

Talk It Over

Travel Light (Week 3) Letting Go of Bitterness

SMALL TALK

1. Okay, food war. Which is less bitter: coffee or tea? Which is better?
2. What's the pet peeve that most frequently causes you to become frustrated with people?

VIEWPOINT

3. **READ Hebrews 12:14-15.** What are some bitter roots you could take care of before they grow up to cause trouble?
4. **READ Matthew 6:14-15; 18:21-35.** Why is forgiving who have offended us so important?
5. **READ Ephesians 4:31-32.** How many kinds of bitterness are we to get rid of? How are we taught to do this? How does this actually work?

GETTING PERSONAL

6. Do you know someone who could be bitter but isn't? How do you think they do it?
7. What life opportunities could bitterness be preventing you from fully experiencing or enjoying?
8. Bitterness attempts to destroy love, intimacy, and trust. What's your history with bitterness?

MAKING PROGRESS

9. Why is bitterness such a big deal? How does this get in the way loving God (and neighbor) wholeheartedly, arguably the most important directive from God? What will you do this week to let go of bitterness?

December 15, 2019

Letting Go Of Bitterness

Series: Travel Light (Week 3)

This world is not our home, we are just passing through, but while we travel through sometimes we pick up heavy baggage, baggage God never intended for us to carry. Today we are talking about Letting Go of Bitterness.

One of the greatest tools our spiritual enemy has to destroy relationships and poison our hearts is what the Bible calls “**A root of bitterness**”.

Here’s what we know: God wants us to be filled with love for him, and other people. Our Spiritual enemy wants to do everything possible to steal that love, kill the trust, and plant a seed of offense that grows into a root of bitterness. He knows that when he does this, he is able to crush your power and effectiveness, and poison your life, and others as well.

This is a timely message because, during this season...some people are looking forward to Christmas, and some people can’t wait till it’s over.

And as we get together with family, it is prime time for the enemy to cause little seeds of offense to be planted, or when these have taken root to erupt with poisonous results. In view of all of this, let’s hear some very clear instruction from God today.

I. Why?

Hebrews 12:14-15 (NIV) Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy ... ¹⁵ See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.

A. You can't control what people do, but you can control how you RESPOND.

Hebrews 12:14 (NIV) Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy ...

Bitterness is a very dangerous and wrong response. It falls short of the Grace of God.

Hebrews 12:15 (NIV) See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God...

- **Don't fall short of the grace of God.**
- **Make every effort to let go of bitterness.**
- **Why is this such a big deal?**

B. Bitterness has a dangerous ROOT.

Hebrews 12:15 (NIV) See to it that ... no bitter root grows up to cause trouble ...

C. Bitterness produces a poisonous FRUIT.

I should get some extra points for rhyming points! Bitterness has a dangerous ROOT, Bitterness produces a poisonous Fruit.

Who does this poisonous fruit poison?

Certainly, it poisons you, but that's only the tiniest fraction of the problem. It causes trouble and defiles MANY!!!

Hebrews 12:15 (NIV) See to it that ... no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.

One bitter person can divide a family.

One bitter person can destroy a small group.

One bitter person can make a workplace utterly miserable.

One bitter person can wreck havoc on an entire church.

One bitter person can sow so many more seeds that take root in others.

All this can happen and the bitter person doesn't see that they are the cause! As all ROOTS are, they are hard to see. They are under the surface. This particular sin is VERY difficult for the person who has it to see! Even when the fruit shows up for everyone else to see, the person who is spewing the bitter poison cannot see how bad it is. They can't see it in the mirror.

The main reason you can't see it in yourself is that you feel TOTALLY JUSTIFIED feeling what you feel. Why? Because you are right and they are wrong! As I have said before, God kicked me with these words while I was musing over how right I was and how wrong someone else was. "I am the most dangerous when I think I am right!"

We don't see bitterness in ourselves as a problem precisely because we are focused on how the problem is the other person NOT me!

II. How?

Ephesians 4:31-32 (NIV) Get rid of all bitterness, [how much bitterness are we to get rid of?] rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. ³² Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

How? With kindness and compassion.

There's tension growing in some of you today because of what I just told you—that although you feel justified in carrying the wounds of offense, nevertheless, you have to get rid of it! But How?

The laws of the Kingdom of heaven almost always are the opposite of your human nature. Jesus said, if you want to be great, serve others. Opposite! Somebody strikes you, you don't strike 'em back. When somebody hurts you forgive them.

BUT HOW? "In Christ".

Beloved follower of Jesus, you need to understand something about kindness, compassion, and forgiveness. You are not generating something; you are passing along something you've already received.

“But you don’t know how much they hurt me!”

No. I don’t. But God does, and he knows how much you hurt him, and he forgave you!

“But their sins are FAR worse than my sins!”

Don’t buy this lie: *“My sin is forgivable, but their sin is unforgivable”.*

One good way of understanding the word “Sin” is by the definition, *“missing the mark”*. One bad way of understanding sin is by comparison my 1 millimeter miss with your 1 mile miss!

Earth’s equation: 1 mile miss > 1 millimeter miss

Heaven’s equation: 1 millimeter X infinity = 1 mile X infinity

Mile sinners and millimeter sinners ALL need the blood of Jesus to make us acceptable to God, period.

We think: their poop is really bad, but my poop is so minimal by comparison.

There is no such thing as an acceptable increment of excrement in God’s HOLY space! The fact is we all pooped on God’s Holy Pillow and to God this is unacceptable.

You’ve been forgiven all your poop. And now someone just smeared poop on you. What they did to you was bad, but you only got an unpleasant whiff, you didn’t experience death and hell for it like Jesus did for you!

When we have been freely forgiven, how dare we withhold it from someone else?

CHRIS BEAL FORGIVEN (VIDEO)