



World Christian Fellowship

www.wcflondon.com
wcflondon@gmail.com

Bitterness!

Hebrews 12:14–17, *Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: ¹⁵looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled; ¹⁶lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. ¹⁷For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears.*

The Characteristics of a Bitter Person

- They are full of self-pity.
- They are very ungrateful.
- They are very selfish.
- They are very Insincere.
- They find it very hard to forgive.
- They sow discord.
- They are full of pride.
- They are envious and covetous.

They feel joy out of someone's misfortune,
They are very critical.
They are fault finders.
They are plotters.
They are very vindictive.
They desire to see others suffer.
They look out for reason to get back at people.
They are always looking for a fight.
They are drowning in animosity and resentment.
They see only themselves.
They hide and camouflage themselves.
They attract likeminded people like themselves.
They are full of malice, wrath, anger, clamour, rage, slander
and evil speaking.

How does bitterness start?

All bitterness starts from an offence taken. It starts with an individual becoming offended by someone or someone is offended about something that they believed was done to them. As such, bitterness is one of the besetting sins.

The difference between bitterness and the other besetting sins is that it is the only sin in the bible that is said to have a root.

Consequently, bitterness has the ability to go into all other areas spreading its roots and affecting many other things.

Hebrews 12:15, *looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled;*

Bitterness not only affect the bitter person but because it grows and it sends out roots all over.

It affects and corrupts many.

This wicked sin can affect everyone and everything.

In every bitter person is a root of envy.

One of the most well-known stories of bitterness in the Bible is told in the first book of the bible with two brothers.

Cain and Abel.

Cain becomes consumed by bitterness towards his brother when he feels unjustly treated in comparison to his brother Abel.

Cain killed his brother out of rage and hatred and pity for himself.

This classic story warns us of the sinful essence of bitterness and that it can result in rage and murder. We must take ownership of our feelings and relinquish what is out of our control to God.

Bitterness

The Dictionary defined bitterness as:

“A feeling of deep anger and resentment. Bitterness is an emotion which encompasses both anger and hate, often people who are bitter appear to the world as just going around upset at everyone and everything.

However, bitterness is often a result of some past event which has hurt and scarred the person.

The word bitter comes from the ancient Greek meaning “sharp or pointed.”

Anyone who has been on the receiving end of a bitter person with a predisposition for ‘sharp-tongued’ remarks knows that words—especially carefully crafted by a wordsmith’s hateful, scornful mouth—can often cut quite deeply.

They desire to make someone else suffer.

A bitter person might spew their inner hurt and anger by saying and doing things that hurt the feelings of others, exhibiting ruthless verbal and emotional cruelty.

Why Does Bitterness Happens?

Bitterness sets in when someone focuses on the hurt. Assumed or real they believed was done to them in the past.

The bitter person's perception of damage done to them, and their vengeful response exceeds the reality of what happened.

Bitterness will make a person says and does things in the most irrational and self-defeating ways.

Once bitterness takes hold, its grip is like that of the snake called boa constrictor. It does not want to let go. That is why, it grows sending out its roots affecting the life of others.

The thought patterns.

A bitter person refuses all rationales and only accepts and sees their own rational. It's almost like they have disconnect from reality except their own perceived and acknowledged sense of what the reality is.

When a person is bitter, they believe that someone else is the problem. Not them.

So how can you convince a bitter person that something might be wrong with the way they are thinking and/or acting?

One must lovingly, thoughtfully, and firmly confront the bitterness head on.

A person harbouring bitterness needs to forgive.

Forgiveness does not mean pretending everything is “OK.”

Forgiveness is simply the act of surrendering our desire for revenge. Our desire to hurt someone for having hurt us to God.

Forgiveness is the gift from God to us and others that enables us to release all the hurts to God. The word of God tells us to forgive so that we can be forgiven.

“For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sin” (

Matthew 6:14-15, *“For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.*

Mark 11:25, *“And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.”*

Common traits of a Bitter person.

a) They desire to make someone else suffer.

A bitter person might spew their inner hurt and anger by saying and doing things that hurt the feelings of others, exhibiting ruthless verbal and emotional cruelty.

Somehow, it makes the bitter individual feel better for a minute to see someone else suffer as they perceive themselves to be unfairly suffering.

b) Full of vindictiveness.

They will go to any length to get back at someone and it does not matter who is that person.

2 Samuel 15:1-12,

Absalom the son of King David, turns against his father the King.

In the opening verses of chapter 15 we see him acting like the king already.

He even intercepts people on their way to King David's court in order to subvert the normal order of law.

Absalom had what he believed to be a complaint against his father King David which resulted into deep bitterness.

He sat on his offence/anger for years and he allowed it to develop into bitterness resulting in a revolt against his own father.

c) Looking for reasons to get back at people.

Bitter people often invent ways to get back at those they view as having neglected, mistreated, disrespected, or ignored them.

They will always find the occasion or make the occasion to get back at people.

They are very callous, cold and calculating in what they do, and they like to stand aside watch things happened and even applaud themselves secretly feeling good about what they have done.

Take Absolon again for example.

2 Samuel 15:4, *Moreover Absalom would say, "Oh, that I were made judge in the land, and everyone who has any suit or cause would come to me; then I would give him justice."*

He is essentially saying "There is no one from the king who can help you. If I were in charge, I could do things the right way."

It all comes to the final implication, "Trust me instead of my father David!"

Because it comes from so close to home – the son of the king he was able to sway many of the people against his father the king.

d) Wash themselves in self-pity.

The bitter person often feels cheated by others and short-changed by life in general. Impossible for such a person to experience genuine gratitude because of how much they feel they have been denied their due.

They often feel so sorry for themselves and rally others to feel the same as they do.

They are very vengeful and spiteful.

They seek to cause torment in the lives of those whom they view as being inadequately caring or inattentive towards them.

They are incapable of feeling love. No matter how much they are given its like they are a vacuum that sucks and drains the life and energy out of a person or an atmosphere.

e) Looking for a fight.

When a person is chronically bitter, they are often in an antagonistic mindset and looking for a fight.

If they can't find one, they will think nothing of doing things to cause one.

They will say or do something to start it up. After it's over, they will feel a little better, while almost everyone else feels terrible.

f) Full of Pride

From the bitter person's point of view, it's the world that's done them wrong and deserves the full expression of their blameful wrath.

Bring their hateful behaviour to their attention in the wrong way, and attempt to get them to see how it's led to their alienation from others.

They are uncaring, insensitive, hurtful and harmful they are.

g) They are drowning in animosity and resentment

A bitter person will find it hard to experience happiness at the success or well-being of others. Instead, the bitter person views the good fortune of someone else as more evidence that they have not been given a fair chance themselves.

In their opinion, it's time to mercilessly take their subject down a notch or even murder (Cain and Abel).

That is why one of the characteristics of a bitter person is envy.

The bitter soul simply cannot see beyond their immediate wants. It's all about them and they are inherently emotionally needy.

They are detached and selfish, only caring about their own ailments whether real or make believe.

As we look at the tree, we see a beautiful green tree above ground but that tree is sending its root everywhere it find a spot to go in the earth.

So, it is with bitter people they spew their bitter venom everywhere they go.

We are commanded by the word of God to forgive so that no root of bitterness has a chance to spring up.

We must not let our sense of hurt turn into bitterness. Instead, we must believe that God will sort it all out.

That God will take care of it. We must value mercy over vengeance and truly surrender all hurts to God.

Bitterness Blows Out the Candle of Joy

More people have a root of bitterness than we may think. A bitter person is harsh, critical, judgmental, sarcastic they are filled with anger, but they are not always like that. Sometimes they are like an iceberg, very cool, very aloof. They are politely indifferent to people. They have an air about them that I don't need anybody.

However, like an iceberg their problem is beneath the surface. They wallow in self-pity. They are often sad, and their problem is because they are eaten up with bitterness. Bitterness has done untold damage to communities. It has done untold damages to churches. Untold damage to homes.

Colossians 3:19, *“Husbands love your wives and be not bitter against them.”*

Sometimes rather than being the ‘better half, they are the bitter half.’

Many people in churches are chained in a prison of bitterness.

Bitterness does more to hold back the power of God than alcohol or pornography.

Bitterness keeps the people of God from having the power of God and the wholeness of God that they need in their heart and in their lives.

Much of this bitterness is found in the people of God. We have bitter brothers, sour sisters, caustic Christians. In the root of bitterness are three factors.

The Germination of Bitterness.

How does the root get there?

How does it germinate?

There are two things in order for germination.

1. The seed.
2. The soil.

What is the seed of bitterness?

Hurt is the seed of bitterness.

The hurt may have been intentional, or it may be unintentional.

The person receives hurt from someone who did not mean to hurt them.

In many cases the person may not even know that they hurt you.

Sometimes the hurt is even imagined.

Incident of someone whom I have hurt you!

Nothing has been done to the person but somehow, they feel that somebody has done something to them.

What is the soil?

The soil is a heart that harbours hostility.

It does not deal with the hurt with the Grace of God and so the person becomes bitter as it goes beneath.

It takes roots and it grows, and the root goes deeper.

Once you get that hurt in your heart and once you harbour it there then you began to look for things to criticize, things to find fault with, to justify the way that you feel.

People who come to church find fault.

Do you come to find fault with your church?

Can you find fault with our church?

Of course, you can find plenty!

Can you find Jesus in our church?

Of course, You can certainly find Jesus!

Check who are you?

The Devastation of Bitterness.

Hebrew 12:15 speaks of a root of bitterness that spring up. It does not just stay on the ground.

It springs up.

Bitterness will trouble you personally and trouble society all of those around you. This devastation of bitterness produces a root and a fruit.

Very well-known **Dr. Macmillan**, cardiologist has confirmed that over **50 diseases** are because of bitterness and hatred.

Ephesians 4:26-28, *“Be angry, and do not sin”*: do not let the sun go down on your wrath, ²⁷ nor give place to the devil. ²⁸ Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labour, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need.

Bitterness has chain reaction.

Ephesians 4:31-32, *Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.* ³² *And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.*

Bitterness just blows out.

Wrath: Internally smouldering.

Anger: Slow burn open the fire.

Clamour: Losing control of your tongue

Evil Speaking: Devil helps you to speak evil.

Malice: Action to intently hurt someone in anger.

James 3:6, *And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell.*

The root is underground and it easy to hide and easy to camouflage.

Rarely will a bitter person admit that they are bitter person.
They will either deny or disguise it.

A bitter person is a very sensitive person, a very touchy person. One must be very careful around a bitter person.

If a bitter person walks into a room and two people talking and then it gets quiet. The bitter person will think that they were talking about him/her.

A bitter person has little, or no gratitude.
A person infected by bitterness is a very ungrateful person.

Why?

Because you cannot be bitter, and praise and you cannot have gratitude without praising.

A bitter person is a very insincere individual.
They will never deal with an individual on a truth level.

A bitter person holds grudges against people for a very long time. They find it very hard to be thankful.

They find it very hard to forgive so much so that the bitterness produces fruits.

What is the fruit?

Bitterness is an acid that destroys its container.

Bitterness troubles the soul and the spirit.

If you are harbouring bitterness, it will affect you physically, spiritually, and mentally. Bitterness has a chain reaction it affects everyone around.

How do we get to this root of bitterness?

1. God reveal it.

Psalms 139:23-24, *Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; ²⁴And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting.*

The root of bitterness is underground not visible, yet it is spreading.

Preacher playing golf story:

So, we must let God reveal and let His grace remove it. If we do not have the grace of God even when God shows us that the bitterness is there, it will never come out.

2. God's Grace remove it.

V 15, looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled; The Grace of God first works by forgiving us of the bitterness.

No matter what someone has done to you. Your reaction is wrong.

Remember grace is divine enablement.

Grace is the desire and the ability to do the Will of God.

Let God reveal the bitterness and let His grace remove it.

Corrie Ten Boom Story of forgiveness:

Betsie and I had been arrested for concealing Jews in our home during the Nazi occupation of Holland; this man had been a guard at Ravensbrück concentration camp where we were sent.

Now he was in front of me, hand thrust out: “A fine message, fräulein! How good it is to know that, as you say, all our sins are at the bottom of the sea!”

And I, who had spoken so glibly of forgiveness, fumbled in my pocketbook rather than take that hand. He would not remember me, of course—**how could he remember one prisoner among those thousands of women?**

But I remembered him and the leather crop swinging from his belt. It was the first time since my release that I had been face to face with one of my captors and my blood seemed to freeze.

“You mentioned Ravensbrück in your talk,” he was saying. “I was a guard in there.” No, **he did not remember me.**

“But since that time I have become a Christian. I know that God has forgiven me for the cruel things I did there, but I would like to hear it from your lips as well. Fräulein will you forgive me?”

And I stood there—I whose sins had every day to be forgiven—and could not. **Betsie had died in that place—could he erase her slow terrible death simply for the asking?**

It could not have been many seconds that he stood there, hand held out, but to me it seemed hours as I wrestled with the most difficult thing I had ever had to do.

For I had to do it—I knew that. The message that God forgives has a prior condition: that we forgive those who have injured us. *“If you do not forgive men their trespasses neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.”*

I knew it not only as a commandment of God, but as a daily experience. Since the end of the war, I had had a home in Holland for victims of Nazi brutality.

Those who were able to forgive their former enemies were able also to return to the outside world and rebuild their lives, no matter what the physical scars. Those who nursed their bitterness remained invalids. It was as simple and as horrible as that.

And still I stood there with the coldness clutching my heart. But forgiveness is not an emotion—I knew that too. Forgiveness is an act of the will, and the will can function regardless of the temperature of the heart.

“Jesus, help me!” I prayed silently. “I can lift my hand. I can do that much. You supply the feeling.”

And so woodenly, mechanically, I thrust my hand into the one stretched out to me. And as I did, an incredible thing took place. The current started in my shoulder, raced down my arm, sprang into our joined hands. And then this healing warmth seemed to flood my whole being, bringing tears to my eyes.

“I forgive you, brother!” I cried. “With all my heart!”

For a long moment we grasped each other’s hands, the former guard, and the former prisoner. I had never known God’s love so intensely as I did then.

It takes two to forgive.
Jesus and you.

Forgiveness is costly but it is worth it.
Let God reveal the bitterness, let His grace remove it and let good replace it.

3. God replace it.

Hebrews 12:14, *“Follow peace with all men and holiness without which no man shall see the Lord.”*

Peace and holiness are linked together.
Hatred and hellishness are linked together.

You cannot have holiness unless you want to follow peace with all men.

It does not mean that all people are going to be at peace with you.

You can pursue peace,
You can follow peace.

You must let go off the bitterness and forgive because the person or persons you are bitter towards you are on the hook with them.

When you forgive you set two people free and one of them is yourself.

Remember the seed is a hurt, the soil is a heart that harbours the hurt.

The root is underground, but the fruit is above ground and only God can deal with that root.

Dr. Keely and the tree story of the slave moment.

Cut it down and Forget it!