

Freedom – 4

Galatians 5:1 (NIV)

1 It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

- The old is gone and the new has come
– 2 Corinthians 5:17

Habitual patterns can weigh us down and keep us hindered from living the life of Freedom

Hebrews 12:1-2 (NLT)

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. ² **We do this** by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith.* Because of the joy* awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God's throne.

We may confess sin again and again yet continue to fall into it over and over

- We try to gain the victory yet fail no matter how hard we try
- *Maybe there is a past wound that needs healing*
- *Maybe there is something dark in our past*
- *Maybe there is something illicit we have dabbled in*
- *More than likely it is a spiritual problem*

A Christian can not be owned by a demon. But a Christian can be influenced by and come under the control from a demon, even from within. The demon can ride you!

Spiritual attacks from the outside:

No Slide: 2 Corinthians 12:7 (NLT)

⁷ even though I have received such wonderful revelations from God. So to keep me from becoming proud, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger from Satan to torment me and keep me from becoming proud.

- When we humble ourselves the Devil will flee
– James 4:7

Demonic influence from the inside:

No Slide: Ephesians 4:27 (NLT)

²⁷ for anger gives a foothold to the devil.

- We have been made alive and sealed by the Holy Spirit;
- We can choose to live by the flesh or by the Holy Spirit – Colossians 3:7-10
- By living in the flesh we can “give place” to the devil

We need *discipleship* and *deliverance*

Romans 6:16 (NLT)

¹⁶ Don't you realize that you become the slave of whatever you choose to obey? You can be a slave to sin, which leads to death, or you can choose to obey God, which leads to righteous living.

The foothold of Bitterness

Hebrews 12:14–15 (NLT)

¹⁴ Work at living in peace with everyone, and work at living a holy life, for those who are not holy will not see the Lord.

¹⁵ Look after each other so that none of you fails to receive the grace of God. Watch out that no poisonous root of bitterness grows up to trouble you, corrupting many.

- Do you feel snappy or edgy towards a person or a group of people?
- Do small nuances in people's personalities bother you?
- Are you constantly concerned about what others think about you?
- Are you afraid that if people met the “real you” they wouldn't like you?
- Are you ashamed of things in your past?
- Do you feel like you need to constantly have a person or group of people by your side to feel validated to protect you from your insecurities?

Do you have a bad or disappointing event that happened to you where you possibly let a root of bitterness get in?

There are surface problems and there are root problems

Surface

- They don't get along with people
- They can't hold down a job
- They have issues with fear
- You go from one bad relationship to another
- You constantly have financial struggles

Bitterness is a root of all roots

Hebrews 12:14–16 (NKJV)

¹⁴ Pursue peace with all *people*, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: ¹⁵ looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled; ¹⁶ lest there *be* any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright.

- “Many” are able to be defiled by bitterness
- Bitterness is a taste sensation
- Sharp, harsh, disagreeable feeling in your mouth
- A lemon or an aspirin is bitter
- Bitterness is a disagreeable feeling deep inside of us
- Bitterness occurs when we feel life is unfair
- We feel offended, pushed aside, annoyed or provoked
- Resentful, cynical, grieved, jealous, or distressed
- We feel we haven’t received our “Fair Share”

Bitterness can lead to a whole list of other problems, actions and behaviors

- Addictions, irritability, depression, pornography usage, lust, immorality, anger, a lack of forgiveness, hate, envy, jealousy and more

My dream of the band failed and my parents divorce had this affect on me

Drinking, drug use, lust, pornography, immoral behavior, anger

Busted windshield – cops called at Trailor Park – fighting, depression – anger became my default

Jesus can heal the root of bitterness

Isaiah 53:5 (NKJV)

⁵But He *was* wounded for our transgressions, *He was* bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace *was* upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.

- Jesus was wounded, bruised and rejected for us
- Bitterness does not have to grow on the inside
- Our wounds and unmet desires can be healed by Christ
- The bitter root doesn't have to stay

Bitterness is a spiritual condition that the enemy can use to trap us in pain and despair

Let's look at three characteristics of the root of bitterness and some ways that God heals us of that bitterness

#1: Bitter Roots Deceive Us – God Tells Us the Truth

The demonic forces that surround deception will whisper lies in our ears

- This will cause us to not see a situation clearly
- We aren't able to discern between the truth and a lie

2 Corinthians 11:3 (NKJV)

³But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

Remember that in the garden the original lie was that if they would turn away from God they would get something they didn't have

- "You will be like God, knowing good and evil"
- They already new good – God
- The lie was that somehow they would be better off if they new evil
- If you only new first hand about evil your life will be better

Now the Devil whispers

- Surely God is holding something back from you
- He isn't doing something for us that He should be
- Surely there is something better than what we have
- Surely we're missing some fun

The devil originally fell because of pride and bitterness towards God and now he is trying to infect everyone with this same spiritual sickness

Isaiah 14:14–15 (NKJV) The fall of Lucifer

¹⁴ I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.' ¹⁵ Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, to the lowest depths of the Pit.

There are two ways we can believe the lie of Satan

Evil Living

- We think we can live any way we want
- There will be no consequences
- We trample underfoot the blood of Christ

The way we live matters

2 Corinthians 5:9 (NKJV)

⁹ Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him.

Legalism

- We attempt to earn our relationship with God
- Work harder and harder to look good enough for God
- We believe it's our works that matter
- If we struggle or sin we judge ourselves un-worthy and we beat ourselves up
- Legalistic people are some of the most miserable people

2: Bitter Roots Defile Many – God can Cleanse Every Stain

The word “Defile” in **Hebrews 12:15** is key

- To stain or dye with another color
- Bitterness will stain us with sin but Christ brings forgiveness and cleansing

Isaiah 1:18 (NKJV)

¹⁸ “Come now, and let us reason together,” Says the LORD, “Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool.

Hebrews 12:15-16 references Esau

- He had been hunting, and was tired and hungry
- He sells his birthright for some stew that his brother Jacob had made
- The birthright meant he would be the head of the family when his father Isaac passed away
- He would have blessing and authority

Genesis 25:34 says he despised his birthright

- He didn't value it
- He gave it away to fulfill an immediate need
- Esau grew bitter – it festered and grew

Genesis 28:6–9 (NLT)

⁶ Esau knew that his father, Isaac, had blessed Jacob and sent him to Paddan-aram to find a wife, and that he had warned Jacob, “You must not marry a Canaanite woman.”

⁷ He also knew that Jacob had obeyed his parents and gone to Paddan-aram. ⁸ It was now very clear to Esau that his father did not like the local Canaanite women. ⁹ So Esau visited his uncle Ishmael's family and married one of Ishmael's daughters, in addition to the wives he already had. His new wife's name was Mahalath. She was the sister of Nebaioth and the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son.

- If a Canaanite wife displeased his father, Isaac then he would get one
- He allowed the root of bitterness to develop towards his family
- Someone hurts you so you do something to get back at them
- This will only hurt you in the end

Usually any hurt we feel towards a person is really directed at God

We see this in the life on Naomi – **Ruth 1:20-21**

- She has lost her husband and two sons in the famine
- She returns home to her daughter in law and tells the townspeople to call her by a different name
- Naomi meant – pleasant
- She says call me – Mara – Bitter
- This is the root of bitterness directed at God

We may look at our lives and there is something we blame God for

- God, why is my marriage so difficult? – Why don't you do something about it?
- God, why is this person in such pain? – You could heal them, but you don't. Why?
- God, why are my children not all I wanted them to be? You could do something to change their lives, but you don't. – Why?
- God, why is my business suffering? Why did I lose my job? Why are we struggling financially?
- God, why isn't my life turning out the way I wanted it to?

God is sovereign. This means He is the ruler of everything
He gives us free will and allows us to have choices
This can bring hardships, sickness, struggle and death

- Bitterness can turn us away from God but He can heal every stain

#3: Bitter Roots Depress – God Brings New Life

When we carry around bitterness we carry around a sense of discouragement or rejection

We need to be delivered from this kind of oppression

This is exactly what happened to Esau

Hebrews 12:17 (NLT)

¹⁷ You know that afterward, when he wanted his father's blessing, he was rejected. It was too late for repentance, even though he begged with bitter tears.

- He was rejected
- Isaac prayed a blessing over him
- God didn't reject Esau
- Esau carried a spirit of rejection on the inside
- He could not repent of his despair and depression

Robert Morris – story of a man in an airport

- Plane delayed
- Orders a hamburger
- Takes longer than expected
- While he is waiting he misses the plane
- You may have a hamburger but you missed the trip

Bitterness can lead to all sorts of impure behaviors

- Every time we sin we exchange God's pleasure for something less beneficial
- When we live a life of sin – disobedient to God
- We live under a curse of sorts – **Deuteronomy 28**

Galatians 6:7 (NLT)

⁷ Don't be misled—you cannot mock the justice of God. You will always harvest what you plant.

Whenever God tells us to obey Him it is for His Glory and our benefit

Deuteronomy 29:18 (NKJV)

¹⁸ so that there may not be among you man or woman or family or tribe, whose heart turns away today from the LORD our God, to go *and* serve the gods of these nations, and that there may not be among you a root bearing bitterness or wormwood;

- When we turn away we become bitter
- Wormwood is a bitter plant
- Bitterness sickens people – even kills them
- We can only remove it with confession, forgiveness, and prayer

Perhaps there's a person or group of people you need to forgive

- Perhaps you need to forgive yourself
- Perhaps you need to forgive God
- Forgive means to Release

James 5:15 (NKJV)

¹⁵ And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.