

Deal with irritations immediately. Never go to sleep angry (Eph 4:26). If you do, you will give the devil an opening to cause bitterness (Eph 4:27).

- 6) Focus on your wife's positive qualities, and thank God for the wife He gave you.
- 7) Work at changing **yourself**, not your spouse.

**b. Determine with God's help to ACT and not REACT**

- 1) When your spouse does something that irritates you, you must act biblically, not react sinfully.
- 2) You cannot trust your feelings and emotions. (Proverbs 28:26) "*He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered.*"
- 3) If you did not react biblically, what does God say you did? (James 4:17) "*Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.*"
- 4) If you sinned, what does God say you are to do? (Proverbs 28:13) "*He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.*"
- 5) How does God say you are to respond to those who hurt you? (Matthew 6:14-15) "*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.*" (Ephesians 4:32) "*And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.*"
- 6) How should you prepare to act instead of reacting the next time this happens? (Galatians 5:25) "*If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.*"

**c. Ask God regularly for grace.**

- 1) You and your spouse are both selfish sinners. Selfish sinners need God's grace to deal with irritations in marriage peacefully.
- 2) If your spouse is a Christian, pray together daily.

**Conclusion:** You can uproot bitterness. If you are bitter, and you will ask God to help you follow the steps we have outlined, you can root out all bitterness from your heart and rejuvenate your marriage. Do not ignore bitterness. If you need help, come and see me.

**Song:** Cleanse Me - 166

# Bitter-free Love Pt.3

5 September 2021 AM – Colossians 3:18-19 – Marriage – Scott Childs

**Introduction:** When irritated, it is always easier to let it go and not talk it through. However, that is like not cleaning out a dirty wound because it hurts too much. After it becomes infected, it will be messy and very painful to clean it out. The best thing is to clean it out right away, in spite of the pain. Then it can heal properly. <sup>Steven Cole</sup> The same is true with marriage irritations.

**Transition:** Two weeks ago, we learned that the wife's role is a type of the church. She is to submit to her husband and give him respect, as the church does to Christ. The husband's role is a type of Christ. He is to love sacrificially and lead his wife as Christ loved sacrificially and leads the church. Last week, we began looking at God's command to husbands, "*be not bitter against your wives*". We identified the first two steps that can help us conquer bitterness. This morning, we will continue where we left off.

*The first step to conquering bitterness is to ...*

## 1. Identify all Seeds of Bitterness in your Heart

- a. To do this, you must understand bitterness.
- b. You must consciously identify each irritation

*The second step to conquering bitterness is to ...*

## 2. Remove all Roots of Bitterness from your Heart

- a. 1<sup>st</sup> tool to remove bitterness is **Confession**
- b. 2<sup>nd</sup> tool to remove bitterness is **Love**
- c. 3<sup>rd</sup> tool to remove bitterness is **Communication**
  - 1) In Matthew 18:15, the Lord clearly told us what to do when a brother offends us. "*Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.*" We must do this in marriage as well.
  - 2) An important part of pulling the roots of bitterness out of your heart is to talk to your wife about the irritations that cause your bitterness.
  - 3) Steven Cole wisely suggests, "*As a couple, you may need to talk honestly about unfulfilled expectations that you*

both are dealing with. Some of these may be valid shortcomings that each of you can work on, but some may be personality differences that aren't going to change even with spiritual growth. That's where mutual acceptance comes into play. If you don't face these disappointed expectations and deal with them God's way, they can turn into angry demands that will drive you apart."

- 4) If you have been holding in your bitterness, your wife may not even know that she has irritated you. You need to **talk to your wife about those irritations**. Bitter couples generally have poor communication skills. Here are twelve suggestions to help you.

- a) Before you arrange to talk, read your list of irritations. If any of the irritations come from the way God created your wife (i.e., slow moving, poor with directions, outgoing, introvert), she may never be able to change them. Do not be unreasonable! Physically cross off each irritation that God can help you cover with love. Only plan to talk about irritants that still need attention.
- b) Choose a time when she is free and ask to talk with her about some things that are troubling you.
- c) Pray before you begin! (Pray with her if she is willing)
- d) Speak to her **kindly** and **tenderly** (Eph 4:32). Seek to keep the discussion productive.
- e) Start by confessing to her that you have been bitter about things she has done. Admit that was wrong.
- f) Tell her that you have asked God to forgive you for being bitter but that you need her help to resolve the issues.
- g) Gently tell her what has been bothering you. Discuss the irritations one at a time. Let her know that you do not want these things to be irritants and that you desire her help to resolve them. Help her to see why the thing she did irritated you.
- h) If an irritation is sinful (i.e., nagging, disinterest in

intimacy, sharp or unkind words, a controlling attitude, lack of showing appreciation, an unforgiving spirit, anger, etc.), be prepared with Scripture to tenderly discuss what God says about the sin.

- i) **Ask her if you have done anything that has pushed her to be irritable**. If she says "yes", discuss it, humbly confess all wrong, and ask her forgiveness.
- j) Before your talk, prepare practical suggestions to help prevent each irritation. **This can give her hope**.
- k) If she asks your forgiveness, forgive her permanently.
- l) Work with her to find a way to prevent the irritation in the future.

**d. 4<sup>th</sup> tool to remove bitterness is Prayer**

- 1) Give unresolved irritations to the Lord. Ask for peace.
- 2) Pray often with your wife about your need for harmony.
- 3) Pray on your own that God would make you more loving, less selfish, and less irritable.

*The third step to conquering bitterness is to ...*

**3. Resolve to Prevent all New Bitterness**

**a. Work on your love**

- 1) Christ loves you even though Satan is continually accusing you before God for the sins you do (Re 12:10; Ro 8:31-39). With all of our sinning, it must be frustrating for Christ to love us, yet he never stops. He is so patient with us, though our sins are so grieving to Him.
- 2) Work on your love. It is not easy to love like Christ, but loving your wife like Christ will prevent bitterness.
- 3) As a sinner, you will offend your spouse. Learn to talk.
  - a) The husband might say, **"I felt disrespected by what you just did/said. Have I done something that has upset you?"**
  - b) The wife might say, **"I felt unloved by what you just did/said. Have I done something that has upset you?"**
- 4) Speak the truth to each other and put away all lying (Eph 4:25). Always seek to keep your words and attitudes edifying (Eph 4:29).
- 5) Never let Satan plant a seed of bitterness in your heart.