bitterness in them.**
 - **Job 28:7 – 10.** There is a path which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture's eye hath not seen; The lion's whelp hath not trodden it, nor the fierce lion passed by it. He putteth forth His hand upon the rock, He overturneth the mountains by the roots. He cutteth out rivers among the rocks; and His eye seeth every precious thing. He bindeth the floods from overflowing; and the thing that is hidden bringeth He forth to light.

- **Psalm 139:23, 24.** Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; And see if there be any wicked way in me; and lead me in the way everlasting.
- **Hebrews 3:13.** But exhort one another daily, while it is called “Today,” lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

➤ **Bitterness can be manifested in many ways. The following is a partial list of some of the fruit that hangs on the tree of bitterness:**

- *To wish evil upon another person*
- *To rejoice in another's troubles*
- *Withdrawal or communication breakdown*
- *To tell others about the hurt that has happened*
- *Rebellion*
- *Keeping company with other bitter people*
- *Becoming defensive of wrong actions*
- *Condemning*
- *Moodiness*
- *Lack of prayer for the one who offended you*

➤ **Bitterness is sin. The effects of sin, as given in Ephesians 4:17 – 31, are always the same:**

- It causes the walk of the Believer to be like that of an Unbeliever. This is part of the “old man.” (Ephesians 4:22)
- It causes the understanding to be darkened, which results in blindness of heart, alienation from God, hardness, destructiveness and progressive steps into darkness. (Ephesians 4:17 – 19; 1 John 2:9 -11)
- It gives place to the devil (Matthew 18:32 – 35; Ephesians 4:27)
- It grieves the Holy Spirit. (Eph 4:30)

➤ **Bitterness hinders our fellowship with God; thereby, causing a serious handicap in prayer.**

- **Matthew 6:14, 15.** For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.
- **Mark 11:24, 25.** Therefore, I say unto you. Whatever things ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have anything against any, that your Father also, who is in heaven, may forgive you your trespasses.

FROM BITTERNESS TO FORGIVENESS

- Realize that all things are working in accordance to the Divine purpose of God and that nothing comes into the life of the Believer without God's approval.
 - **Job 1:8, 12.** And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant, Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one who feareth God, and shunneth evil? And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD.
 - **Isaiah 14:24.** The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand.
 - **Romans 11:36.** For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen.
 - **Ephesians 1:11.** In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will.
- Realize that God's great love for you will cause Him to take and make everything that has happened in your life work ultimately for good. God is with the Believer wherever he goes and whatever he may go through; all the days of his life. This truth is portrayed by Joseph in Genesis chapters 37, 39 – 50, and the following verses:
 - **Genesis 39:21.** But the Lord was with Joseph, and showed him mercy, and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison.
 - **Isaiah 41:10.** Fear thou not; for I am with thee. Be not dismayed; for I am thy God. I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.
 - **Isaiah 46:3, 4.** Hearken unto Me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, who have been borne by Me from their birth, who are carried from the womb; And even to your old age I am He; and even to gray hairs will I carry you; I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you.
- **In every trial, if received in the right spirit (faith, humility and thanksgiving), God has provided a blessing**
 - **1 Peter 3:9.** Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing, but on the contrary, blessing, knowing that ye are called to this, that ye should inherit a blessing.

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