

# Bitterness

# The Bruises of Satan

By Carroll Thompson  
An extract from his book, *The Bruises of Satan*

**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  
(Hebrews 12:15)**

## Khieu Samphon

In this generation, the most ignominious example of savagery and brutality has come out of Cambodia. At the head of this bloody regime stood a man who is responsible for killing millions of his own people.

Who is this Khieu Samphon of Cambodia? His classmates remember him as a quiet boy who never reacted when kicked, slapped and mistreated by other boys. As he grew up, he is described as a loner. He had no relationship with the opposite sex and is said to be sexually impotent. This quiet boy who never reacted, this young man who remained alone, had a volcano of bitterness and hatred coming out of past hurts that erupted, bringing destruction to his own people.

## Poison of the Soul

No man can live with bitterness; it is the poison of the soul. It can completely transform the character of a person. Hardness, severity, unforgiveness and hatred will characterise the person who is bitter. The poison of bitterness will come out in one's speech, since the subject of conversation flows out of personal hurts and injury. Vindictiveness will be expressed toward those who are considered responsible for the injury. Others are drawn into this stream of bitterness, and a fellowship is formed over bitter waters.

Bitterness is first detected in one's speech and then in one's attitude and actions. A bitter spirit is difficult to tolerate, unless you yourself have one. Bitterness has a way of attracting others with the same problems.

## David Berg

In our generation, groups have sprung up which have pulled young people into their fellowship. One of these groups, the Children of God, was started by David Berg, a sincere man of God in the beginning. Pastoring a small Christian Alliance church, he struggled to support his family.

Even though the church grew and there were members who were able to give, they did not see that the needs of the pastor's family were met. The family suffered from a lack of food and clothing. The hurt of this young pastor began to be felt in his sermons as he scolded the people for their failure in Christian commitment. The people responded in the same spirit, refusing to be condemned weekly from the pulpit. [After a while], they asked the young man to leave.

The hurt of his soul tore deeply into his being, and he wavered between belief and unbelief, between godlessness and God, and considered joining some radical group. [Eventually], he decided to start his own group that would follow Christian principles. Into the group flowed young people who also were hurt, bitter and disgusted with society, and the fellowship of bitterness began.

Out of bitterness comes deception. David Berg marked off society as doomed. The leaders of the group, who were supposed to lift the standard of righteousness, fell into immorality. Moral values were set aside, and occultism soon entered.

Finally, the founder stood forth claiming to be the prophet of God for this hour, daily receiving God's Word for His people. Immorality and deception has ravaged the whole group.

Here we see the results of bitterness: from bitterness to deception, from deception to immorality. The price of bitterness is high. No soul can sustain its poison and live. It is the black plague for the Christian.

## **Broken Relationships**

Bitterness also builds walls of isolation around the person. He retreats behind these walls, distrusting others and fearful of further hurts. Shut up inside himself, loneliness fills his life.

Bitterness leaves a trail of broken relationships. Little thought is given to cutting off one person or excluding another; hardness and severity are exhibited. The bitter person suffers from these broken relationships, and changes take place in his own life.

### **First, broken relationships will bring darkness into one's life**

The Scripture states,

“But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes” (1 John 2:11).

Rejection is a form of hatred. When you choose to break a [right, godly, sound] relationship, you are choosing to hate. No man can hate without darkness coming into his life. Most people seem to consider broken relationships of little consequence, but they are deceived.

The most severe consequence is realised when the bitter person loses his perspective of life, and all relationships thus become distorted. He begins to act unwisely; he does not see himself or others as they really are. His judgment becomes faulty. His life loses direction and he stumbles

along, confused and disoriented. Darkness has filled his life because of hatred and broken relationships.

### **Second, broken relationships will cause a person to become insensitive**

One cannot sustain a series of broken relationships without becoming hardened. A hard crust will form about the soul. The person becomes oblivious to the hurts he is causing others through his attitudes, words and actions. Totally shut up within himself, he becomes self-centered and does not consider the feelings and needs of others. This hardness of soul causes one to lose the capacity to feel, and the soul that does not feel is dead.

### **Third, broken relationships cause immaturity**

Emotional maturity comes from healthy interaction with others, and emotional growth ceases when one refuses to maintain healthy relationships. In other words, a person does not mature in isolation. Does not divorce in our generation speak of immaturity in our day? Does not selfishness and demanding of personal rights characterise this generation? Where are the traits of unselfishness, commitment, forgiveness, and trust that are the basic ingredients of a lasting relationships? Immaturity and broken relationships go hand in hand. There is a price to pay for maturity; it requires commitment, longsuffering and forgiveness until both parties are mature enough to contribute to one another's well being and happiness. Commitment to a relationship is the path to maturity.

## **The Enemy's Tool of Destruction**

Bitterness is the greatest tool of destruction the Enemy has at his disposal. No man of God can sustain himself in bitterness. The bleached bones of many servants of God lie along the trail of bitterness. It is the way of spiritual death.

Bitterness is poison to the soul, a poison that penetrates the whole being of the person. The most serious consequence is that it cuts off one from God. This warning is given in God's Word:

“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” (Hebrews 12:15).

Notice it cuts off one from the grace of God and becomes a source of constant trouble and torment in one's soul.

The preceding passage describes the person as ready to fall and admonishes,

“Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed. Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord” (Hebrews 12:12-14).

Here is the answer: “Follow peace.” Do not let bitterness produce hatred and broken relationships; maintain peace with all men at all costs.

## **Bitterness Towards God**

One must also be aware of bitterness toward God as a result of adverse circumstances or disappointments in life. One tends to forget God is not responsible for all the evil in the world.

The experience of Job is an example for all men. He refused to accuse God of injustice. Even though he did not understand, he waited patiently for the salvation of God. Friends tried to persuade him sin and judgment. His wife tried to divert him from trusting a God Who would permit such things. Yet he remained committed and trusting, believing the character of God to be just and merciful to those who call upon Him. He refused to be bitter. The work of the Enemy was not achieved; Job overcame him by refusing to be bitter.

This is a lesson for all Christians. Never find fault with God; do not become His accuser.

Bitterness toward God will destroy you. He is not your enemy. Wait upon Him, and He will be your salvation. The test is: Can you trust the character of God in the bad times as well as in the good times? Do you really know the character of your God?

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