

The Bible on Bitterness

<http://www.kt70.com/~jamesjpn/articles/Bitterness.htm>

DEFINITION OF BITTERNESS:

Holding on to or showing feelings of intense (strong) animosity (hatred, anger), resentment or vindictiveness (wanting to get back at someone).

Other words that describe it are: Merciless, unforgiving, holding a grudge.

Bitterness is also described as feelings resulting from something that is difficult to accept.

1. God's Word warns us against the dangers of bitterness...

Be on guard against it, because even a little root of bitterness can do much harm to you and others:

“Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled (contaminated)” (Hebrews 12:15).

Bitterness is a sin to be repented of:

“Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the gall (wrath, anger, trial) of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity” (Acts 8:22-23).

Command to Husbands:

“Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them” (Colossians 3:19).

Bitterness is nothing to be proud of:

“But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the Truth” (James 3:14).

2. Do not carry or keep bitterness, but replace it with love, kindness, and forgiveness...

“Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear (carry or keep) any grudge (bitterness) against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the Lord” (Leviticus 19:18).

“Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour (shouting or crying), and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice (desire to do harm): And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you” (Ephesians 4:31-32).

“For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (Matthew 6:14-15).

In His parable of the unmerciful servant, Jesus made it clear that we will suffer if we refuse to sincerely forgive our brethren:

“So likewise shall My Heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not everyone his brother their trespasses” (Matthew 18:23-35).

Even if someone has mistreated or "wronged" you, God's Love is love enough to forgive:

“And above all things have fervent love among yourselves: for love shall cover the multitude of sins” (1 Peter 4:8).

3. If you allow bitterness a place in your heart, it will eventually come out of your mouth in murmuring and complaining...

“Therefore, will I not refrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit, I will complain in the bitterness of my soul” (Job 7:11).

“Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness” (Romans 3:14b. See also Matthew 12:34b).

4. The Lord, in His Love, can deliver you from the sin of bitterness...

“I had great bitterness: but Thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for Thou hast cast all my sins behind Thy back” (Isaiah 38:17).

5. Since bitterness stems from feelings of anger and an unforgiving attitude towards others, here are some more solutions from the Word on how to avoid it...

“Let not the sun go down upon your wrath (don't harbour anger over night); Neither give place to the Devil” (Eph 4:26b-27).

“Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought (grievance) against thee (or vice versa); Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift” (Matthew 5:23-24).

“And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in Heaven may forgive you your trespasses” (Mark 11:25).

“Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye” (Colossians 3:13).

“Bitterness is also caused by holding on to bad or angry feelings about someone or something that happened, but the Lord tells us to forget the things that are past: Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before” (Philippians 3:13).

“God's Word often speaks of "renewing our minds," which implies letting go of the old; particularly any past grievances and bitternesses. And be not conformed to this World: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Romans 12:2).

“And be renewed in the spirit of your mind” (Ephesians 4:23).

“Bitterness is also described as the feelings resulting from something that is difficult to accept; so it's important to always remember that the Lord has a good purpose in everything that He allows to happen to us. We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose” (Romans 8:28).