



## The Cure for the Contagion of Bitterness

Lesson Three • Hebrews 12:12-17

### Digging Up the Deadly Root of Bitterness

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

Stage 2 - **AVOID** the Curses that Bitterness Spreads

Stage 3 - **ADDRESS** the Contagion of Bitterness

Stage 4 - **APPLY** the Cure for Bitterness

## Address the CONTAGION of Bitterness

### What Is a Contagion?

- A **Contagious** Influence: *The rapid spread of a disease by physical contact*
- A **Corrupting** Influence: *The rapid spread of a harmful influence*
- A **Communicable** Influence: *The rapid spread of a feeling*

### Address the Contagion that...

#### 1. PREVENTS PEACE by causing trouble in relationships and communities.

*"Pursue peace with all men..." (12:14)*

#### 2. HINDERS HOLINESS by spreading defilement to others.

*"Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification (holiness) without which no one will see the Lord." (12:14)*

#### 3. FALLS SHORT of God's grace by not being saved.

*"See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; (12:15)*

#### Two Ways of Looking at This

- 1) "I may be bitter, but at least I am saved!"
- 2) "I am saved, therefore, I cannot and will not remain bitter!"

#### There is Only One Option Presented in the Bible

**REPENT** of your bitterness and **REPLACE** it with forgiveness.

#### 4. WAITS TOO LONG to Repent and Is Cursed with Being a Bitter Root that Spread the Deadly Fruit of Bitterness.

*"For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears. (12:17)*

- The longer you wait **the deeper** its roots grow in your heart.
- The longer you wait **the further** its deadly influence spreads.
- The longer you wait **the closer** you come to the point of no return.

What Is the Point of No Return?  
Much **SOONER** than you think and more **ABSOLUTE** than you desire!

## Apply the CURE for Bitterness

A General Plan Based on Hebrews 12:14-17

### 1. Make Every Effort to Pursue PEACE with Others. (v. 14)

*Work at living in peace with everyone... (NLT)*

- **ENJOYING** peace is the fruit of God's Spirit. *Galatians 5:19-21; Romans 8:6*
- **MAKING** peace is a characteristic of God's children. *Matthew 5:9*
- **PURSUING** peace is a responsibility of God's people. *Romans 12:18; 14:19-20*

*Pursuing peace is hard work and it is easy to give up. In fact, it is easy to get even more bitter as you pursue peace and others do not respond or get even meaner!*

*Dig Up the Root: **REACH OUT** with forgiveness and reconciliation!*

### 2. Make Every Effort to Pursue HOLINESS with God. (v. 14)

- Peace with others is not peace at **ANY PRICE**: *The price tag is that we must set aside our own sin and selfishness to pursue what is pleasing to God.*
- Peace with ourselves or others is never possible apart from peace **WITH GOD**. *Romans 5:1-5*
- What pleases God is a **PURE** heart that is free from bitterness. *Ephesians 4:30-32*

*Dig Up the Root: **SET APART** from bitterness to tenderness!*

### 3. Make Every Effort to Pursue GRACE in the Process. (v. 15)

- Uprooting bitterness is a **SOVEREIGN** work of God.
- Uprooting bitterness is a **SPIRITUAL** work of God.
- Uprooting bitterness is a **SUPERNATURAL** work of God.

*Dig Up the Root: **LOOK UP** to Christ, our only hope in time of need!*

### 4. Make Every Effort to Pursue REPENTANCE before It Is Too Late. (vv. 15-17)

- Repentance is a **change of heart** that leads a to a change of life.
- Repentance is a **replacement process** on several levels.

*Dig Up the Root: **TURN BACK** before it is too late!*

## A Specific Plan Based on Biblical Theology



### Time to Start Digging Up the Root of Bitterness

- **EXAMINE** our own hearts for the seeds, roots, sprouts, and fruits of bitterness.

**Make Every Effort:** Give it all you got to dig up the bitter root!

- **ENCOURAGE** the hearts of others.

**Look after Each Other:** See to it that no one becomes a bitter root with poisonous fruit!

*Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all. 1Thessalonians 5:14*

*And have mercy on those who waver; save others by snatching them out of the fire; have mercy on others, coupled with a fear of God, hating even the clothes stained by the flesh.” Jude 22-23 (NET)*

**There IS a LIFE of BLESSING in CHRIST on the OTHER SIDE of the CURSE of BITTERNESS!**

*Don't let past hurts, problem people, or present injustices rob you of the joy of being who you are in Christ. Repent of your bitterness and start the replacement process **TODAY**... before it is too late!*