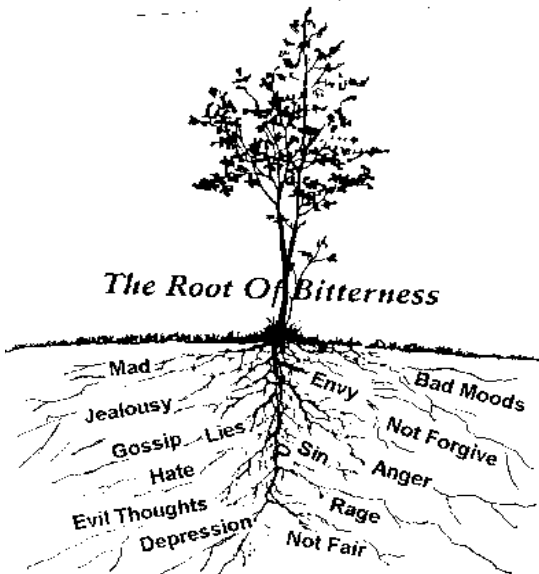


SWM BOOKLET SERIES

THE ROOT OF BITTERNESS

**By
Ted & Carlene Camp**



MB11- Bitterness

Silent Word Ministries, Inc.

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Root of Bitterness

**"Follow peace with all men, and holiness,
without which no man shall see the Lord:**

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 12:14-15.

***Sin has destroyed many people
but bitterness
has destroyed many more.***

What does the word **"bitterness"** mean? The dictionary defines bitterness as having harsh and unpleasant thoughts and feelings toward another; an unforgiving spirit against others; inner feelings of grief, pain and misery; feelings of deep rejection, anger and hurt. Many families, friendships, lives and ministries have been destroyed by bitterness. **Bitterness** is compared to a **root**, **"root of bitterness springing up."** If it is not destroyed, it will continually grow and many will be destroyed. **"many be defiled."**

The Roots of Bitterness - Roots are **unseen**. They grow under the ground. They are crooked and ugly. Bitterness is also covered but it exists within unseen. It also is crooked and ugly. Bitterness, just like roots of weeds, needs to be carefully dug up before they can be destroyed. Bitterness usually begins from hurtful and painful times. There are many causes of bitterness; unfaithful/abusive husband; abusive parents; rejection; physical handicaps; deep hurt by friends; always is hard time in life; neglect; poor physical appearance; rebellious children; abusive children; life seems unfair; poverty; abandonment; poor health; illegitimate birth; shame in the family; death of a loved one, etc. **What is causing your bitterness?** You must face your problem become you can solve your problem. Bitterness hurts you more than the other person. Admit it; analyze it; attack it; dig it up and destroy it.

Bitterness in Families

The home is **not** a place for **strife** or bitterness. Home is the place where bitterness and strife should be shut out and love should be shut in. When the home is not right, then nothing is right. There should be **no bitterness** in your family. If there is bitterness or strife in your home then dig it up and destroy it.

"Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them."

--Colossians 3:19.

Bitterness in the Church

An easy way to kill a church quickly is to have members with bitterness. It will grow until the church is defiled and destroyed. The church can be consumed with it. The church will grow and be blessed when there is a spirit of **unity** and fellowship.

**"But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts,
glory not, and lie not against the truth.
This wisdom descendeth not from above,
but is earthly, sensual, devilish."**

--James 3:14-15

Bitterness in your Conversation

What you say with your mouth is evidence of what is in your heart. Words have destroyed nations, families, and ministries.

Words can heal or hurt!

**"Doth a fountain send forth at the same place
sweet water and bitter?"**

--James 3:11

How to Become Better and Not Bitter

Don't let bitterness control and consume you. Remember the person who is bitter is the one who is hurt the most. Bitterness will not accomplish anything but more bitterness. Life is too short to be bitter. Seek to become better not bitter. The solution to bitterness begins with you. Some must yield. The one who yields usually has more character. Let it be you.

**"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger,
and clamour, and evil speaking,
be put away from you, with all malice."**

-- Ephesians 4:31

Forgiveness Will Kill Bitterness

When two people are in disagreement, all that is needed is for one to give in. Remember, the one with the strongest character will do what is right. Learn to attack the problem and not the person. All Christians should be reasonable. It is not who is right, but what is right. The relationship has been broken and it needs to be restored. It cannot be restored without it being resolved. Remember how things once were before the bitterness. As the Lord has forgiven you, be willing to forgive others. Forgiveness kills bitterness!

**"For if ye forgive men their trespasses,
your heavenly Father will also forgive you:
But if ye forgive not men their trespasses,
neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."**

--Matthew 6:14-15

Personal Bitterness

Sometimes only **you** may know of your bitterness. You may not need to go to the other person but you should go to God. Then, change your attitude towards that person. Let God give you peace of mind and heart. Ask God to forgive you and then forgive yourself. When you see the person to whom you were bitter, be kind and forgiving as the Lord forgives you. Sometimes just a kind word, shaking hands, a hug, or pat can break the barrier of bitterness. Two things that can quickly destroy you and give you bad health are **bitterness** and **guilt**. Note: The Lord has given His pattern and program for forgiveness. What works between you and God can also work between you and another person. Notice how it begins, "If we confess our sins..." It begins when one is sorry and seeks forgiveness. Do not begin with "you" but begin with "I." Usually after the act of forgiveness the two are even closer than before. Why? Because they did not want to lose their relationships. It works with you and the Lord and it can also work with the two of you. Try it!

**"If we confess our sins, he is faithful
and just to forgive us our sins,
and to cleanse us
from all unrighteousness."**

--1 John 1:9.

Depression

What does “depression” mean?

1. to feel low with sadness or gloom.
2. emotional dejection. withdrawal because of an objective reason.
3. to press down
4. It can also mean deep discouragement and deep frustration.

Many millions of people suffer depression. Usually women are **twice** as likely to experience depression than men. Women with small children are especially vulnerable because they are often emotionally and socially isolated. Not all depressed people are sad. They can have “**highs**” and “**lows**” - swing mood cycles. Depression is more than feeling sad, blue or down in the dumps. One in twenty people suffer depression. Depression can become a way of life. Depression can control your thinking and feelings.

Symptoms Of Depression - Mood swings, loss of appetite, withdrawal, bouts of discouragement, nervousness, anxiety attacks, fussy, irritable, cranky, complaining, unhappy and a bad case of the “**blues**” that continues for weeks and months. Often the physical appearance changes; walk with drooped shoulders; sloppy dress; personal hygiene neglected; sad countenance, etc.

Can Christians Be Depressed? Yes, many great men in the Bible suffered from depression. Many great preachers and Christians in the past and even today suffer from depression. Some people feel that depression is simply a way of life. There will be times when all people will be discouraged and depressed. But, for the Christian, it should **not** be a way of life.

There is **clinical depression** which needs professional attention and treatment. This type of depression is a **medical illness** the same as diabetes, high blood pressure or heart disease. If a person has a headache he takes treatment with an aspirin. Some people who are clinically depressed should seek professional help and treatment. Do **not** feel guilty or sensitive about seeking a doctor for a mental health problem.

You would take an aspirin for a headache, you should also seek help when you have an heart ache. There is **mild depression** that many, even Christians, may experience. Even Paul had an **emotional battle** at one time. He **even despaired** of life (II Corinthians 1:8).

Four Wrong Steps Down

The Cause of Depression

Be advised: This study does **not** discuss clinical depression but only mild and **spiritual** depression which can be overcome and treated with a proper Biblical outlook and right attitude. When troubles come, it is important for Christians to respond correctly and have the right outlook and attitude. Do you have chronic depression? Is it a sin to be discouraged and depressed? How can you help someone who is depressed? We hope the following articles will be helpful. There are usually four downward steps that lead to despair.

Step One: Discouragement - God never uses a discouraged Christian. Discouragement usually comes when bad things happen. Maybe you have problems with family or friends. You could be discouraged because of finances, failed expectations, bad health or a feeling that life is not fair. What discourages you? Is it a sin to be discouraged? No, because everyone has times of discouragement. But when you stay discouraged and start complaining, then it becomes sin. **Are You Discouraged?**

Step Two: Disappointment - Maybe you have become disappointed because of your work, bad news, problems in the family and with friends, illness, an accident, love life, just life itself. Sometimes things can happen and life will never be the same again. Life is filled with disappointments. Bad things can happen to Christians. **Are you disappointed?**

Step Three: Depression - The **third** step becomes a life of gloom, rejection, no use give up, blaming others, leave me alone, I don't care, sadness, and bitterness. Many Christians go into depression and give up on life. The third step of depression is a sin. Do not left depression overcome you, but you must overcome it. **Are you depressed?**

Step Four: Despair - This means to give up hope of things becoming better or changing. This person may say, "Just let me die." Remember, even the great apostle Paul **despaired** of life, "**We despaired even of life**" (2 Corinthians 1:8). A person in **despair** does not care if he lives or dies. A person in despair feels he has lost any reason to live and has no hope. This is wrong. It is a sin. God is in Heaven. There is always a reason to live. There is hope. It is important for you to examine yourself. See your weakness and ask God to help you change to become a better person. Don't seek to change others, seek to change yourself. **Are you despaired?**

FOUR WRONG ACTIONS AND ATTITUDES

People who become depressed are usually no longer in control of their life. They will have bad attitudes and actions. Their ways will be moody, complaining, fussy, sour and bitter. They have wrong actions and can become carnal Christians. They stop living and acting like Christians.

1. Depressed people **see** things wrong. They see things negatively. Because they feel bad, they think bad and everything becomes wrong.

2. Depressed people **think** wrong. Things that they see and hear become wrong. They think that the pastor, friends, family and church members no longer care. They think they have no worth and everyone and everything is against them. This is wrong. Usually depression is an inside job. It starts within and must be solved within. Your peace needs to be restored.

3. Depressed people **say** wrong. They easily hurt other people. It is easy to hurt those that you love the most. Sometimes caring people turn away because of the hurtful words.

4. Depressed people **do** wrong. They act like people who are not Christians. They become angry at the people who love them the most. When a person is depressed, it is easy to make wrong decisions. Depression can happen to everyone, including you.

Be cautious and careful during the times of depression. You can make decisions or statements only to regret them later. **Never** make any life changing decisions when you are depressed. At this time you are not in control physically, mentally and spiritually. You cannot **see** clearly, **think** straight, and it is easy to **say** the wrong things and **do** the wrong actions. You are not in control of your life when you depressed. It is important that you mind and heart both agree before you can have the peace of God that passes all understanding.

“And the **peace of God**, which passeth all understanding,
shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”
- Philippians 4:7

You cannot have peace when there is a conflict within your mind and heart. Your mind and heart must agree before you can have inward peace. Your mind affects your heart, and your heart affects your mind. God works in your heart, and the devil can work in your mind. God does not speak to your flesh, but He speaks through His Spirit into your heart. Your heart is the real you. So do not let your flesh and mind control your body. Be controlled by the Spirit and Scriptures. Learn to think right and you will become right. As a man thinketh in his heart so is he (Proverbs 23:7). You must seek to think right and agree with your heart. Wrong **thinking** creates confusion and conflict

***It is not what happens to you, about you, before you,
but what happens “within”
you that makes the difference.***

That's E'nuff

Isaiah 55:9

“For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are **my ways** higher than your ways,
and **my thoughts** than your thoughts”

God has higher **ways** I cannot see.
God has higher **thoughts** I cannot understand.
His **ways** and **thoughts** I do not see or know,
but I know Him and that's e'nuff!

Ted Camp, SWM

FOUR WAYS OUT OF DEPRESSION

The Cure for Depression

1. Lean on the Lord - Let God work for you. If you cannot change the problem, give it to God. Stop trying to fix everything yourself and start trusting God to help. Job said, **“though God slay me, yet will I trust Him.”** Don’t look at the problem or people but look up to God. Take responsibility for yourself. Don’t stay alone in dark places. Go outside in the sunshine, look at God’s creation, and be thankful for life. When you can’t see the **hand** of God, then look for the **heart** of God.

2. Learn From the Experience - Learn and change your life to become better because of what has happened to you. **“It is good for me that I have been afflicted...that I might learn”** (Psalm 119:71). Pray and read your Bible. Find hope and comfort from God. Talk to God about your depression. You can tell Him anything. He will understand. You can trust Him.

3. Love the Lord and Stay Close to Him - **“Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you”** (1 Peter 5:7). No matter what happens, keep going and stay close to the Lord, your family and friends. **God Cares!**

Suggestion - Get a prayer partner to pray with you. Seek a Godly friend you can trust who will listen to you. Don’t try to do it alone. Let others help you. Don’t stop living but start to live again. Ask God to give you a new beginning. Live one day at a time and rejoice in it. **“This is the day which the Lord hath made, we will rejoice and be glad in it”** (Psalm 118:24). Don’t look at the problems, but look at the possibilities. You cannot change the past but you can change the future. **You may have no choice but to simply start again!**

4. Look to the Lord - Don’t look at the problem or people who perhaps caused your depression. Look to Jesus. **“Looking unto Jesus”** (Hebrews 12:2). Keep going no matter what happens. As you **overcome** your depression there will be a time when you realize it is finally behind you. God gave you the victory because you responded correctly. One day, as you trust the Lord, you will learn that all things do work together for good (Romans 8:28). The Lord is too wise to do wrong, and too good to do bad!

Remember, everyone at times will suffer from depression. You are not alone. You do not have to be defeated. Recognize your need, analyze the cause, seek help from God, confide in a good friend, get a prayer partner, take responsibility for your life, don't expect immediate change but continually look to God. A good Christian will keep going no matter what happens. Other people have faced the same problem you have and they have not stopped. A failure is not someone who fails, but someone who quits. As long as there is a God, there is **hope!**

Learn to Respond and not Resist - The more you **resist** the longer your **"thorn"** may **remain** and may not be **removed**. After you have suffered awhile and responded correctly then one day you will slowly become stronger, sweeter and more sensitive. When a person remains bitter then they have not learned from the trial nor have they responded correctly to the Lord. When you have responded correctly the depression will slowly fade and be replaced with His peace. You will be stronger and sweeter than before so you can help others with depression. Always remember the famous four words, **"It came to pass."** Depression as grief can also fade away with time and help. Overcoming usually involves the **process** of pain. You may need to start experiencing a **"new normal"** so your subconscious mind also agrees with your new way of thinking. Always realize that most of the things that depress you are false and untrue. Even if the worse thing happens it usually is not as bad you thought it would be. Worry has never solved one problem or dried one tear. There needs to be a time when you stop resisting and start responding to the Lord and let Him help you. You need to **stop trying**, and **start trusting the Lord**. Cast all your cares upon Him because He cares for you. "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you." (1 Peter 5:7). Cast means to roll it off you and roll it on Him. If it is upon you than it is not upon Him. After you correctly respond to your suffering you should be stronger, sweeter, and more sensitive as a Christian. God's grace is sufficient!

"But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you."

-- 1 Peter 5:10

Bible Forgiveness

What does the word “**forgiveness**” mean?

Dictionary Definition of Forgiveness:

1. to grant pardon for or to.
2. to cancel (a debt or payment).
3. to cease to feel resentment against.
4. It means to remove, erase, cancel or have paid in full.

**Unforgiveness divides
but forgiveness brings unity.**

Forgiveness for the Sinner

A person who is not saved does **not** have peace with God. He is separated from God. There is no rest or peace for the person not saved (Isaiah 57:20). There is no hope for the unsaved person (1 Thessalonians 4:13). God has only **one way for a sinner to be forgiven** and that way is Jesus Christ (John 1:12; 14:6; Romans 10:13; Acts 4:12). When people accept Jesus Christ to forgive their sins, they have peace with God and their sins are forgiven (Romans 5:1). Joining a church or trying to do good will not forgive a person's sins. The only way to be forgiven of God is to accept His Son, Jesus Christ as your Saviour. When you are saved, you no longer are called a sinner but a child of God. You are born into the family of God. God becomes your “**Heavenly Father.**” You have peace with God. Only God can give you true **peace** within your mind and heart (Philippians 4:7).

Forgiveness for Christians

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). Sins of God's children must be confessed or judged. When a son does wrong, the father does not kick him out of the house but he still loves his son. As a child of God you do not need to be saved again but you need to come to your **father** and ask forgiveness. God promises that if you **confess** your sins that He will **cleanse** and **forgive**.

The Words of 1 John 1:9

"IF WE" Paul was a Christian so the word **"we"** means Christians.

"CONFESS" means to **agree** with God about your sins. Confess means also that you desire to stop your sins. You need to confess to God not man. Tell God that you are sorry. When you confess then God will cleanse. Confess your sins to God and tell Him you are sorry!

"OUR SINS" Sins break fellowship with God our Father. Name your sins and confess that you have done wrong. Do not try to excuse sins.

"HE IS FAITHFUL" God is faithful as a Father to love and forgive you. God will always do what is right! He is God!

"AND JUST" This means that God will do what is right. God is fair and good. He does not see our sins but He sees His Son in our place. He will forgive you.

"TO FORGIVE US OUR SINS" God will cancel the sin. It will be paid in full. He forgives and pardons the sin as though it was never done. Forgive means to cancel it! You are forgiven immediately by God, but consequences may remain and it may take time for others to forgive.

"AND CLEANSE US FROM ALL UNRIGHTEOUSNESS" To cleanse means that it is completely washed away and gone. Christians can sing my sins are **G-O-N-E** (Hebrews 10:17; 8:12).

3. Forgiveness To Others - Forgiveness is not natural. It is difficult to say, **"I'm sorry."** Yet it is harder to say **"I forgive you. It is all right."** Forgiveness simply means that you will not bring the subject up again to the person, another person, yourself or even to God. You choose **"not to remember"** as the Lord.

A. WHY SHOULD YOU FORGIVE?

1. Because God commands it. **"Forbearing one another and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye"** (Colossians. 3:13).

2. Because you need forgiveness. **"For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses"** (Matthew 6:14-15).

3. Because you want to be like Christ. **"For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps"** (1 Peter 2:21). Christ suffered when He did no wrong but He forgave.

B. HOW CAN YOU FORGIVE?

1. Believe that God will judge all sin. (We see the person who has hurt us walking around free and see no judgment in their life.) God has not forgotten and judgment is coming. **"...the wicked shall not be unpunished but the seed of the righteous shall be delivered"** (Proverbs 11:21). Sin and wrong will not go unpunished. Let God help!
2. Remember God has forgiven you and for Christ's sake you are to forgive others. You will never regret it!
3. Make the decision to forgive. It will give you freedom of mind and spirit. You need to replace the bitterness with peace.
4. Renew your mind by meditating on the Scriptures. Memorize some verses and when you begin to think about the wrong, say to yourself, **"Cancel, cancel"** and then think about the Scripture.
5. Replace your bitterness and unforgiving spirit with love. Remember, attack the **problem** but not the **person**. All bitterness can be solved with forgiveness and love.

**"Thou shalt keep him in perfect peace
whose mind is stayed on thee..."**

--Isaiah 26:3

C. HOW TO LOVE AND FORGIVE OTHERS:

- (a) Bless them that curse you and hurt you.
 - (b) Do good to them that curse you and hurt you.
 - (c) Pray for them that hurt you and persecute you.
 - (d) God can change my attitude toward those who have hurt me.
1. Forgiveness between **you** and **another person**. Go to that person and make it right. You forgive them first because God has forgiven you (Matthew 5:25).
 2. Forgiveness between **husband** and **wife**. Husbands are to love their wives. Wives are to be submissive to their husbands. The one who forgives is the strongest and best Christian. It is important that husbands and wives learn to quickly forgive each other (1 Peter 3:7). Bitterness can destroy a marriage!
 3. Forgiveness between **parents** and **children**. It is important for the family to be in unity and love. Parents should forgive children and children should forgive parents (Colossians 3:21). Bitterness can drive parents and children away from each other!

4. Forgiveness between **Christians** and **the church**. When a Christian sins openly, it hurts the church. He should ask the church (people) to forgive him (Galatians 6:1). Bitterness will effect others!

5. Forgiveness between **you** and **God**. When you sin is only between you and God then go to God alone and ask Him for forgiveness (Amos 3:3). You know when you are not right with God. You know when you need to be right with God!

D. HOW OFTEN SHOULD YOU FORGIVE?

**“Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord,
how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him?
till seven times? Jesus saith unto him,
I say not unto thee, Until seven times:
but, Until seventy times seven.”**

-- Matthew 18:21-22.

Jewish Tradition - The Jewish tradition of forgiveness was to forgive at least **three** times, so Peter doubled this and added one for **seven** times. The Lord surprised him with an answer to forgive **490** times. This simply means to always be willing to forgive as God forgives you. How many times has God forgiven you? His forgiveness can never be numbered! **Think about it!**

There Must Be Agreement

Can two walk together, except they be agreed?

--Amos 3:3.

Forgiveness always **requires** that one of the involved parties must give in and **agree** with the other party. The one who seeks forgiveness displays the most character. When both parties **agree** and **forgive** then **peace** is restored and all bitterness is gone. You must **agree** with God to be forgiven and you must also **agree** with others to be forgiven. Go to the other party and seek forgiveness. Seek to **resolve** it then **restore** it and later learn to **release** it. **You will be glad you did and so will others.** This is God's way to be forgiven and have peace in our mind and heart.

**“Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar,
and there rememberest that thy brother
hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift
before the altar, and go thy way;
first be reconciled to thy brother,
and then come and offer thy gift.
Agree with thine adversary quickly...”**

--Matthew 5:23-25

Helpful Scriptures

Let him eschew evil, and do good;
let him seek peace, and ensue it.
--1 Peter 3:11

"Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing.
My brethren, these things ought not so to be."
--James 3:10

"...and have peace one with another"
--Mark 9:50.

Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace,
and things wherewith one may edify another."
--Romans 14:19

"Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort,
be of one mind, live in peace;
and the God of love and peace shall be with you."
--II Corinthians 13:11

"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you,
live peaceably with all men."
--Romans 12:18

Helpful Words

**Good Christians should
always be reasonable.**

**We cannot choose
how many years we will live,
but we can choose
how much life those years will have.**

**God chooses what we go through,
we choose how we go through it.**

**When you cannot see
the hand of God
Look for
the heart of God.**

I Need Your Rest

Matthew 11:28

**“Come unto me,
all ye that labour
and are heavy laden,
and I will give you rest.”**

Lord, I am lonely, be with me.

Lord, I am stressed, calm me.

Lord, I am grieving, comfort me.

Lord, I am without hope, help me.

Lord I am heavy laden, lift me.

Lord I am tired, I need Your rest.

- Ted Camp, SWM

God's Replacement Program

Colossians 3:8-14

“Put off all these... Put on therefore.”

Lord, Thank You...

For replacing my **panic**, with your **peace**.

For replacing my **sorrow**, with your **Spirit**.

For replacing my **cares**, with your **contentment**.

For replacing my **heaviness**, with your **hope**.

For replacing my **stress**, with your **serenity**.

For replacing my **loneliness**, with your **love**.

For replacing my **anxiety**, with your **abiding**.

For replacing my **guilt**, with your **grace**.

For replacing my **grief**, with your **goodness**.

For replacing my **pain**, with your **presence**.

Lord, I thank You!

— Ted Camp

During ICU Blood Clots

**DON'T STOP
QUIT OR GIVE UP!**

When things go wrong
as they sometimes will,
When the road you are traveling
seems all uphill,
When the deaf do not come
you sit alone,
When you feel like crying
and have no song,
When you feel like giving up
and walking away,
Look up - Do it for Him
You must stay!
Don't Stop - Quit or Give Up!

