

Introduction

Last week we began to look at the need to **GUARD AGAINST** the **EMOTION** of **BITTERNESS** in our lives. 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 the **EMOTION OF BITTERNESS IS ALWAYS A SIN!**

We said that we need to have an **ATTITUDE OF FORGIVING OTHERS EVEN AS GOD FOR CHRIST'S SAKE HAS FORGIVEN US!**

We began to look at the EFFECT that BITTERNESS has on people. We looked at the great need to GUARD AGAINST BITTERNESS because of what BITTERNESS will do in our life:

- I. *WE MUST GUARD AGAINST BITTERNESS BECAUSE IT UPSETS OUR SPIRITUAL LIFE!*
 - A. *That's Because Bitterness Necessitates That We Walk In The Flesh, And Not In The Spirit.*
 - B. *That's Because Bitterness Halts Spiritual Growth Altogether.*
- II. *WE MUST GUARD AGAINST BITTERNESS BECAUSE IT UPSETS OUR PHYSICAL LIFE!*

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. *WE MUST GUARD AGAINST BITTERNESS BECAUSE IT UPSETS OUR EMOTIONAL LIFE!*

Where there is bitterness, there is discouragement. Bitterness not dealt with can lead to paranoia. It can cause one to develop a victim's mentality as well as to become negative and critical.
- IV. *WE MUST GUARD AGAINST BITTERNESS BECAUSE IT UPSETS OUR CHURCH LIFE!*

It can kill fellowship and otherwise destroy Church ministries!
Galatians 5:9 "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump."

We said as we closed last week that we need to **GROW UP, and GET OVER THINGS THAT HAVE HURT US and MOVE FORWARD FOR CHRIST!**

We can do that by remembering 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!**

Let's see four more reasons to GUARD AGAINST BITTERNESS:

- V. **WE MUST GUARD AGAINST BITTERNESS BECAUSE IT CAN UPSET OUR OTHER RELATIONSHIPS!**

There is, more often than not, **A SPILL-OVER AFFECT** with **BITTERNESS!** What I mean by that is, one can become **BITTER** in one area of their life, but that **BITTERNESS** can **SPILL-OVER** and have an **EFFECT** in other areas of their life as well.

BITTERNESS is a nasty and **DIVISIVE TOOL** that **SATAN** loves to use to **DRIVE A WEDGE BETWEEN PEOPLE** and **DESTROY RELATIONSHIPS.**

But please understand, one doesn't have to be **BITTER** toward their spouse for **BITTERNESS** to **RUIN** their marriage. One can become **BITTER** toward one or both of their own parents or even one or both of their in-laws, and **RUIN** their marriage! Also, one can become **BITTER** toward someone else and **RUIN** their marriage!

One can become **BITTER** toward someone at **CHURCH** and **RUIN** their relationship with their **SPOUSE** and/or **CHILDREN** because of the **SPILL-OVER EFFECT.** (*e.g. Leaving mad!*)

BITTERNESS in one's life can **DESTROY** their **ABILITY** to be a good employee or employer!

BITTERNESS in one's life can make them a **TERRIBLE NEIGHBOR** to have to live by and deal with!

One's **BITTERNESS** can even **DRIVE** their own **FRIENDS AWAY** from them! (Who wants to be around a **BITTER** person?)

BITTERNESS can also make one a terrible person to have to wait on at the restaurant or down at the supermarket or anywhere else!
*(Think of the poor waitress or cashier or customer service rep that has to endure a person's **BAD DISPOSITION** that stems from their **BITTERNESS!**)*

BITTERNESS CAN UPSET OUR OTHER RELATIONSHIPS!

VI. WE MUST GUARD AGAINST BITTERNESS BECAUSE IT CAN DEPRIVE US OF A BLESSING!

BITTERNESS can cause one to have a **NEGATIVE** and **CRITICAL SPIRIT** about everything they are involved in!

If one brings a **NEGATIVE, CRITICAL SPIRIT** to **CHURCH** with them, they won't come looking for a **BLESSING**, they'll be coming and looking for what's wrong. And they'll be sure to find something wrong, even if it is only in their imagination!

BITTERNESS can and will rob one of their **J-O-Y!**

BITTERNESS can cause one to **REJECT** the **TRUTH** of the **WORD OF GOD** that is the very source of **BLESSING** in life!

BITTERNESS can cause one to tune out and turn off all **COMMUNICATION WITH GOD**. I'm talking about where they're **NOT TALKING TO GOD** and **GOD IS NOT TALKING TO THEM!** I'm talking about **WHEN PRAYER** and **THE WORD OF GOD** take a backseat to what's going on in their life!

I'm also talking about when the **PREACHING** and **TEACHING** of **GOD'S WORD** or even **GODLY COUNSEL** can't get through to a person because they are **CLOSED TO GOD** because of their **BITTERNESS!**

VII. WE MUST GUARD AGAINST BITTERNESS BECAUSE IT WILL GROW AND BLOSSOM INTO FRUIT THAT WILL DEFILE US AND POSSIBLY DESTROY US!

What are some of the **FRUITS OF BITTERNESS?**

REBELLION – Especially, if the source of **BITTERNESS** is someone in authority.

JEALOUSY – Especially when we see **GOD** working in the lives of others but not in our lives. (*e.g. 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. **Clamour is 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.

OVER SENSITIVITY – When it doesn't take 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 US AND POSSIBLY DESTROY US!

VIII. WE MUST GUARD AGAINST BITTERNESS BECAUSE IT WILL NOT ONLY TROUBLE US, IT CAN AND PROBABLY 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.)

There are people who are not in **CHURCH** who point to someone who had a *root of bitterness* 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 can expect and even wait for an apology, but if it doesn’t come, we begin to **harbor resentment** against that person.

We’ve gotten the wrong idea that before we can **FORGIVE** someone, they have to *apologize*. Did you know that the word “*apologize*” isn’t in the Bible? When we deem that someone has **SINNED AGAINST US**, we often wait for an *apology*. However, if we don’t get it, we can get **BITTER** toward that person.

What if the person doesn’t realize that they have **SINNED** against us? Or, what if they actually haven’t **SINNED** against us (but we think they have)? Then, they’ll never *apologize* and we can become **BITTER**, waiting for an *apology* that will never come.

BITTERNESS is a “ROOT.” And it is from the **ROOT**, that the defiling **FRUITS OF BITTERNESS** eventually **SPRING FORTH**. Remember how we said last week 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**. (i.e. **FORGIVENESS** and **ONLY FORGIVENESS** can **KILL THE ROOT OF BITTERNESS!**) We can’t do it by ourselves. We need **GOD’S HELP** to do that!

We must deal with **BITTERNESS** like any other **SIN** in our 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 each of us **FORGIVENESS** of our **SIN** against **GOD**. Understand, none of us deserve **FORGIVENESS**, but it is freely offered to all who will come to **GOD** seeking **FORGIVENESS** through the **BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST**.

GUARDING AGAINST BITTERNESS—PT 2
EPHESIANS 4:31-32; HEBREWS 12:14-15

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 must 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.”

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.”

Are you in the **BONDS OF BITTERNESS**? Why not let the **LORD FREE YOU TODAY** and release you from those **BONDS**?

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!