



## The Characteristics of Bitterness

Lesson One • Hebrews 12:14-17

- What is the greatest obstacle to obeying the Great Commandment? *Ephesians 4:31-32*

Love's Greatest Obstacle Is a BITTER HEART!

- Bitterness and love cannot abide in the same heart!

### Digging Up the Deadly Root of Bitterness ~ Hebrews 12:14-17

**Stage 1** - Acknowledge the Characteristics of Bitterness

**Stage 2** - Avoid the Curses and Contagions that Bitterness Spreads

**Stage 3** - Apply the Cure for Bitterness

## How to Recognize the Root of Bitterness in Ourselves and Others

Four Characteristics of the Root of Bitterness

### 1. Bitterness is a POISON that Is Extremely DEADLY.

*Acts 8:20-23; James 3:14-16; Deuteronomy 29:18-19*



How Do Most People Deal with the Presence of Deadly Poisons?

### 2. Bitterness is a PROCESS that Is Incredibly DECEPTIVE.

The Root of Bitterness Pictures a Process

- A process that is HIDDEN beneath the surface and not easily detected.

3 Reasons Why the Process of Becoming Bitter Is Deceptive

- 1) Bitterness is a HEART sin that grows unseen and unnoticed.
- 2) Bitter people have a HARD heart that refuses to see things God's way and repent. *Deuteronomy 29:19*
- 3) Becoming bitter is a HIDDEN sin that is not easy to discern in the heart of others or detect in our own heart.

- A process that takes TIME to grow, spring up, and bear fruit.

What Are Some Biblical Ways to Deal with Self-Deception?

### 3. Bitterness Is a PLAGUE that Is Highly CONTAGIOUS.

- The root of bitterness can contaminate **MANY PEOPLE**. *Hebrews 12:12-14*
  - 1) The command to watch out for the root of bitterness is one of **several commands to the entire church body**. (vv. 12-15)
  - 2) The command concerning the root of bitterness is a **corporate responsibility to carefully look out for one another**. (v. 15)
  - 3) The command to look out for the root of bitterness is critical, because **anyone is susceptible** and **many will actually be infected by it**. (v. 15-16)
  
- The root of bitterness not only contaminates many people, but it can also be passed on to **FUTURE GENERATIONS!** *Deuteronomy 29:14-18*

How Should People Handle Contagious Diseases?

ONE FINAL WARNING: Watch out for "FLOATING BITTERNESS"!

### 4. Bitterness Is a PERSON that Is Spiritually CURSED.

The Root of Bitterness Is a Person...

- Who has **FALLEN SHORT** of the grace of God and **is cursed** like Esau in the OT. *Hebrews 12:15-16*
  
- Who is an **IDOLATER** that will **suffer all the curses** written in the Law. *Deuteronomy 29:18-21*

How Do I Know If I Am a Root of Bitterness?

- **ASK GOD'S SPIRIT** to search your heart for any seeds of bitterness that have already taken root there.
- **AGREE WITH GOD** that bitterness is a deadly poison, deceptive process, contagious plague, and cursed person that cannot be tolerated and only He can cure.
- **ACCEPT THE FORGIVENESS** that is found only in God's Son who drank the bitter cup of our sin on the cross and freely forgives those who repent of their bitterness toward God or others.
- **PUT AWAY ALL the ANGRY BITTERNESS** toward all those who have hurt you and replace it with the loving forgiveness that God has freely given you in Christ!

*"And do not bring sorrow to God's Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, he has identified you as his own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you. Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are his dear children. Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ. He loved us and offered himself as a sacrifice for us, a pleasing aroma to God." Eph 4:30-5:2 NLT*

Next Week

How to Avoid the Curse & Contagions of Bitterness