

# BITTERNESS – ITS CAUSE AND ITS CURE

**Question:** Why is this subject so, so important?

**Answer:** Because whenever change is necessary; not to change is destructive! (Repeat)

- ◆ If you need to change your diet (and don't) it will be destructive!
- ◆ If you need to change your thinking (and don't) it will be destructive!
- ◆ If you need to change your spending (and don't) it will be destructive!
- ◆ If you need to change something in your marriage (and don't) it will be destructive!

**Question:** Why is this truth so important?

**Answer:** Because bitterness (once it takes root) has the ability to poison everything else!

**Question:** Why is this so important for leaders?

**Answer:** Because leaders in the church, in business, in government, in the home, on a team – all deal with disappointment, surprises and unfulfilled expectations.

## **And never forget this:**

- ◆ Disappointment is something that if not dealt with properly, will degenerate into something else!

## **In other words:**

- ◆ We look for the ideal,
- ◆ Then reality hits,
- ◆ And we have to process life with imperfect people all around us. (For instance):

### **I. In John 11:21 (Martha says)**

“Jesus, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.”

(V. 24) Jesus said Lazarus will rise again and Martha says: “I know he'll rise again at the last day.”

(V. 39) “Lord, by this time he stinketh; for he's been dead four days.”

## **It's all a voice of bitterness:**

1. Martha knew that she sent the message to Jesus early enough.
2. But, because Jesus didn't drop what He was doing and come when she thought He should...

## **Martha gets all bent out of shape.**

**Question:** Why is Martha offended?

**Answer:** She didn't get her way, was disappointed and has to deal with an unfulfilled expectation.

### What's the discovery here?

1. Bitterness springs up in the heart when we allow disappointment to degenerate into resentment. (And)
2. Bitterness is fueled and fed and grows whenever we nurse grudges.

#### In other words:

- ◆ An expectation is not met,
- ◆ We allow a root to take hold,
- ◆ The seed gives birth to resentment,
- ◆ And like Martha, we become cynical, critical, poisoned and toxic!

**Question:** Why so damaging?

**Answer:** Because bitterness produces...

1. Distrusting people who constantly discredit the motives of other people.
2. Defensiveness and quarreling over nothing.
3. Jealousy and suspicion where something little triggers your anger because of something deeper.

#### Remember again:

**When change is necessary – not to change is destructive!**

## II. Jesus Said In Matthew 11:30 "My yoke is easy and my burden is light."

**Question:** What does that mean?

**Answer:** It means whatever you are yoked to in life, you will carry the burden of it.

#### Which means:

- ◆ The worst thing you can be yoked to in life is bitterness. (Why?)
- ◆ Because you end up carrying the burden of someone else's sins against you.

#### In other words:

- ◆ You were not created by God to bear them.
- ◆ Being yoked to bitterness, offenses, resentment, or the stress of unforgiveness has a consequence.
- ◆ It forces a chemical reaction in your body so your body begins to break down.

**Question:** Why does the body break down?

**Answer:** Because whatever the mind cannot contain, it will impose on the body!

#### And remember:

◆ **When change is necessary – not to change is destructive!**

Harboring bitterness in your heart brings consequences that affect you physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. (Your body, soul and spirit)

1. Resentment causes imbalance in the hormones from the various glands of the body, producing many physical symptoms and diseases.
2. The stress of bitterness weakens the immune system and heightens your susceptibility to physical ailments. Often doctors can trace physical disorders to a point in time when bitterness began to develop.
3. Refusal to forgive causes fatigue and loss of sleep. Soon your eyes and facial features reflect your inner distress.
4. It takes emotional energy to maintain a grudge. When your emotional energy is exhausted, you become depressed.
5. Resenting someone produces stress hormones in your body. You become worn out and unable to cope with daily challenges.
6. Bitterness and resentment create an emotional focus toward the person who offended you. This focus causes you to become like the one you resent.
7. Scripture relates bitterness to gall and describes it as something that can grow and spread to hurt many people. (Acts 8:23 and Hebrews 12:15) When Jesus instructed His disciples to forgive again and again, “Until seventy times seven” (Matthew 18:21-22) He challenged them to a lifestyle of forgiveness that offered freedom from the consequences of bitterness. (Why so important?) Because:

◆ Unforgiveness is the umbilical cord that keeps you tied to the past. When you forgive, you cut the cord and can live free from the control of what someone else has done to you! (In other words)

◆ Forgiveness slays the enemy in our hearts!

**III. In Luke 17:1 Jesus said:**

“Everyone will be offended.”

**Then in V. 4, Jesus said:**

“And if someone trespasses against you seven times a day, forgive him.”

**Question:** And what did the apostles say?

**Answer:** (V. 5) "Lord, if that's the deal, then you need to increase our faith."

- ◆ And Jesus said (V. 6) "All you need is faith the size of a grain of a mustard seed to keep moving forward in the journey."

**In other words:**

- ◆ It takes faith to really forgive! (And)
- ◆ It takes faith to believe and trust God with those who offend you!
- ◆ It takes faith to forgive those you cannot control.

**You could say "I'm not changing" but:**

- ◆ If you're not willing to change, you'll never grow! (And)
- ◆ A stubborn person will always be an ignorant person!

**For one simple reason:**

- ◆ They refuse to be taught, for a lack of humility.
- ◆ And, change is the essence of growth.
- ◆ And, change always begins with a decision!

**Question:** What makes it possible to be a healthy leader (to lead and bleed at the same time?

**Question:** If bitterness is the acid, then what is the ant-acid?

**Question:** What kills the root of bitterness and protects your heart, spirit, health and attitude?

- ◆ Only one cure – **Forgiveness!**
- ◆ Forgiveness is not a reward, it's a gift.
- ◆ Forgiveness is the essence of the gospel – unmerited favor!

**If it's hard for you to forgive:**

- ◆ Remember; hardness of heart is only overcome when we realize what it cost God to forgive us by the death of His Son!

**Remember:**

- ◆ **When change is necessary – not to change is destructive!**

**And never forget this:**

- ◆ No pain of your past ever justifies misbehavior in the present. (And)
- ◆ To the degree that I blame someone else for what's inside me- to that same degree I cannot be changed and will not be healed!

Nuf Sed!  
Bill Kirk