

4. Rule Your Spirit

a. We must again say, "If God's against it, so am I".

- 1) We have seen that God is clearly against bitterness. He said, "Be not bitter" (Col 3:19).
- 2) I am not a fan of C.S. Lewis, but he made this good point, "Getting over a painful experience is much like crossing monkey bars. You have to let go at some point in order to move forward." Let go of your bitterness and turn to God for help. "Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you." (James 4:8)

b. We must yield our spirit to the Holy Spirit.

- 1) As we yield our spirit to the Holy Spirit, He will enable our spirit to rule our soul (mind, will, emotions) so that we can forgive the person with whom we have been bitter.
- 2) You may need to forgive your spouse. Forgive as Christ has forgiven you. Remember, you are a sinner, married to a sinner. You are not perfect – so be willing to forgive your spouse. Always do it right away before any bitterness can build up.
- 3) You may need to forgive your parent, your relative, an abuser, your brother or sister, your boss, your neighbour or a former friend. (Ephesians 4:31) "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:"
- 4) After putting away the bitterness, replace it. (Ephesians 4:32) "And be ye kind one to another, **tenderhearted** sympathetic, compassionate, **forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.**" No one has ever hurt us as much as we have hurt Jesus Christ. Our offences caused him to die on the cross and to pay for the eternal hell we deserved.

Conclusion: If you came to church with bitterness in your heart, do not leave until you have confessed that bitterness. Then seek the Holy Spirit's help to overcome it and make it right with anyone you have hurt. Until you, with God's help, control bitterness, you are like a city that is broken down and without walls. You are in spiritual danger.

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Ruling Your Spirit: Bitterness

11 September 2022 PM – Proverbs 25:28 – RuleSpirit22 – Scott Childs

Introduction: Read Proverbs 25:28. If we do not learn to rule our spirits, we will have no defence against the devil. Our Christian lives will be weak and unfruitful. God has given each of us a spirit, soul and body. The **Holy Spirit** desires to commune with our **spirit**, which then communes with our **soul**, made up of our mind, will and emotions. Our soul controls our **body**. When our spirit yields to our flesh or the devil instead of to the Holy Spirit, we do wrong. If our spirit yields to the Holy Spirit, we will do right. **We must choose to let the Holy Spirit control our spirit.**

Transition: This evening we are going to consider the problem of **bitterness** and learn how God wants us to rule it.

1. Identify the Problem

a. What is bitterness?

- 1) Jim Berg's answer is, "Bitterness is the discontent of the soul that says 'I don't like what God has allowed'."
- 2) Bitterness is anger and disappointment because someone treated us unfairly. We did not receive the promotion, award, appreciation, nicest gift, proper treatment, or special privilege that we think we deserved. We may feel that we were mistreated, cheated, or deceived. Abuse often causes bitterness.
- 3) When we cry, "**That's not fair**", it is a sign of bitterness in our heart. Whether the situation truly was unfair or not, bitterness is still not right.
- 4) Bitterness is synonymous with resentment and envy. (James 3:14) "**But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth.**"
- 5) "Bitterness comes when you hold onto hurt and refuse to forgive the person who hurt you." Sabrina Beasley McDonald

b. Our world is full of bitterness.

- 1) One marriage counsellor said, "**Bitterness, I believe, is the**



number one killer of our marriages.” Perhaps that is the reason God commanded, (Colossians 3:19) **"Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them."** If you are married, **you are a sinner married to a sinner.** Your spouse will offend you from time to time. At times, your spouse will let you down, fail to meet your needs, say something that hurts, or neglect to show you appreciation. Your spouse may even greatly disappoint you. **The devil wants these offences to make you bitter.**

- 2) If you are irritated that your Dad, or Mum, or child, or co-worker, or boss, or neighbour, or friend has made your life more difficult, you are bitter. If that offence keeps coming back to your mind, and you cannot speak to that person without feeling irritated, you are bitter.
- 3) **"Bitterness starts out small. An offence burrows its way into our hearts. We replay it over and over in our minds. We retell our hurts, with great detail, to any available listener. Then, we enlist support, pushing us further into our resentment."** [Clay Monkus](#)
- 4) Bitterness may be like a cancer that grows silently and unseen until it becomes so large that it can no longer hide. Bitter people are unforgiving people.

2. Let's Study God's Precepts

a. Do we find any Bible examples of bitterness?

- 1) Yes, we find the first example in the opening pages of the Bible. Cain was bitter because God rejected his bloodless sacrifice and accepted Abel's blood sacrifice. He was bitter at both God and his brother. Like bacteria multiplying in an infected wound, his bitterness multiplied and mutated into hatred as he mulled it over and over in his heart. His hatred then resulted in murder.
- 2) We find another classic example of bitterness in Joseph's brothers. Circumstances had led to Joseph, Jacob's tenth son, receiving the birthright of the firstborn. Jacob gave him a coat of honour. God gave Joseph dreams indicating that his brothers and father would one-day bow to him. His brothers felt that all this was unfair. Their hearts

became full of envy, bitterness and hate. This grew until they sold Joseph as a slave into Egypt (Acts 7:9).

b. What other scriptures speak of bitterness?

- 1) Beware, the root of bitterness will grow, spring up and eventually defile you. (Hebrews 12:15) **"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;"**
- 2) We briefly mentioned James 3:14, but here it is in context. (James 3:14-16) **"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. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work."** Bitterness is **not a wise** response that comes from God above. Bitterness is an **earthly human** response. It is **sensual**. In other words, it is a soulish response appealing to the mind, will and emotions. It is **devilish**, promoted by Satan himself. James tells us that it will lead to confusion and every evil work. Bitter people do evil things they would not normally do.

3. If Guilty, You Must Admit It.

a. Are you envious or bitter?

- 1) Is there discontent in your soul that says, **'I don't like what God has allowed'**? Do you feel angry and disappointed because someone treated you unfairly? If so, you are bitter.
- 2) If there is someone (a spouse, parent, child, relative, co-worker, neighbour, church member) with whom you cannot speak peaceably, you are bitter.

b. Admitting guilt is the first step to victory.

- 1) This is true of any sin. Bitterness is no exception.
- 2) You might say, "I am not bitter, I am just upset, or I am just hurt." **If God calls it bitterness, it will not do any good for you to call it by any other name.**
- 3) With a broken heart, simply say, **"God, I am bitter, and I know that is sin."**