

Letting

Go...

## of BITTERNESS

*"Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."*

– John 8:32

Have you ever felt hurt, betrayed, or disappointed with people? Have you been wounded so deeply that you don't know how to get over it? Have you found yourself consumed with thoughts of an offense and/or the offenders? Have you felt like the victim wanting to continually talk about your frustrations? Does anger and self-pity play a frequent role in your feelings?

We were never promised a fairytale life. We will experience hurt, pain, persecution, disappointment, and bewilderment. People will let us down, work will be hard, trials will come, and health may fail us... but we have to be very careful to not let the dangerous seeds of bitterness grow in our hearts.

Bitterness starts out with an offense and grows into crazy destructive roots that take over every area of your life. It holds you captive in a prison cell of emotional trauma.

*Fill in the blanks below to see what God's Word has to say about how we should handle bitterness.*

**Hebrews 12:15** " \_\_\_\_\_ that no one falls short of the grace of God and that \_\_\_\_\_ grows up to cause \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_."

**Ephesians 4:31** " \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice."

### **Solution to Bitterness**

Jesus is the Way, Truth, and the Life (John 14:6). In John 8:32 He talks about knowing His TRUTH that sets us free. What truth sets us free and unlocks the prison of bitterness? \_\_\_\_\_

**Forgive** defined by dictionary.com  
[verb:]  
to give up all claim on account  
to cease to feel resentment against  
to cancel an indebtedness  
to pardon an offense or an offender

The ONLY way to get rid of or remove the roots of bitterness is to understand and accept God's forgiveness and grace for us... and then to extend that to others. As God forgives, so we too must forgive others.

What do you learn from Jesus' example in Luke 23:33-34? \_\_\_\_\_

## God's Forgiveness

What do the following verses say about God's forgiveness of our sins?

Colossians 2:13-14 \_\_\_\_\_

Psalms 103:12 \_\_\_\_\_

Isaiah 43:25 \_\_\_\_\_

Ephesians 2:4-5 \_\_\_\_\_

## Our Response

What do the following verses show us what our response to bitterness should be?

Colossians 3:13 \_\_\_\_\_

Mark 11:25 \_\_\_\_\_

Ephesians 4:32 \_\_\_\_\_

Nothing about forgiveness is easy, but it is **always** right!

What does Matthew 6:14-15 say is a consequence of unforgiveness? \_\_\_\_\_

What practical actions do the following verses tell us to do to those who hurt us?

Leviticus 19:18 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Romans 12:17-21 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Luke 6:27-28 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Summarize Matthew 18:21-35 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How do you relate to this story? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Is there someone you need to forgive? Write out your action plan to become free from bitterness: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## **Wrap up:**

I must let go of \_\_\_\_\_ and use the key of \_\_\_\_\_ to

unlock my prison cell and set me free.

## **Passage Index** (NIV 1984 unless otherwise stated)

**Hebrews 12:15** "See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many."

**Ephesians 4:31** "Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice."

**Luke 23:33-34** "When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. <sup>34</sup>Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.' And they divided up his clothes by casting lots."

**Colossians 2:13-14** "When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, <sup>14</sup>having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross."

**Psalms 103:12** "as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us."

**Isaiah 43:25** "I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more."

**Ephesians 2:4-5** "But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, <sup>5</sup>made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved."

**Colossians 3:13** "Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you."

**Mark 11:25** "And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins."

**Ephesians 4:32** "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."

**Matthew 6:14-15** "For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. <sup>15</sup>But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins."

**Leviticus 19:18** "Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord."

**Romans 12:17-21** "Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. <sup>18</sup>If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. <sup>19</sup>Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: 'It is mine to avenge; I will repay' says the Lord. <sup>20</sup>On the contrary: If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head. <sup>21</sup>Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."

**Luke 6:27-28** " But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, <sup>28</sup>bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you."

**Matthew 18:21-35** "Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, 'Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?'<sup>22</sup> Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants.<sup>24</sup> As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold was brought to him.<sup>25</sup> Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.<sup>26</sup> At this the servant fell on his knees before him. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.'<sup>27</sup> The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.<sup>28</sup> But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins. He grabbed him and began to choke him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he demanded.<sup>29</sup> His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.'<sup>30</sup> But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt.<sup>31</sup> When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened.<sup>32</sup> Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to.<sup>33</sup> Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?'<sup>34</sup> In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.<sup>35</sup> This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart."