

## Session 1: Bitterness Defined

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### I. The Poison of the Serpent

- A. Piercing – to bite
  - to affect deeply
- B. Penetrating – overcoming
  - To affect the mind
  - To cause to feel
- C. Perpetrating- the evil
  - The destructive damage of an evil act
- D. Pollution – the spread
  - To make unclear or impure
  - To taint with guilt
  - To use for carnal or idolatrous purposes
  - To corrupt morally and physically

### II. The Provocation of the Poison

- A. Grief
  - The pain of mind produced by loss, misfortunes, injuries, or evil of any kind
- B. Anger
  - To arouse resentment (a violent passion)
  - To provoke revenge or a desire to express another's fault
  - To choke, strangle, make narrow, to be pressed, vexed, anxious
- C. Discontentment
  - Dissatisfaction at any present state of things
  - To make uneasy at the present state
- D. Rebellion
  - Resistance to authority
  - To act in opposition, to strive against, to counteract, defeat, or frustrate
  - To disappoint – unyielding resistance to the progress of another power or purpose
- E. Contention
  - Argumentative, controversial, perverse
- F. Disobedience
  - Refusal to obey – doing what is prohibited
  - Not observant of rules or duties, non-compliance
- G. Stubbornness
  - Inflexible
  - Fixed in opinion, not to be moved or persuaded by reasons
  - Harsh, stiff, rough

### III. The Visual Characteristics of the Poison

- A. Continual unhappiness, grief, distress, or depression
- B. Exasperation or increasing irritation, anger, resentment, aggravations (overly sensitive to irritations)
- C. Defeating jealousy, suspicion and fears
  - Deeply affected by the exaltation, pleasures, or advantages of others that we desire for ourselves
  - Suspicious that we do not receive the affections or respect we see shown to others
  - The fear that a rivalry may rob us of the affections of the one whom we love or that this has already happened
- D. Producing in others misery, sorrow, grief, distress

Note: Floating bitterness may be seen by some who are in constant contact with an individual but not seen by others.

## Session 2: Bitterness Portrayed

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1. Position without possession
2. Disobedience preceded or revealed by a deep hurt
3. Expected acceptance and/or unexpected rejection

### **Bitterness in the Rebellious Spirit (the life of Cain)**

1. Rejection is received from the one acceptance was desired or expected (Gen. 4:1-5).
  - A disobedient spirit may precede or be revealed through bitterness.
2. Bitterness results from the lack of attention, consideration and compassion one expects for his effort (Gen. 4:5a).
3. The two major elements of bitterness are anger and jealousy (Gen. 4:5b).
4. Bitterness reflects itself through a downcast appearance (Gen. 4:5c).
5. Bitterness is very expressive and visual to others (Gen. 4:6).
  - Bitterness needs questioned accountability.
6. Bitterness must be reasoned with (Gen. 4:7).
  - Making one's course of life line up with what is pleasing to God reverses the effects of bitterness, changing the character and the visual appearance.
  - To offend the Lord by offending another and receiving a just punishment for one's action must be subdued.
7. Bitterness can produce a mentality bent on disobedience that runs head-long into distressful punishment that also causes one to feel separated and isolated (Gen. 4:8-14).

### **Bitterness in the Submissive Spirit (the life of Hannah)**

1. Bitterness can result from position without possession or benefits of the position (1 Sam. 1:1-2).
2. Bitterness with a submissive spirit can be overcome even under perverse ministries (1 Sam. 1:3).
3. Bitterness and a submissive spirit do not hinder dependence, provisions and love (1 Sam. 1:4-5).
4. Long term adversity attempts to fix one's thoughts on what God is withholding or on what one is not receiving, which provokes distress and unhappiness (1 Sam. 1:6-7).
5. Bitterness, even to a submissive spirit, can overpower the joy produced by loving acceptance, the plentiful provisions and even the joy and grateful worship that one should have unto the Lord (1 Sam. 1:8).
6. Bitterness with a submissive spirit can be dealt with through:
  - A continued pursuit of the Lord
  - An outpouring of the soul in truthful prayer
  - A self-sacrificing vow that grants the Lord ownership of the source of the distress and the glory that will come from it
7. A submissive spirit with a truthful heart will always experience the healing hand of the Lord in removing any and all sources of bitter-causing situations.

## Session 3: Bitterness Counteracted

As Illustrated in Matthew 18

Offenses which produce bitterness are counteracted by:

- Submission (Matt. 18:15-20)
  - Freedom
  - Accountability
  - Prayer
1. A forgiving spirit has no boundaries by which revenge becomes justified (Matt.18:21-22).
  2. Forgiveness is the continual responsibility the Lord expects in Christian character.
  3. A forgiven spirit begins with the realization of being held accountable for a person's own indebtedness (Matt. 18:23-25).
  4. A forgiven spirit comes from the realization that one's need for forgiveness extends beyond any ability or timeframe that would allow one to make up for his own offenses, transgressions, or indebtedness (Matt. 18:24).
  5. A forgiven spirit is developed and maintained by the realization that without forgiveness great and long term consequences will result.
  6. A forgiven spirit realizes its position and responds in humility, reverence and patience (Matt. 18:26).
  7. A forgiven spirit experiences the compassion of the Lord that is known through the freedom it senses (Matt.18:27).
  8. A forgiven spirit is not necessarily forgiving (Matt. 18:28-30).
  9. A forgiven spirit will always be challenged by the offenses of a fellow servant (Matt. 18:31-34).
  10. A forgiven person is expected to be the means through which forgiveness sets others free from their indebtedness.
  11. A forgiven person is not expected or allowed to be a source of bondage.
  12. A forgiven person that does not forgive places others and themselves in distressful bondage.
  13. As bitterness is contagious, so must forgiveness become the antidote.

### Looking at Bitterness in a Forgiven Person

1. Bitterness begins with a selfish expectation from a heart that lacks consideration for others' spiritual condition.
2. Bitterness produces an insensitive spirit that lacks patience.
3. Bitterness is visualized through distress, discontentment with fellow servants, oppression from life situations and discontentment with the present state of living.

Note: Bitterness in a Christian is like a man in a boat struggling against a strong oppositional wind.