



PUTTING ANGER & BITTERNESS TO REST

As you go through each lesson, look up the Bible verses and answer the questions in the blanks provided. When you are finished with this lesson you and your mentor will meet to discuss your answers and any questions you may have. This is not a pass/fail test, so answer honestly as you understand things. We want you to understand, not just to give the “right” answer.

Do you find yourself feeling angry or thinking negative thoughts when the name of a certain individual or group of people is brought up in conversation? Would you like to “get even” with someone who has sinned against you or otherwise treated you unfairly? Who’s face comes to mind when you read this paragraph?



Because we live in a sin-cursed world populated by sinners, it is impossible for us to expect to escape life unscathed by the effect of other people’s sin on our life.

But that does not give you the right to remain angry and bitter.

1. **Ephesians 4:26-27** indicates that it is possible to be angry without sinning. It also indicates that when we have the wrong kind of anger, we are giving Satan the upper hand in our life. *“Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil.”*

2. Read **Ephesians 4:31** and **Colossians 3:8**. According to these verses what attitudes, emotions, and actions are we to eliminate from our lives as Christians?

3. What do **Romans 12:17-19** and **I Peter 3:9** say about the natural desire to get revenge or get back at those who hurt us?

THERE IS A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ANGER AND BITTERNESS.

ANGER – A state of indignation and outrage, often resulting from distress caused by injustice or insult...

Martin H. Manser, *Dictionary of Bible Themes: The Accessible and Comprehensive Tool for Topical studies* (London: Martin Manser, 2009).

- ✓ **ANGER** – The initial emotional response to a situation that seems unjust.
- ✓ **BITTERNESS** – A prolonged feeling of hurt, despair, or rage over an injustice (real or only perceived). It just won't go away.
- ✓ **REVENGE** – A desire to lash out and get even against the one who has hurt you.

***SOMETIMES ANGER IS JUSTIFIED.
BITTERNESS AND REVENGE NEVER ARE.***

4. **Jealousy** can motivate us to become angry. Who was jealous in the following verses? Of whom was he or she jealous?

I Samuel 18:6-8 _____

I Kings 21:1-4 _____

Luke 15:17-28 _____

5. **Pride** can also motivate us to become angry. Who was proud in the following verses? Who was he or she angry with because of pride?

Jonah 3:4-4:3 _____

II Kings 5:9-12 _____

II Chronicles 26:14-19 _____

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6. Sometimes when someone speaks **the truth** to us it causes us to become angry. Who was angered by the truth in the following verses?

II Chronicles 16:7-10 _____

Numbers 24:10-13 _____

7. Not all anger is sinful. There is such a thing as “righteous indignation (anger)” with those who dishonor God through disobedience. Who was angry in the following verses and why was he or she angry?

Exodus 32:15-21 _____

Why was he angry? _____

I Samuel 11:1-6 – Who was angry? _____

Why was he angry? _____

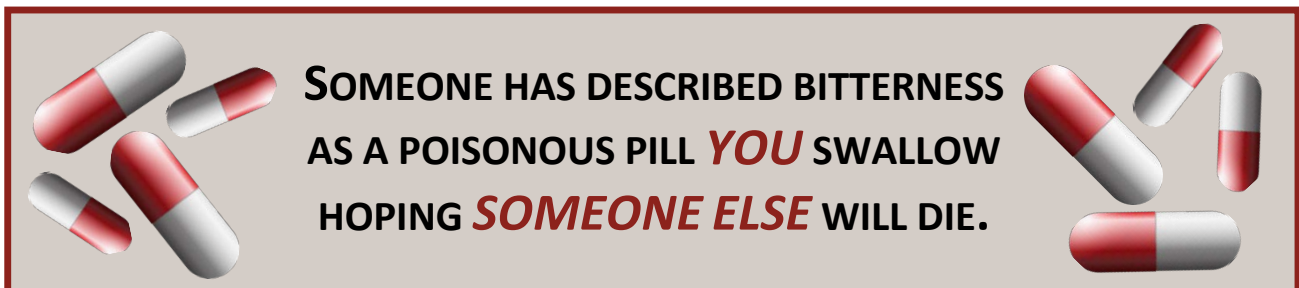
Mark 3:1-6 – Who was angry? _____

Why was he angry? _____

John 2:13-17 – Who was angry? _____

Why was he angry? _____

8. **Anger** is a flame up that flares up and soon dies away. Bitterness is something far more dangerous. Sometimes it is just plain sinister. It burns inwardly like a long-term furnace of emotional hurt, fear or rage.



In other words, **bitterness hurts you more than it hurts anyone else** (including the person or circumstance that has made you bitter).

When we become bitter towards another person, that person may never have any idea that we are angry with them! They may have wronged us unintentionally. But even if they have sinned against you intentionally, they just don't care that they hurt you.

BITTER – In general, something disagreeable to the sense of taste ...The Old Testament mentions bitter herbs (**Exodus 12:8**), bitter grapes (**Deuteronomy 32:21**), and bitter water, which comes by its bitterness either naturally (“*Marah*,” **Exodus 15:23**) or because of a divine curse (**Numbers 15:17ff**).

Metaphorically, bitterness can express desperation, pain, despondency (**Genesis 27:34**; **Ruth 1:20**; **I Samuel 1:10**; **Matthew 26:75**), and even enmity (**Psalms 64:3**; **Acts 8:23**).

Alan C. Myers, *The Eerdmans Bible Dictionary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987), 161.

Life sometimes hurts. At times God allows things to happen that are beyond our control. Sometimes pain comes to our lives as the result of the sinful actions of other people. When we feel as though we have been mistreated by God or by others, a sense of bitterness or resentment can settle into our hearts. Resentment and bitterness can destroy us!

RESENTMENT – a feeling of bitterness towards someone, usually as a result of their actions or words. Resentment is possible against God or against other people.

Martin H. Manser, *Dictionary of Bible Themes: The Accessible and Comprehensive Tool for Topical studies* (London: Martin Manser, 2009).



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9. The Bible gives us examples of those who refused to become resentful or bitter.

- **Joseph** had been mistreated by his brothers – even sold into slavery! When he was given an opportunity to get revenge against his brothers, what was his response? (See **Genesis 50:15-21**)

- The man **Job** went through horrible tragedies, yet what was his response to God even as he suffered the loss of many people and things that he loved? (See **Job 1:1-22**).

- **Jesus Christ** suffered at the hands of an unjust mob. What was His response? (See **Luke 23:27-34**).

Based upon these examples, we see that bitterness and a desire for revenge is not the appropriate response to the sins of others. We see that it is possible to simply trust God when we do not understand why we are suffering, and that forgiveness must take place if we are to be at peace with our enemies. And blaming God is never the answer.

10. Do you think that you are an angry person? _____

11. Is it possible that you are bitter towards God or another person?

12. Can you be honest enough to consider that you might be bitter?

***BITTERNESS AND RESENTMENT MANIFEST THEMSELVES
IN MANY DIFFERENT ATTITUDES AND ACTIONS.***

13. Because everyone we know (including us) is a sinner, people are going to hurt us. It comes naturally! The bible helps us to understand some excuses for which we feel justified in becoming resentful towards other people.

- Who **Cain** bitter against, and why was he bitter? (**Genesis 4:1-5**)

- Who did some of **Christ's disciples** resent, and why did they resent them? (See **Matthew 20:20-24**)

- Sometimes we feel like we have been mistreated because of our nationality or "racial" group. In **Acts 6:1** which group felt that another **racial group** was receiving better treatment?

- In **Matthew 20:1-15** Jesus tells a parable that deals with **fairness at the workplace**. Why did some people feel that they were being mistreated in this parable? Does the answer Jesus provided satisfy you?

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- According to **Proverbs 3:11-12** what **other reason** is given to explain why life is hard for us at times?

- **King David** felt stress at times because of bitterness. Where did he find encouragement when he was discouraged about the way life was treating him? (See **I Samuel 30:6**)

- **Colossians 3:21** clearly states that the way **parents** treat their children may cause resentment. Do you feel that you were mistreated by your parents?



DID YOU KNOW THAT WE CAN ALSO BECOME BITTER TOWARDS GOD?!

- 14.** How can we see bitterness and resentment towards God in the children of Israel as they wandered in the wilderness? (See **Numbers 21:4-5**)

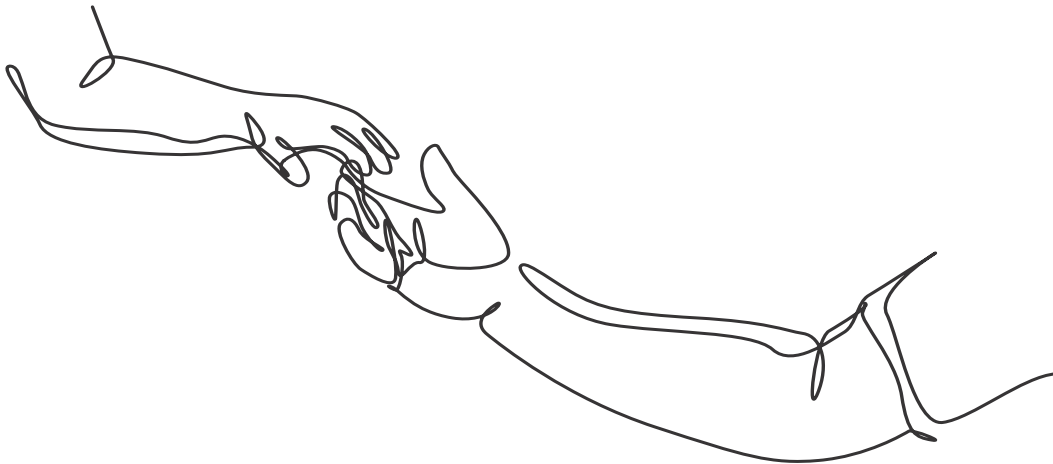
- 15.** The children of Israel acted in another way as they saw Pharaoh's armies approaching (See **Exodus 14:10-12**). What emotion are they displaying in this passage? It's another way of showing a lack of trust in God's goodness.

16. In **Matthew 13:54-58** we see a group of bitter people speaking with a sarcastic, bitter spirit. To whom was their bitterness directed? What caused them to have this wicked attitude?

17. In **Matthew 15:10-14** the Pharisees were bitter towards Jesus and His teachings. Their bitterness brought spiritual blindness to their hearts. What did Jesus say would be the result of that blindness on themselves and on other people?

James 3:14-15 clearly describes “bitter envy and strife” as being “earthly, sensual, and devilish.” Such things have no place in a Christian’s life!

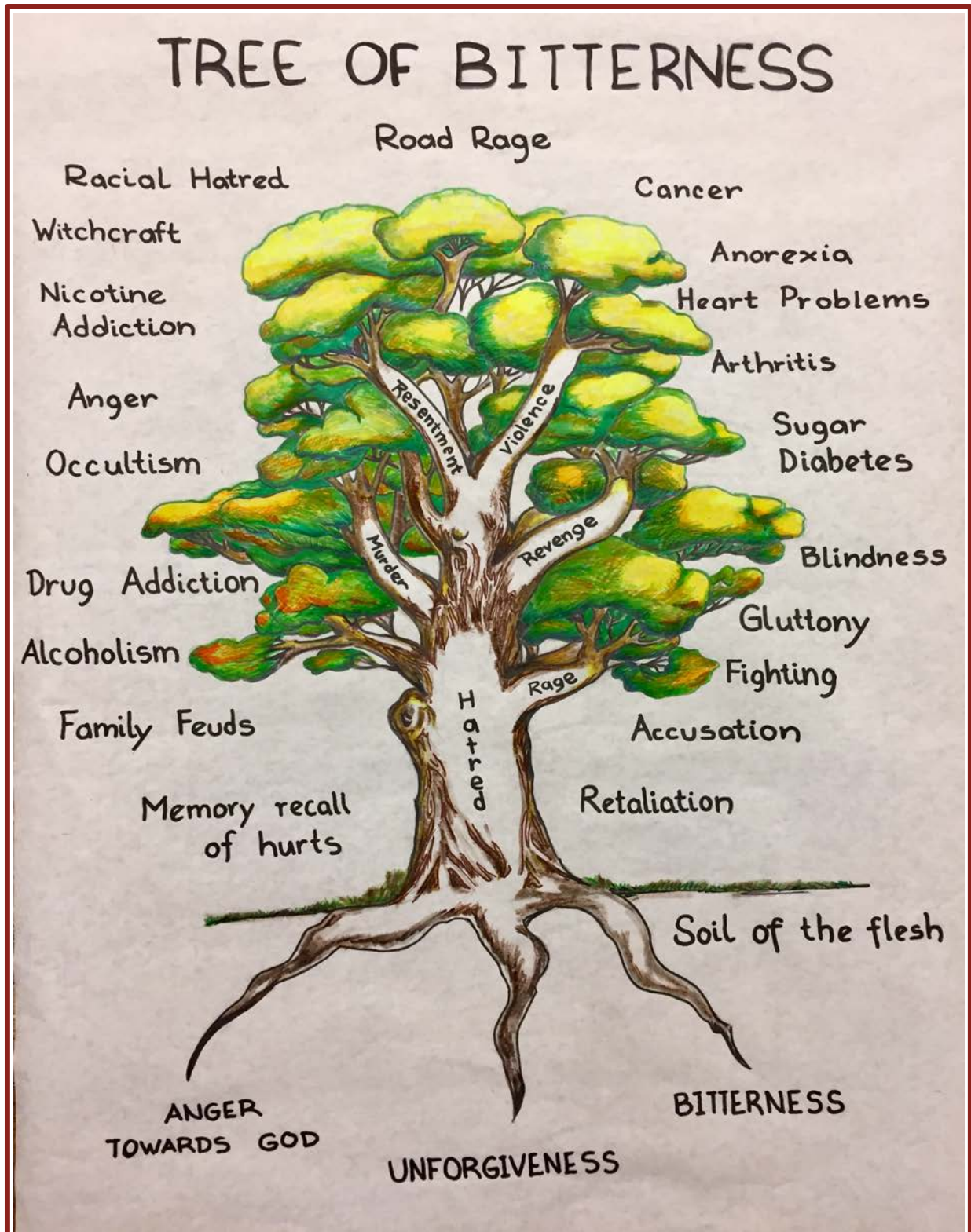
That is why the writer of Hebrews encourages us to live at peace with God and with others. Bitterness always hurts *us*, but it doesn’t hurt *only us*. It hurts many other people we know and love.



Hebrews 12:14-15 *“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: 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.”*

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STUDY THE TREE OF BITTERNESS DIAGRAM. How do you think bitterness is manifesting itself in your life? *(Circle words on that tree that come to mind about yourself as you study it.)*



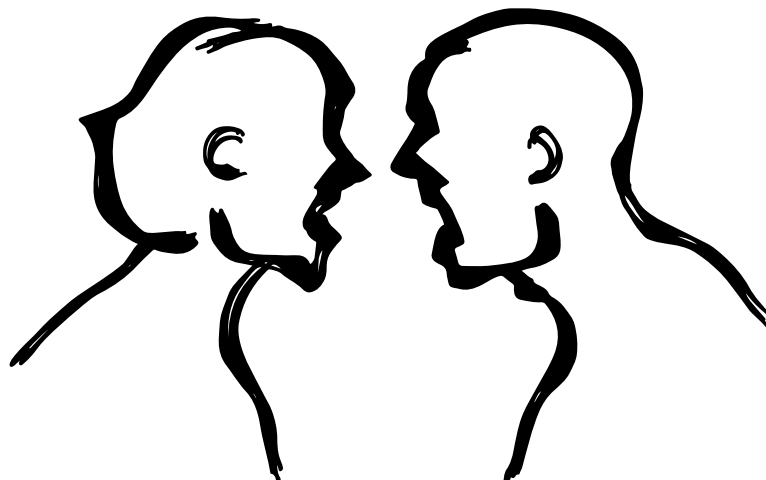
NOW LET'S LOOK AT SOME WAYS THAT WE CAN OVERCOME BITTERNESS AND ANGRY RESENTMENT TOWARDS GOD AND OTHERS.

18. **Ephesians 4:22-28** describes a change of heart that happens when we surrender to the Lord in the matter of bitterness. Describe what that new attitude looks like.

19. According to **Ephesians 4:25 & 29** what happens to our speech when we have a Christ-like change of heart?

20. According to **Ephesians 4:31-32** what should we choose to “put away” and what attitudes and actions should we replace those things with?

21. In **Philippians 2:14** we are told that two things should not be a part of our everyday life. What are those two things?



GETTING OVER BITTER FEELINGS IS NOT AN EASY TASK.

PROVERBS 18:19 *"A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city: and their contentions are like the bars of a castle."*

THREE IMPORTANT STEPS IN YOUR BATTLE AGAINST BITTERNESS

- 1. RECOGNIZE BITTERNESS AS A SERIOUS SIN.** I John 3:15 – *"Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him."* Bitterness is hatred! Hatred leads to murder! Murder begins in the heart. Do not allow this seed to take root!
- 2. CONFESS THE SIN OF BITTERNESS TO GOD** You are not responsible for what others do to you, but you are responsible for your reaction.
- 3. FORGIVE THE ONE(S) WHO HAVE SINNED AGAINST YOU** This may not always be possible to do in person, but be sure to do it in your own heart. You can't go forward with a joyful heart until you do.

THE BATTLE AGAINST BITTERNESS will be a prolonged battle with some ups and downs, but if you are persistent in the fight with God's help you will experience great joy and victory in due time.

ACCOUNTABILITY PAGE

My Name: _____

My Mentor's Name: _____

Date I completed Lesson Eleven: _____

My Mentor's Signature: _____

A Pastor's Signature: _____



HAMILTON SQUARE
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THE DISCIPLESHIP TRAINING COURSE

Lesson Schedule

Lesson #1	What Happens When One is “Born Again?”	Salvation
Lesson #2	What to Do When You Fall	Confession of Sin
Lesson #3	What About Baptism?	Baptism
Lesson #4	How to Pray & Why Should I?	Prayer
Lesson #5	Bible Study: Making it Personal	Bible Study
Lesson #6	Obedience Brings Blessing	Obedience
Lesson #7	Church Membership Matters	Membership
Lesson #8	Tithes & Offerings: Bible Principles	Giving
Lesson #9	Overcoming Sexual Sin & Temptation	Victory
Lesson #10	Our Lord’s Commission	Witnessing
Lesson #11	Putting Anger & Bitterness to Rest	Bitterness
Lesson #12	Alcohol & Other Addictive Substances	Addictions
Lesson #13	Music and the Christian	Music
Lesson #14	Social Media, TV, Movies, The Internet & The Future	Media
Lesson # 15	Biblical Separation: The Dangers of Compromise	Separation
Lesson #16	Bloom Where You’re Planted! Staying in the City	City Ministry
Lesson #17	Happiness Forever: The Fruit of Faithfulness	Heaven

If you have questions, ask your mentor to help you.
If he or she can’t help you, they will help you set up an appointment
with a pastor at our church. They are here to help you!