



“Overcoming Bitterness”

Ephesians 4:27

Forgiveness is a vital part of our Christian Living. It is a central theme throughout the Bible. Jesus placed it in our model prayer (Matt. 6:12). If it is so prominent in the Bible, we can be sure that Satan will attack us in this area on a constant basis. We must learn to keep bitterness from forming in our lives by dealing with potential hurts quickly.

I. Discovering the Root of Bitterness (Heb. 12:15)

- A. The root of bitterness comes from _____.
- B. Unresolved hurts will _____ those around us.
- C. Dealing with bitterness is pulling out its _____.

II. Bitterness is Related to Suffering (1 Pe. 4:19)

- A. Christians are _____ to suffer according to the will of God (1 Pe. 2:19–24).
- B. Suffering can sometimes be _____-inflicted (1 Pe. 4:14–19).
- C. We must _____ ourselves for times of suffering (1 Pe. 4:1–2).
 - 1. Instead of retaliating we _____ it to God (1 Pe. 2:23).
 - 2. Understand _____ allowed you to experience the suffering (Isa. 53:4).

3. Suffering is a part of God's _____ process in our lives.

D. God is seeking to free us from _____, not destroy our lives (Dan. 3:19–25).

III. Steps to Dealing with Bitterness

A. _____ and _____ (Rom. 12:19)

- vengeance — to execute justice. Execution of right, justice. Maintenance of right, support, protection, to maintain one's right, defend one's cause.
1. We must be able to identify those that have hurt us and release them to _____ (Prov. 24:17–18).
 2. We must learn to stop _____ others for the way we feel in our suffering.

“To become bitter is making God accountable to me.”

B. Forgive From the _____ (Mat. 18:21–22)

1. Forgiveness cannot be something we do situationally. It must be from the heart every time someone wrongs you.
2. Forgiving does not require you to remain in a situation that is bringing you _____.
3. Paul warned the Corinthian believers to forgive so that _____ would not get advantage in the church (2 Cor. 2:1–11).
4. Bitter _____ infect and tear down their own marriages. If you don't know how to forgive, don't get married (Col. 3:19).

5. Jesus maintains a forgiving _____ toward mankind, this is what is giving everyone the time they need to repent (Luke 23:34).

C. Live with the _____ (Eph 4:30–32)

- The key to living with the consequences is to maintain fellowship with the Holy Spirit.

IV. _____ to Forgive

A. Forgiveness is a choice we make, not a _____.

B. Great _____ awaits those that choose forgiveness over bitterness.

- Homes reestablished
- Friendships restored
- Peace in our homes
- Our families will be saved
- God will forgive us of our sins.

Removing Bitterness

If you have not forgiven someone, it's likely you harbor an unforgiving spirit and bitterness, for as time passes the resentment over an offense deepens into bitterness. You must forgive. Here's how.

1. Ask God to reveal to your mind the people against whom you are holding feelings that are not right. Make a list of the name(s) as God reveals them. Also, check yourself to see if you are holding any bitterness toward God or yourself, and include these names on your list if that is the case.
2. Start at the bottom of the list, because these are usually the people who are easier to forgive. As you work your way up the list, tell God you forgive each person and release the hurts to Him. That's forgiving from your heart. We are bitter for a reason, and we must get in touch with pain—that is, the reasons we are bitter.
3. If after forgiving the person for the major offense you recall a specific, hurtful incident, don't let your feelings smolder anew. Instead, release them to God then and there. In my experience with my own father I found that after dealing with the major offenses, I would remember days or weeks later a specific incident. I would stop and pray, *"God, I forgive my dad for _____ (the specific offense) also."* You only need to deal with the things God brings to your remembrance.
4. Tell God you are willing to live with the ongoing consequences of the offender's action and share these with Him in prayer.
5. Ask God to take back the ground you have given Satan through unforgiveness, then turn around and reach for the things that are ahead.
6. If some future action of a person you have forgiven triggers painful memories and you are tempted to pick up past bitterness, release this temptation to God on the spot.