

Letting go of bitterness

Hebrews 12:14-15

Key Points:

- Bitterness kills hope. Our spiritual enemy uses bitterness to rob us of the hope that Jesus gives us. The root of bitterness is dangerous - it grows in our hearts as we leave moments of offence undealt with. The deeper the roots go, the more it affects us and the harder it is to deal with.
- Bitterness has a poisonous fruit - it sucks hope and ruins relationships. It not only keeps other people at a distance, but also leaves us feeling distant from God. We freely receive the forgiveness of God yet withhold it from others.
- We can't control other people, but we can control how *we respond*. Eph 4:31-32 says that we kill bitterness with compassion & forgiveness. Jesus says, '*bless those who curse you, pray for those who hurt you.*' (Lk 6:28) It's the opposite of our human nature, so it's really hard. Praying blessings for someone who's hurt you and forgiving one moment at a time are ways to start this journey, partnering with God to let go of bitterness.

Questions:

1. What is the most bitter food or drink you've ever tasted? Do you like bitter food/drinks?
2. What the one thing that most frequently causes you to become frustrated with people?
3. Do you know someone who *could* be bitter but isn't? How do you think they do it?
4. What life opportunities could bitterness be preventing you from fully experiencing or enjoying?
5. Bitterness attempts to destroy love, intimacy, and trust. What's your history with bitterness?
6. Read Hebrews 12:14-15. What are some bitter roots you could take care of before they grow up to cause trouble?
7. How will you kill bitterness with compassion and forgiveness? Share some specific ideas.
8. Start praying. Be bold and pray with power. *God, You love us so much. Thank You for always forgiving us, even when we don't deserve it. Holy Spirit, show us any bitterness in our lives. Please give us the strength to show compassion and forgiveness to people who have hurt us. We love You and praise You for all that You do. Amen.*
9. Start doing: Commit to a step and live it out this week. Who do you need to forgive? What's your action plan? How will you show compassion?