

Bitterness:

**Its Characteristics,
Dangers and Cures**

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Bitterness

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- **Introduction**

I have been in the ministry almost 40 years. Tragically, I have seen **BITTERNESS MAGNIFIED** more in the past 20 years than in all the rest of my ministry.

Why is that? I have some thoughts on the matter. Two of the contributing factors, though not the only ones, are the Hollywood productions and violent video games that magnify and glorify *getting even* and dealing with hurts in a very violent way. That IS tragic. Many people think the movies portray the way the world should work. And video games give the players a way to visualize getting even. Tragically, for an increasing number of people, they have more influence on them than the church, their teachers or even their parents. We are seeing more young people taking vengeance. There are numerous instances when young people go to their schools and start shooting people. But it is not just young people. In the past 10 years I have seen many news accounts of people becoming embittered and walk into their places of employment and shoot people.

Two movies out of many, which have popularized the “**get even**” or “**get revenge**” philosophy, are, first, the 1978 movie *Animal House*. One of the famous lines in that gross movie was spoken by the character D-Day “We have a saying in the Delta House, **don’t get mad get even!**”

The second movie that comes to mind is the 1983 movie *Sudden Impact* starring Clint Eastwood as Harry Callahan (Dirty Harry) who gets a bad guy cornered and urges him to make a wrong move so he can blow his head off. Dirty Harry

says, “**Go ahead, make my day.**” Other films that Eastwood has starred in and or produced carry the revenge theme as well.

People have bought into the “don’t get mad, get even” philosophy today. Bitterness and its twin, revenge, are being portrayed as acceptable! But, they are NOT. Our focus is primarily bitterness in this booklet. **I want you to know that the Bible warns that if a root of bitterness springs up in your life, or my life, or anybody’s life, it not only affects the bitter person, but it affects all those people that are around us.**

Not only does it affect them, but it defiles them. It pulls them down! It gives them the wrong focus. It leads them into sin! That is why I am addressing the issue of BITTERNESS. Certainly it is appropriate and proper to look at **the characteristics and dangers of bitterness**, and to look at **the biblical cures for bitterness**. The problem is that many people, even though they are professing Christians and know the Word of God, refuse to practice the Word of God when it come to the issue of BITTERNESS.

Now let me just tell you, we can identify the causes of bitterness and we can identify the dangers of bitterness.

Unless you are willing to, in faith, do what the Lord says you should do about bitterness, then that bitterness is going to continue festering. When that bitterness comes out there are many ramifications, including broken relationships.

Let’s take a closer look at bitterness.

- **The Definition of Bitterness**

Bitterness is holding onto or showing feelings of intense animosity, resentment or vindictiveness. Bitterness is also described as feelings resulting from something that is difficult to accept.

- **Description of Bitterness**

Bitterness is a terrible hindrance to living a successful Christian life. Bitterness can be one of the most crushing mind occupying problems in an individual's life. When a Christian is bitter it hinders his or her fellowship with the Lord as well as causing the loss of many of the blessings of the normal Christian life, including emotional stability, peace, and joy.

Bitterness is a devastating mindset, a sin, and it triggers a wide range of other sins, such as: hatred, antagonism, temper flares, arrogance, cruelty, self-pity, arrogance, irrationality and the desire for revenge.

One author noted, "Bitterness is neither consistent nor rational. A bitter person is his own worst enemy. It is very difficult to maintain any kind of relationship with a chronically bitter person; and bitterness is a major contributing cause of marital and family problems."

As we begin, my focus is on **Colossians 3:12-15**. In Colossians chapter 3 and verse 12 it says this: *"Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, ("bowels of mercies" simply means a heart of compassion – that is what it is talking about.) kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye."*

And then it says this: “*And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.*” My simple definition of **charity** is loving acts without expecting anything in return. The Encyclopedia Britannica Online defines it as “the highest form of love, signifying the reciprocal love between God and man that is made manifest in unselfish love of one’s fellow men.” My point is simply this: The modern picture of charity is ringing the bell for the Salvation Army and soliciting donations as people pass by. While this is laudable, it is not the **charity** as it is defined biblically.

Now let’s look at **verse 15**, “*And let the peace... [you need to see this, and let the peace of God – give room for the peace of God,]... of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.*”

- **The Devastating Root of Bitterness Must Not Be Allowed In Your Life**

Turn with me to **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;*”

This is a clear injunction against allowing hurt to turn into bitterness. Look at the words of **Hebrews 12:15**. This is probably **the Hallmark passage on bitterness.**

It says this, “*Looking diligently...*” In other words search high and low – don’t just be satisfied to do a cursory consideration like, “Oh, no, I am not hurt”, “Oh, no, I am not bitter” or “Oh, no, I am not angry” – No! No! No! Looking diligently indicates that you do an all-out search in your life for bitterness so it can be removed from your life.

The verse goes on to say – “...lest any man fail...” Now here is what happens if you get bitter, if you allow your anger to turn into bitterness, if you allow your hurts to turn into bitterness, you are **failing** to look to the grace of God. You might not like that, I might not like that but this is what the Word of God says. It says; “look *diligently* lest any man fail of the grace of God.”

In other words, God’s grace is sufficient for me. I love the mellow song, “God’s Grace Is Sufficient for Me,” and it is. But if you resist God then His grace is not going to be sufficient for you.

The verse goes on to say – “...lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you.” The phrase “**spring up**” means to germinate and grow. When bitterness germinates and grows it causes **BIG TROUBLE**. The word “**trouble**” means to agitate, cause a disturbance, or to cause trouble.

When you allow bitterness to germinate and grow in your life, you are headed for BIG trouble. The result is this: “*and thereby many be defiled.*” Note what the verse says; not just a few – you cannot say, “It is only hurting me.” No, it’s not. It is hurting those around you. It is hurting the people in your Christian community. It is hurting the people in your home. The word “**defiled**” means to stain, pollute, or contaminate.

Bitterness contaminates those you work with. It stains your family. It pollutes your friends. They often take up offenses for you. Biblically we are to follow **Colossians 3:13** – “*Forbearing one another and forgiving one another even as Christ forgave you.*”

Sometimes bitterness passes quickly. Sometimes the wounds are healed. Sometimes the causes are forgotten, but other times if those wounds are not dealt with, if those wounds are not resolved, they will fester and here is what happens. I can tell you after counseling more than 30 years, people replay

things over and over and over in their mind instead of getting them under the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ; instead of forgiving those things and part of forgiveness is that you do not dwell on those things yourself. You see, the world teaches you that you have to go back and re-grieve those hurts. That is the Devil's lie! It needs to be forgiven and put under the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The world says, "Oh, go back and re-grieve", but I tell you what, every time you go back and re-grieve, guess what? It is going to bring that hurt again to the surface, and it is going to be like a raw and open wound. The offended party replays it and that causes it to consume their mind, and they cannot think properly because their mind is so consumed with this thing that caused them hurt. You need to be on the lookout for bitterness because it lingers and defiles not just you, but it will defile your relationships and those you are around. Failure to deal with bitterness by forgiveness, failure to deal with your hurt, failure to deal with your anger by forgiveness, failure to deal with those is going to cause great destruction. There are going to be stresses in your life that you cannot imagine. Your mind is going to become so preoccupied that that will be all you can think about.

You know, we still have a fallen nature, at least I do, and the Bible says we all do. The Devil wants to maximize the real or perceived hurts in your life. The real abuses, the imagined abuses, and all believers, every one, has experienced distresses. They have experienced emotional upsets. They have experienced losses. They have experienced sometimes verbal abuses and sometimes physical abuses. Every single, solitary believer at some time in their life has run across those types of things.

Now, I don't know how many have heard this before, I think most of you have, "You can either get bitter or you can get better." If you believe that God's grace is sufficient for you then, in faith, you are going to apply **Proverbs 3:5-6** which

says, *"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. 6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."*

When God tells you to do these things sometimes you say, "That just does not make sense." When someone says something evil and nasty and vile to you (I just had an email yesterday where this Christian person was called something evil and vile and I wrote back and said, "Be cautious that you do not render evil for evil." Don't play their game. What do you need to do? "Be not overcome with evil but overcome evil with good." That is what the Bible says in **Romans 12:21**.

- **The Objects of Bitterness**

Bitterness usually originates with a hurt or a series of hurts. It does all of the time. (Much of this information comes from Jay Adams and he is good in the counseling area.) Such hurts can be real or they can be imagined. They can be intentional or unintentional. I have dealt with some people and they tell me about their hurts and what was done to them. So, I go and try to talk to the other person and that person has no idea that it even bugged them. Some people wear their feelings on their shirt sleeves. They have their arm out there saying, "Go ahead and offend me." You know they are just waiting to be offended. If you are waiting to be offended come and see me because I manage to that regularly, so I should be able to do that quite quickly because usually outspoken people offend people quite easily. Not that I would do it on purpose, but if you are looking to be offended and wearing your feelings on your shirt sleeve, or if you are looking for things to be tweaked about, you will find many of them. You will find many of them in our local congregation; you will find many of them where you work. If you are paranoid, there are some people who just kind of border on the edge of paranoia, you will find them.

Often there is misunderstanding involved. I have had one person tell me a story and another person tell me the story and you would think they were from two different planets. One person takes it this way and the other person has no idea. So when I say bitterness originates from hurts or a series of hurts, these hurts can be real or imagined, intentional or unintentional, personal or impersonal, often a misunderstanding is involved and people feel that others have done them wrong. A lot of times these hurts are blown out of proportion.

How many of you have heard the phrase “Making a mountain out of a molehill”? You know, that is what happens a lot of times, particularly in marital relationships. You make a mountain out of a molehill. You can take some little thing – how many have heard the phrase, “The straw that broke the camel’s back”? What happens is you are not dealing with the main issue at all but there are things that have gone on previously and then this little thing is added and “BOOM!” It is like the pressure cooker in my mother’s kitchen when I was 7 years old and she was making chicken cacciatore for supper. The heat was too high and the pressure plug blew – BOOM. It scared us to death and there was chicken cacciatore hanging from the ceiling. What happened? We opened up the pressure cooker and it was funny to see those white bones of the chicken in the pressure cooker, the rest of it was on the ceiling.

Let’s look at some of the **things that cause bitterness**.

✓ **Circumstances:** Sometimes circumstances make people bitter. Often times other people are involved but we get frustrated at events. Examples of circumstances that can cause bitterness are accident, fire, set backs, job losses, not being able to make academic expectations. All types of circumstances can make people bitter if they handle it wrongly. There are people who have their glass half full or half empty. You are one way or the other.

A person who has their glass half full says, “This is great, I have half a glass of water. I am not going to have to worry about being thirsty for a time.” But a person who views that glass as half empty says, “This glass is half empty. What am I going to do if I get really thirsty? This is not enough water. I need a full glass of water. I will probably die of thirst.” Now, where do you fit? Usually you fit in one way or the other. Sometimes there are real moderate ones.

Circumstances, if you do not react to them properly, can cause you a great deal of problems. One of the things that this reminded me of was the hymn, “Like a River Glorious”. Are you trusting Jesus or not? Is God sovereign or is God not sovereign? Verse 3 says, “Every joy or trial falleth from above”. Now see, some people are really bitter at God. They are not bitter at you; they are bitter at God because of some horrendous circumstance that God has allowed into their life. I can understand that.

“Every joy or trial falleth from above,
Traced upon our dial by the Sun of Love:
We may trust Him fully all for us to do –
They who trust Him wholly find Him wholly true.
Stayed upon Jehovah hearts are fully blessed,
Finding as He promised, perfect peace and rest.”

I have had tragic things come into my life. Are we going to trust God or not? He is sovereign, so could He have stopped them? The answer is “Yes”, but He has also promised in **1 Corinthians 10:13** *“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, (not to get you out of it, but) that ye may be able to **bear** it.”* Do you believe that all things work together for good to them that love God and to them who are the called according to His purposes? See **Romans 8:28**.

✓ **Peers:** Not only do circumstances come that, if responded to wrongly, cause bitterness but there cruel peers can also contribute to bitterness. Peers can be incredibly cruel. I had bad acne growing up in High School and I got called all kinds of names. Some people withdraw but I am thankful that God did not allow me to do that. I was very active in school. I was the announcer. Recently I opened a FaceBook account to post some things and to connect up with some classmates. Nearly all of them remember the morning announcements. I was the photographer at school as well and not one single one of them mentioned the bad acne I had while in High School. Now, I could have let that put me into my shell and done nothing. However, by the grace of God that did not happen.

Peers can be unbelievably cruel. They can magnify a handicap, appearance, a long nose, etc. but who cares? Some people **do** care and do react and respond wrongly getting very bitter over that. Maligning somebody as fat, maligning somebody as skinny, maligning somebody as short or maligning somebody as too tall. There are so many things on that. Some people are so untactful: “Hi! You look 20 lbs. heavier than the last time I saw you”. “Oh, well, thank you.”

✓ **Family:** Then another cause for bitterness is family – poor husband/wife relationships, poor parent/child relationships, suffering physical or sexual abuse, difficulty of one spouse or the other being able to express love, unreasonable standards. A lot of the time these things hang in the minds and lives of children and then there comes the issue of authorities.

Obedience to authority can sometimes trigger obedience. There are wives who just do not want to be submissive to their husbands; there are husbands who just do not want to lead their wives. There are children who just do not want to

obey their parents. A policeman says stop and they bristle. They forgot all about Romans chapter 13.

✓ **Failure of Authority:** At other times there is the failure of authorities so people get bitter. Then, as I already mentioned, circumstances that God allows. There are people who are just bitter at God. “Why did you take my mom early?” “Why did my baby die?” “Why did we have such a serious accident?” Why, why, why? Jesus Christ said, “...*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*” **Matthew 27:46**

The problem isn't in asking the why; the problem is extrapolating it beyond asking the why and looking at God as being unjust. I know that is a tough one, but there are people who do not like the position they are in. They do not like a disability or such, but believers must not continue to question and attack God.

Turn to **Romans 9: 20**. I do not know what position you are in but you need to just ask God. The apostle Paul besought the Lord 3 times to take care of his thorn in the flesh. I do not know for sure what that thorn in the flesh was, but he asked God 3 times. He could have become bitter over it, but he did not. His response was to believe God when He said in **2 Corinthians 12:9**, “*My grace is sufficient for thee, my strength is made perfect in weakness.*” Paul said, “OK God, I am not going to ask you anymore.”

As we move on, we will look into what **Romans 9:20** says, “*Nay but, O man, (look at this) who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?*” Why have you let me be in this situation? God, what is wrong with you? Now I am telling you, that is a bad deal. I cannot answer all the whys. I cannot answer some of the things that have happened in my life. I do not know why I have my dad to care for, but God knows. He has enabled. We need to be very cautious. God is

the Potter and we are the clay. Our attitude toward that should be, “Have thine own way, Lord, have thine own way. Thou art the Potter, I am the clay. Mold me and make me after thy will” Now comes the hard part, “While I am **waiting** yielded and still.”

I do not know why you have been out of a job for so long. I do not know why you lost a baby in miscarriage. I just do not know. But I have an underlying belief that God is trustworthy. He has proven Himself to be trustworthy in the difficult circumstances that Linda and I have faced and do not think for a moment that we haven't faced difficulties. God's people should accept God's will and even praise Him for what He has done. As Paul struggled with his thorn in the flesh he learned to trust God's wisdom. **1 Corinthians 12:7-9**. The believers of today must do the same.

- **The Dangers of Bitterness**

- ✓ **It Destroys Your Stability**

Bitterness has a terrible impact on you and on others because ***it destroys your stability***. It will destroy the stability of your family, of your marital relationship, of your friendship and relationship with others. I do not like to be around bitter friends and if I have a choice, I will go some other place or do something else.

There is a 21-year-old missionary kid whose parents had served in Africa for many years. They finally had to leave the mission field and seek help for their daughter. She would not talk and was silent for 2 years until she finally told what her secret was. Her problem was not a mental problem or a physical problem. It was because she was bitter at her parents and bitter at God. This is a true story. She resented being sent away to school. She hated all the sacrifices that she and her parents had made over the years. Her silence was simply a way to cover up her true feelings. (This story is

from Jay Adams' "Christian Counseling Manual" pages 25-28.) Her experience is not unusual. A prolonged bitterness always, always destroys emotional stability – always.

✓ It Incites The Desire For Revenge

Here is how it typically affects behavior. Harboring those hurts but not forgiving and hold a grudge brings a person into a desire for revenge of one type or another. It is not always killing someone, but they want revenge. They sometimes long for a disaster to happen to somebody who is bitter at them.

Leviticus 19:18 *"Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD."* This is pretty pointed.

Proverbs 24:29 *"Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me: I will render to the man according to his work."* ("I don't get angry, I get even.")

That is the philosophy of our day. Get even – get your pound of flesh. Shame on those people who advocate such a solution! The Bible says --

Romans 12:17 *"Recompense (do not return) to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men."*

1 Peter 3:9 *"Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing."* If someone has hurt you, pray that God will bless them.

✓ Rebellion

Here is a big one. This is even bigger than revenge. Kids often do this and sometimes husbands or wives, but rebellion

is a key one when you get hurt and demonstrate bitterness by rebellion. A bitter person will often rebel against authority. Whatever their authority is they are going to rebel against it. They long to prove they are independent. They long to prove they are right and will break all the principles of Scripture to demonstrate to someone that they are right. Do you think God is going to buy that? I don't think He is going to buy it at all. They want to show that their way is best and that they can make it on their own.

God hates rebellion and do you know what He says about rebellion? **1 Samuel 15:23** "*For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft...*" You say, "Oh Pastor, I am a Christian!" Yes, and if you are rebelling, you are practicing witchcraft. I did not say it; the Word of God says it.

Isaiah 1:20 says, "*But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword...*" Now, rebellion also takes a few other twists that demonstrate that there is rebellion, and that is blame-shifting. People start shifting the blame and do not take responsibility for their own actions; or they start rationalizing. I recently listened to a whole raft of rationalization while talking to someone on the telephone and I am sitting back saying, "Rebellion, rebellion, rebellion."

There is a little song that reveals the epitome of rationalization so prevalent in our day. The song is by Anna Russel. The lyrics are --

I went to my psychiatrist to be psychoanalyzed

To find out why I killed the cat and blackened my wife's eyes.

He put me on a downy couch to see what he could find,

And this is what he dredged up from my subconscious mind:

When I was one, my mommy hid my dolly in the trunk,

And so it follows naturally that I am always drunk.

When I was two I saw my father kiss the maid one day,

And that is why I suffer now -- kleptomania.

When I was three, I suffered from ambivalence toward my brothers,

So it follows naturally, I poison all my lovers.

I'm so glad that I have learned the lesson it has taught,

That everything I do that's wrong is someone else's fault!

That is where we are at today. Nobody wants to take responsibility for themselves. It takes two people to have a problem. Quit pointing the finger at the other person, draw a circle around yourself and you take care of your part. You do what is right and quit blame-shifting and quit the rationalization because that is nothing but rebellion.

There is another way and that is escape. Often times people who are bitter try to escape through food, alcohol, drugs, immorality, sleep, and/or refusing to work. And then there is withdrawal. The missionary's daughter wanted everyone to know she was hurting so she went around not speaking just to make sure everyone saw she was hurting. A form of escape

is walking around with a perpetual pout on your face. “What’s wrong with you? Are you OK?”

There is also perfectionism. Some who are bitter with their parents or with their peers are never satisfied and are amplified perfectionists. What this does is undermine relationships. Bitter believers cannot have fellowship with God. I didn’t say that by accident. The Lord says, *“If ye love me keep my commandments”*. (**John 14:15**) *“He that loveth not his brother (or his wife or husband or children) whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen.”* (**1 John 4:20**)

- **The Results of Bitterness**

The result of bitterness is always tragedy. A bitter man or a bitter woman may disguise their feelings for awhile but ultimately it comes out. **Proverbs 26:26** says *“Whose hatred is covered by deceit, his wickedness shall be showed before the whole congregation.”* You cannot harbor bitterness without it ultimately coming out and destroying your relationships.

- **Dealing With Bitterness Biblically**

So what do you do about it? What are the cures? Well, **Ephesians 4:2** says *“...with longsuffering forbearing one another in love.* **Colossians 3:13** says, *“Forbearing one another and forgiving one another...”* Forbearing is to hold back, to be patient, to endure, even when hurt. One who forbears has every right, humanly speaking, to be upset or even to lash out at the one who has caused the hurt. But he refuses to do so, choosing to forgive the fault and to seek peace.

Forgiving others’ faults. I’ve got a bunch of faults, anybody else? **We are to forgive others even as God for Christ’s sake has forgiven us.**

First, God demands that we forgive others. If we are not willing to forgive, God will not forgive us. You say, “Where did you get that?” Look at **Matthew 6:12-15; Mark 11:25; Luke 11:4; Luke 17:3**.

Secondly, we must forgive continually – 70 times 7.

Thirdly, we must look to God for our examples of forgiveness. God forgives us and no longer holds our sins against us. He does not bring them back up to us. Believers must forgive others and refuse to hold things against them as well because that is the way God does it. “*As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.*” – **Psalm 103:12**. Forgive the person! Do not dwell on it, do not bring it up again in the future; that is biblical. Trust God.

“Every joy or trial falleth from above,
Traced upon our dial by the Sun of Love.
We must trust Him fully, All for us to do
They who trust Him wholly find Him wholly true.”

Forgiveness is God’s will for our lives. God cares about us and He promises in **1 Corinthians 12:9** “*My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness...*” In the eternal prospective, it is essential in overcoming bitterness. We need to see things from God’s point of view and quit playing our petty little games.

Biblical illustrations

The first negative example is Cain. He was bitter against his brother. He was hurt by his brother. God accepted Abel’s sacrifice and He rejected his. So, to show his anger at God he killed his brother.

Joseph’s brothers hated him because they thought of him as their father’s favorite. Be cautious about favoritism in your

children, friends. But Joseph did not allow bitterness to get him. He says in **Genesis 50:20** that they meant it for evil but God meant it for good to save his family alive. Joseph had a tough time.

Then there is Haman. He was a hater and he hated the Jews. He ended up getting hung on his own gallows. It hurt.

Positive examples: Joseph had a cause to be bitter. His young life was filled with frustration. He was sold into slavery, but he did not become bitter. **Jeremiah 10:23** "*O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.*" We need to rely upon God and have faith in Him because He sees things perfectly. And friends, as a believer, He does have your and my best interests in heart.

Conclusion

The Bible states that BITTERNESS IS SIN and IS TO HAVE NO PART IN THE BELIEVER'S LIFE (Ephesians 4:31-32). Further, the Bible warns that if a root of bitterness springs up in your life, it not only affects the bitter person, but it affects all those people that are around us (Hebrews 12:15). Not only does it affect them, but it defiles them. It pulls them down! It gives them the wrong focus. It may lead them into sin!

God forgives and forgets sin (**Psalm 103:12**). However, as human beings you may have made your best effort to forgive and forget and find that you cannot forget those who have hurt you. God can help you to cleanse your memory. Instead of remembering with malice and hurt, remember with forgiveness. Then go one step further and ask God to forgive your offender. By forgiving and then asking God to forgive your offender, you will not become bitter and you put yourself in the position to be blessed of God.

A Suggested Prayer To Consider

I came across this prayer in my research for putting together this booklet on bitterness. Please carefully consider praying this prayer to help you get over bitterness

Our Heavenly Father, I acknowledge that I've held resentment and bitterness against _____. I confess this as sin and ask you to forgive me. I forgive _____ for what they have done. Remind me, Lord, to not hold any more resentments, but rather to love this person. Father, I ask you to also forgive _____. Thank you for hearing and answering my prayer. In Jesus' name, Amen.