

# Equipping Women to Uproot Bitterness

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I. A Story of Bitterness

II. A Definition of Bitterness

A. What Is Bitterness?

“A feeling of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, caused particularly by perceived unfairness in suffering or by adverse circumstances.”<sup>1</sup>

“Bitterness is unresolved, \_\_\_\_\_ anger and resentment. It is the result of anger changing from an experience to a \_\_\_\_\_. Bitterness is seething and constant. Bitter people carry the same burdens as angry people, but to a greater extent.”<sup>2</sup>

“The Bible says that bitterness is a resentful, \_\_\_\_\_ attitude which cuts and pricks others as well. To put it another way, bitterness is the result of responding improperly or unbiblically to an \_\_\_\_\_. Bitterness is the result of dwelling too long on a \_\_\_\_\_.”<sup>3</sup>

B. Believers, You Didn’t Learn Christ This Way! (Eph. 4:1-32)

1. Therefore...

2. Walk...

3. Pikria (Gk#4088)

i. Resentful state of mind, harshness, or a settled hostility that poisons the whole inner man.<sup>4</sup>

4. Abandon Bitterness and Be Becoming Kind, Tenderhearted & Forgiving

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<sup>1</sup> Manser, M. H. (2009). *Dictionary of Bible Themes: The Accessible and Comprehensive Tool for Topical Studies*. London: Martin Manser.

<sup>2</sup> <http://biblicalcounselingcoalition.org/resources/the-heart-of-bitterness> (Julie Ganschow, Feb 21 2014)

<sup>3</sup> Priolo, Lou (2008) *Bitterness: The Root That Pollutes*

<sup>4</sup> Warren Wiersbe, *Be Rich* (Colorado Springs: Victor, 1979).



III. Evidences of Bitterness (Matthew 15:19)

- A. Withdrawal
- B. Complaining, Gossiping, or Slandering
- C. Difficulty in Resolving Conflicts.
- D. Distrusting
- E. Repaying Evil for Evil



IV. Getting To the Heart of Bitterness<sup>5</sup> (James 4:1-3)

- A. I Desire
- B. I Demand

“To whatever we look for any good thing and for refuge in every need--that is what is meant by god. To have a god is nothing more than to trust and believe in him from the heart...To whatever you give your heart and entrust your being that I say, is really your god.” (Martin Luther)

How to discern if your desire has become a demand:

1. What are you preoccupied with these days? Is this thing on your mind morning and night?
2. How would you finish this sentence: If only I had \_\_\_\_\_ then I would be fulfilled, happy, and secure?
3. Where do I put my trust?
4. When a certain desire is not met, how do I respond? With frustration? Anger? Bitterness? Or depression?
5. Is there something I desire so much that I'm willing to hurt others to have it?

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<sup>5</sup> Ken Sande, *Peacemaking for Families* (Carole Stream, IL: Tyndale, 2002).

C. I Judge

D. I Punish



V. Working-Out Bitterness

**A. Repent Before God**

1. Biblical Definition
  - a. “Turn Back” or “Returning”
2. Thomas Watson’s *Doctrine of Sin*
  - a. First there is S \_\_\_\_\_ of Sin
  - b. Second there is S \_\_\_\_\_ for Sin.
  - c. Third there is C \_\_\_\_\_ of Sin.
  - d. Four there is S \_\_\_\_\_ for Sin.
  - e. Five there is H \_\_\_\_\_ for Sin.
  - f. Six there is T \_\_\_\_\_ from Sin.
3. Biblical Illustration of Repentance – Psalm 51
  - a. David goes to God first (v. 1)
  - b. David has a sight of sin (vv. 3-4)
  - c. David accepts responsibility for his unbiblical thoughts and actions and pleads for total forgiveness (v. 1-3)
  - d. David has a biblical view of sin (v. 5)
  - e. David has a strong desire to reconcile his relationship to God (vv. 10-12)
  - f. David desires to bring glory to God by teaching the rebellious about God’s merciful ways (v. 13)
  - g. David wants what God wants from him which is a humble spirit and a contrite heart rather than external service (vv. 16-17).

**B. Renew Your Mind (Hebrews 4:12; John 15)**

1. Consume the Gospel Truths (Ephesians 1-2; Col. 1-3; Romans 1-11)
2. Check Your Heart (Matthew 7:3-5)
3. Consider the Members of Your Earthly Body as Dead to Sin (Rom. 6:1-11, Col. 3:5-9, Gal 2:20)

**C. Reaffirm Righteousness (Eph. 4:1, 32)**

1. Walk in *Kindness* (Eph. 4:32, 1 Cor 13:4)
  - a) “Be Becoming” Gracious (*chrestos*)
    - (1) Choose to refrain from saying unkind things about your offender.
    - (2) GenChoose to look for active God-honoring ways to be a blessings toward your offender.
  
2. Walk in *Tenderheartedness* ( 1 Pet 3:8-9, Col. 3:13)
  - a) “Be Becoming” Compassionate (*eusplagchno*)
    - (1) Choose to refrain from repaying evil for evil.
    - (2) Put on a heart that is compassionate
  
3. Walk in *Forgiveness* ( Col. 3:13)
  - a) “Be Becoming” Bearing Up (*charizomai*)
    - (1) Choose to treat the offending party graciously.

**D. Read Biblical Resources**

1. *The Transforming Power of the Gospel* by Jerry Bridges
2. *Bitterness: The Root that Pollutes* by Lou Priolo
3. *Unpacking Forgiveness: Biblical Questions and Deep Wounds* by Chris Brauns
4. *From Forgiven to Forgiving* by Patrick Morrison
5. *Help! I Want to Change* by Jim Newheiser
6. *Peacemaking for Families* by Ken Sande

### For Further Study:

1. Look up the following verses. What were the circumstances of these individuals? What seems to be at the heart of their bitterness? Did it manifest or lead into other complicated sin?
  - Genesis 4:1-8 (Cain)
  - Esther 5:1-9 (Haman)
  - 2 Samuel 13 (Absalom)
2. Bitterness can also be a manifestation of a low view of God. Read Ruth 1:19-21.
  - What is she responding to?
  - What is she forgetting about the Lord?
  - What principle can you glean for your own life or that of your counselee?
3. Generally speaking bitterness is a manifestation of a “hurt” that you have chosen to dwell on too long. It may be an indication that you have not truly forgiven the one that has hurt you.
  - According to Luke 17:3-10, when is forgiveness granted?
  - Does this text indicate which party is commanded to go—the offended or the offender?
  - According to Matthew 18:32-34, how is the unforgiving slave characterized?
  - Why is it appalling for a Christian not to forgive another?
  - How does knowing that you’ve been forgiven an unpayable debt motivate you to forgive those that have offended you?
  - Read Isaiah 43:25 and Jeremiah 31:34. When we forgive, what are we essentially doing?
  - When you truly forgive someone, what promises are you essentially making...see a few below and add your own.
    - You promise not to impute your offender’s trespasses against him.
    - You promise not to dwell on the offenses.
    - You refuse to cultivate bitterness.
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4. What’s one take-away from the talk on bitterness and/or further study that you’d like to apply to your life?