

Beware of Bitterness

by Anthony N. Wade

It is a documented fact that unforgiveness is a very harmful character flaw that must be rooted out of the life of every believer. In fact, unforgiveness can stop you in your tracks. It can create more difficulty than many of us can anticipate. I once heard that hypertension – high blood pressure – is and can be a silent killer. People who have it, sometimes aren't even aware of its dangers, until it is too late, and serious damage is done to their blood vessels.

Well, the purpose of this article is not to give you a health lesson, but to warn you of the dangers of unforgiveness, and the other side of unforgiveness; *bitterness*. Both unforgiveness and bitterness can create disturbances in your spiritual well being. All too often people are not aware of the dangers that are deep within their mind, will, and emotions – their soul.

Unforgiveness and bitterness, are silent killers. What I mean by silent killers is that they can steal from you the heart and soul of who you are. They can render you ineffective in your relationships with others. The intent of this artifact is to encourage you to do a check up, from the neck up. It is my goal to help you locate where you are in your walk with God, as well as your walk with others.

MOUTH FULL OF IT

Romans 3:14 KJV

{14} Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness:

One of the first things that a person should do to determine whether he or she is bitter is to locate what is coming out of his or her mouth. Whether we like it or not our tongues can reveal more about us than we may sometimes care to be revealed.

It was a Sunday afternoon, and he was in a very strange frame of mind. He had no idea what was deep within him until he took a good look at himself. When I say deep within, I am talking about the mind, will, and emotions – the soul (**Hebrews 4:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:23**). He began to verbalize things that were shocking to him, as well as the others around him – things that were buried deep within his memory. He was wounded from injuries that had been inflicted upon him over the years. Instead of really dealing with it, he buried it. So he thought.

He knew he should not use foul language, because he had been a God-fearing man for more than two decades. Still, he had not taken a good look at himself to locate where he was. Although he knew that foul language was not acceptable yet he was cursing by allowing harmful communication to come out of his mouth (**Ephesians 4:25-32**).

“Unforgiveness and bitterness, are silent killers.”

SWEET WATER & BITTER

The Epistle of James is very graphic about what is coming out of our mouths. The third chapter is devoted to taking a good look at what we are saying. Space will not permit me to exhort you on every verse in this chapter, however there are a few things I would like to bring to your attention. James is making a comparison in this passage. He asks can sweet water and bitter come from the same fountain? The fountain that he is talking about is the mouth. In verse fourteen he puts bitterness, envy and strife in a cluster. This says to me that these three usually work together. How are they detected? You guessed it, by what is coming out of the mouth. One of the Greek definitions for *bitter* is something that is piercing and sharp. My question to you is are you allowing your tongue to be piercing and sharp in your interactions with others? If so, *you are bitter*. To be full of *envy* means to be full of jealousy. How can we know if we are in the middle of envy? By what is coming out of our mouth. If you are continually talking about what others possess in comparison to yourself, you could be allowing envy to be a part of your life without even knowing it. The last character trait I want to discuss in verse fourteen is *strife*. The word strife can be summed up with four words: debates, contentions, disputes, and arguments.

2 Timothy 2:23-26 NIV

{23} Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels. {24} And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. {25} Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, {26} and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.

BE NOT BITTER AGAINST THEM

In Colossians the third chapter the word *bitter* comes to the surface once more. This time it is in relation to husband and wife. In verse eighteen the wife is commanded to submit to her husband. However, her submission has a lot to do with how her husband interacts with her on a regular basis. If he loves her as Christ loves the Church (**Ephesians 5:25**), he can be confident that her submission will be intact.

Her submission is not that she does everything he wants her to do at any given time, but it is her attitude towards him. If any husband will sow the right seeds towards his wife, she will for the most part, respond in a favorable manner. Even so, if he spews out *bitterness* her way, she is hard pressed to be submissive.

Colossians 3:19 KJV

{19} Husbands, love your wives, and be not *bitter* against them.

“Are you allowing your tongue to be piercing, sharp, and cutting?”

THE ROOT OF BITTERNESS

Hebrews 12:14-15 KJV

{14} Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: {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;

It is possible to be at peace with all men if that is what all men want. However, we know that some want to quarrel about nearly everything. Life is too short. Verse fourteen says peace and holiness, without it, no man shall see the Lord. What a tall order! Remember, that if it is in the Bible, we can do it.

God would not command us to do something, and not give us the power to do it (**James 1:22**). Verse fifteen tells us to look diligently. The word 'looking' connotes a continual observation on our part. Why? Because we don't want to fail the "Grace of God." Failing the "Grace of God," simply means that we do not realize that He is the One Who will, and can put us over. He has a favorable regard for who we are. He has a favorable disposition towards us.

Failing to understand the "Grace of God" will cause a root of bitterness to spring up, trouble you, and defile you. You might ask, "What could possibly defile me? You might be defiled with the root of bitterness that you chose to let come out of your mouth. The root of bitterness is produced because you have chosen to not 'follow peace.'

The reason why people don't follow peace with others is **1) They Don't Want Peace. 2) They Are Not At Peace With Themselves.**

This is what I mean: Let's say you became sick to your stomach. It is impossible to keep in your stomach something you consumed, so you end up vomiting. Not only do you vomit, but that vomit is so abundant and forceful that it gets all over you. Your clothing, your shoes etc., is covered with the vomit that is projected from your mouth. Everything you have on is defiled. Even some of your undergarments are soaked with vomit.

Not only are you covered with this defilement, but possibly your associates and family members are standing near you. Some of your vomit gets on them. The smell is awful. You were anxious to get somewhere where you could take a shower bath and get yourself cleaned up. However, before you could get to a shower, you have another vomiting spell. Now you are so embarrassed that you cannot describe how you feel.

That my friend is what it means to be defiled by a "Root of Bitterness." Not only does it affect you, but it has an affect on your associates and loved ones, as well. Everyone is affected when you choose to let bitterness come from your mouth.

