**BETTER TOGETHER** in 2022

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**Fill Up**

**The Emptiness of Bitterness**





Bitterness always begins with a **hurt** – real or perceived.

We have all been hurt – big hurts or little hurts, real or perceived. We have all been hurt … but we never set out to become bitter.

Untended offenses take **root** and grow.

*See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no “root of bitterness” springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled.*

*Hebrews 12:15*

Sin is a bitter thing, it will grow in our hearts like weeds grow in our gardens after heavy rain – it will spring up before we are aware. Charles Spurgeon

Ahithophel – 2 Samuel 16 and 17:23

Warning signs of bitterness:

* Imaginary conversations
* Replaying a convo or experience in your head over and over
* Feel the need to tell someone what he/she did
* Easily offended by this person
* Strong negative reactions when you are around
* Remember the details for months or years
* Keeping a list of offenses

Roots of bitterness spring up to produce **rotten** fruit.

*Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.*

*Proverbs 4:23*

The rotten fruit of bitterness **poisons.**

*For I see you are full of bitterness and captive to sin.*

*Acts 8:23 (NIV)*

Bitterness seeds unforeseen behavior.

Hatred, Murder, Suicide. It can cause us to speak and act in ways that we probably could never see ourselves doing. It can cause us to show up like we do not want to show up.

Bitterness sickens others.

Weeds never stay in our yard … they spread.

Bitterness grieves the Holy Spirit.

*And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.*

*Ephesians 4:30-31*

We all experience hurt – pain – offense. We all will be treated unfairly in life. These hurts can be minor or they can also be big, monstrous, tragic events.

We do not choose our hurt; we choose our **response**.

*Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.*

*Ephesians 4:31*

Will you let bitterness take root? Let it spring up? Let if impact your life? Let it lead to an empty, angry, disappointed life?

It may not be a person causing your bitterness … but rather a situation or life circumstance. Maybe you have experienced something, gone through something, or something that you just do not think is right or fair or just … and there is no one to blame, in your mind, but God.  
  
We do not choose our circumstances; we choose our response.

Will you let bitterness take root? Let it spring up? Let if impact our life? Let it lead to an empty, angry, disappointed life?

Or do you want to choose a full life? A life not full of the emptiness of bitterness … but a life that experiences the fullness of God?

Not **choosing** is a choice to let bitterness grow.

**Forgiveness** kills the weeds of bitterness all the way to the root.

*Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.*

*Ephesians 4:32*

Choosing forgiveness begins with **embracing** grace.

*Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more…*

*Romans 5:20*

*There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.*

*Romans 8:1-2*

Embracing forgiveness opens the door to the **examined** life.

*You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.*

*Matthew 7:5*

*But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light…*

*Ephesians 5:13-14*

Becoming WHOLE people, who take the WHOLE Gospel, to the WHOLE World

Fellowship Mission

**Trust** God – He is who he says He is, and He does what He says He will do.

*Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it[[i](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+12&version=ESV" \l "fen-ESV-28249i" \o "See footnote i)] to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.”*

*Romans 12:19*

*For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.*

*Ephesians 6:12*

**Cancel** the debt.

See others the way **God** sees them.

*When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents … And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt.*

*Matthew 18:24&27*

Again, and again, and again, and again.