

Reading: Ephesians 4:30-32; Hebrews 12:14,15

Topic: The Harmfulness of A Bitter Spirit

INTRODUCTION: Everyone would like to have a life without any _____, obstacles or difficulties, but unfortunately, the reality of life is that there will be all of those things at some points in our lives and we have to choose between _____ what God allows or becoming bitter.

I. BITTERNESS CAN HAPPEN:

A. *Circumstances of Life:*

1. Nobody enjoys problems, obstacles, difficulties, opposition, sickness or _____, but everyone is going to experience some or all of these at some _____ in life. John 16:33
2. Some people are called upon to _____ more than others, and this is a challenge for any child of God to _____ in life without becoming discouraged or even bitter. Ps. 73:11-16

B. *The Story of Naomi:*

1. Naomi was a godly lady with a good husband and two sons and when a _____ struck the land in which they lived, the family moved to the _____ of Moab and settled there.
2. Their comfortable life in Moab was shattered when Naomi's husband _____ unexpectedly, which meant that her primary source of income and _____ was gone.
3. Naomi would next have to depend on her two married sons for financial _____ and support but the two sons both tragically _____ also, leaving her without any means of sustenance.
4. Naomi's comfortable life had gone downhill very unexpectedly and quickly and she was now _____ to return back to her homeland to _____.
5. When Naomi returned back to her homeland, she had became _____ because of the circumstances of her personal _____. Ruth 1:19-21

II. BITTERNESS CAN BE HARMFUL:

A. *To An Individual:*

1. When bitterness begins to build in the _____ of an individual, it becomes a hindrance and an obstacle to both _____ and worship. Col. 3:19; I Pet. 3:7
2. When the spirit of an individual becomes _____, the flow of the Spirit of God and the blessings that accompany it become tainted and the plan of God for that _____ is thwarted and delayed. Ja. 3:11

B. *To Others:*

1. Bitter people not only are _____ themselves, they also affect others who they are in contact with and they cause _____ to them also. Heb. 12:14,15
2. This bitterness affects people in two ways:
 - a. The bitter person is also an _____ person who lashes out at others around them.
 - b. The bitter person can also spread their _____ spirit to sympathetic listeners who listen to the story of one who feels they have been unfairly treated by life and by others. Ps. 64:3,4
3. Bitterness also affects one's ability to share the _____ with others, for the spiritual condition of the bitter person dims their ability to understand the perilous condition of the _____. 2 Pt. 2:9

III. THE CURE FOR BITTERNESS:

A. Recognize It:

1. The first step in dealing with bitterness is to be able to recognize it in one's own _____ and life, because there are people who are in self-denial when it _____ to dealing with it.
2. Bitterness can hide itself behind a _____ of excusing oneself by believing that one is justified to behave in an un-Christlike manner because of what _____ have done to us.

B. Repent of It:

1. Once one has recognized that there is bitterness in the _____, one must understand that this is not pleasing to God and therefore one needs to _____ of it and change. Acts 8:21-23
2. God will _____ us if we develop bitterness inside, but His conviction is for the purpose of leading us to a place of repentance and then He will _____ us. I Jn. 1:8,9

C. Let God Help You Heal From It:

1. God is not just in the physical healing of our _____ business, but He is also in the healing and restoration of broken hearts and _____ spirits. Lk. 4:18
2. God is able to remove bitterness and replace it with His _____ and joy but we must allow Him to perform the spiritual operation that is required to bring about the _____ and restoration.

CONCLUSION: Everyone will be tested by the test of bitterness at some _____ in life and the temptation of our weak flesh is to allow bitterness to creep in and take over our lives, but God is wanting us to turn to Him and cry for _____ to overcome and defeat the plan of the adversary, and let bitterness be turned into betterness. Phil. 2:13