

## Love Can't Count & Bitterness Majored in Accounting

### **A parable:**

Two students were enrolled in the school of relational hard knocks. The first was named love and the other's name was bitterness. They were both good students with their strengths and weaknesses. Love always received high marks for being a good neighbor and for his positive attitude. His weakness though was in mathematics. Love always wanted to subtract and absolutely refused to perform addition. When love had to do word problems about debts and paying back what you owe, he always wanted to write off the debt and free the debtor from his debts. Bitterness on the other hand got low marks for his relating skills but when it came to adding up and compounding interest on money owed, he was a whiz. He was so good at keep tabulations on wrongs suffered that he decided to major in accounting.

One day when love was erasing the chalkboard containing the list of sins committed against him, bitterness confronted him about it. Why do you refuse to keep score and accurately add up the wrongs committed against you? Don't you want justice and equity or even revenge on those who hurt you? I think you are stupid and a fool. You let everyone take advantage of you. I on the other hand always keep up with every wrong committed against me. Look at this he said as he opened up a huge book with lists of real and imagined wrongs against him all noted with meticulous detail. Love looked at the book smiling as he pulled a huge eraser from his pocket and began to vigorously attack the list. Love thought bitterness was about to burst a gasket and he jerked the book away. Bitterness began to shout, how do you expect to gain anyone's respect if you don't keep up with how they wrong you and confront them about it? Don't you realize that these people will run over you if you don't keep a good accounting of their wrongs? Plus if you keep up with their sins you can use guilt and shame to get something out of them. If nothing else you can make them hurt the way they hurt you. Love listened patiently waiting on bitterness to wind down. He finally fell silent and looked at love with an angry face, breathing heavily.

Love let the silence grow and then finally responded. First of all, I don't need to keep up with wrongs against me because I am not looking to gain respect from people. In fact I am not seeking anything for myself. My only goal is to help others become better than they are. I am committed to being patient and kind. I keep believing that something good can come out of any situation and I keep hoping the best for everyone in spite of their repeated failures. I do feel hurt at times, but instead of striking back, I give my hurt to the Lord and remember how he gave Himself in spite of how people hurt and rejected Him. I always work for the good and never give up on people.

As bitterness listened to love's "sermon" his face became more and more hateful. The look of pure hate he gave love could have started a fire. You are a fool, a wimp. You are divorced from reality. One day when you grow up maybe you will be willing to face the truth about people and tell them the truth about themselves.

Again love looked at bitterness with kindness and compassion. I also love truth my friend he said, but I know that only love can help others be willing to face the truth about themselves. Therefore, I never count the wrongs suffered and I forgive every time, freeing the sinner from his debt.

That is called forgiveness.

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### Love

**1Cor 13:5** - It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, **it keeps no record of wrongs.**

Keeping records – **logizomai** PMI – to count, to add up, calculate, keep an account, credit to one's account (impute); think, reason, consider, conclude.

“The concept implies an activity of the reason which, starting with ascertainable facts, draws a conclusion, especially a mathematical one or one appertaining to vusiness, were calculations are essential.” Colin Brown Vol 3 p 822-823.

- A mathematical accounting of specific events that have occurred
- A mathematical account of wrongs suffered by the sins of others.

Wrongs – **kakos** – wrong, evil, bad, foul, injury, harm, trouble

- Injuries suffered by the relationship failures of others – offenses

**Love can't count – Love refuses to count**

- Love does not keep a count of failures – require a large ledger
- Love does not keep records to build a case to change others or justify anger
- Love erases the significance of the wrong and allows the person to start over

**Love patiently accepts character flaws that cause ongoing sin offenses**

- Knowing that the person will likely sin against you in the same way.
- 1Cor 13:7 – keeps believing & hoping that the person will grow out of the flaw

Bitterness - **keeps meticulous records**

- **Bitter** – **pikria; pikraino** – sharp, anger, resentment, harshness, hatred, exasperation, irritation, indignant, grieved; **consistently increasing resentment built up over time based on adding up the flaws & failures of another**

Col 3:19 – Husbands love your wives and don't be made bitter toward them

- Note: Love and bitterness are opposites in relationships
- **Pikraino** Perf.P.Impv – husband whose wife is immature, selfish and he is keeping score of everything she does that he doesn't like – adding it all up, building a case as to why she is wrong, why she must change or why he raises his voice in anger;

Passive voice: he is allowing the specific events to influence his attitude toward his wife

Jam 3:14 – But since you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth.

- 1<sup>st</sup> Class condition – if and it is true – some believers were filled with bitter envy & selfish ambition – built up anger & jealousy because of competitive ambition; compare vs 13 – wise & understanding, good deeds done in humble wisdom
- stop boasting & lying contrary to the truth – competitive boasting and falsehood intended to discredit and destroy the competition

Heb 12:15 – fail to utilize grace à root of bitterness à many defiled

- Reject God's purpose for adversity & suffering à bitter toward God
- Root – develop a false belief about God & adversity – time bomb
- Build up anger based on adding up all the adversities and losses

Love refuses to count or add up wrongs suffered but bitterness is a mathematician

### **Forgiveness - releases sinners from the debt incurred by their sins**

- Aphimi – to cancel a monetary debt owed to a creditor

Mt 18:23-34 – parable of the unmerciful servant – forgave his debt – cancelled the monetary debt owed instead of selling him into slavery

2Cor 2:5-8 – man disciplined by the church – forgive him – release him

1Jn 1:9 – God releases us from the debt owed for our sins – paid for on the cross

1Jn 2:12 – sins judicially forgiven permanently – Perfect tense

- Love refuses to count the sins – Love erases the record of sins – forgives them
- Forgiveness diligently applied, avoids the build up/adding up to bitterness
- Forgiveness/erasing is intended to be utilized every single time you are wronged; seventy times seven

1. Intimate relationships are initially built on personal preference – conditional love
2. Conditional love is not sufficiently powerful to maintain intimate love
3. Relationships are allowed to continue growing through the use of Christian virtue.
4. Everyone wrongs & is wronged in ongoing relationships
5. Wrongs suffered must be absorbed, given to the Lord & erased as significant
6. Natural tendency is to add them up à build up anger & build a case to justify anger
7. Sins added up intensifies resentment à builds a boundary line in the sand à destruction of the relationship

### **Ephesians 4:32**

**And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.**