

RECOVER FROM BITTERNESS

(Eph 4:31-32) Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

In eternity-past, God's grace devised a training program for His children, whereby He uses every event of life, especially our adversities, to teach us to live +R & mold us into the image of Christ. Life, as He has allowed it to unfold is full of difficulty, death & sorrow, making it very easy for us to be angry about how our life works out. Heb 12:3-11 describes this training program; Vs 15 explains that if we don't consciously, intentionally pay close attention to how we respond to adversity, we will react with false logic leading us to become angry, resentful & bitter. If we respond to adversity by trusting God's promises, we will bypass bitterness & grow spiritually unto a mature man in Christ.

Respond – Trust God for Adversities

1. Jesus Christ is in control of human history – divine decree from eternity past
2. Everything He allows in the life of His children is meant for good – Rom 8:28
3. Good: **agathos** = divine good, that which is good for us & honors God
4. Trusting God & the divine logic of the word to understand adversity produces growth
 - exposes false ideas of human agenda to be rejected & thrown away
 - opportunity to embrace truth as correct answer that gives us peace & God glory
5. The mature gain capacity to honor God by trusting Him through undeserved suffering
 - share sufferings of Christ to demonstrate the +R of God's judgments
6. Bel who fails to trust God, trusts in human agenda for +H will become angry → bitter

Bitterness

1. **Bitterness – pikria** – angry, hostile attitude built up over time as one experiences loss and/or conflict – belief that what we lose is necessary for +H; conflict is undeserved.
2. Bitterness is built from anger & resentment that goes unresolved and/or unforgiven.
3. Bitterness is a breakdown of UL where we begin to keep score of wrongs suffered 1Cor 13:5 – Love does not reckon (keep score) wrongs suffered
4. Bitterness based on loss of our human agenda – toward man and/or even God
 - wronged by people – they want what we have, free us from burden of having it
 - wronged by God – issues where only God could have changed the situation
5. Results from failing to believe that what God allows, He allows for our good
 - instead we believe that God doesn't care, He isn't a good person
6. Results from failing to believe that we war not against flesh & blood – fallen angels
 - instead we believe that the people involved should be the object of our wrath

Recovery from Spiritual Failure – Bitterness

1. Recognize out of God's will – Ps 26:2; 1Cor 11:28 – Consistent state of mental, verbal or overt sin - relationship conflicts & struggles

- You can live outside of God's will and not even realize you are into sin
- 2Cor 13:5 – examine yourself to see if you are in the faith – are you saved?
- Psalms 26:2 – examine me Lord, test my mind & heart
- Recovery from a state of sin requires that we 1st recognize our sin

2. Restoration of Filling of the Holy Spirit (F/HS) – 1Jn 1:9; Eph 5:18; Gal 5:16-17

- F/HS is a command – Eph 5:18 – a choice as compared to the Indwelling Holy Spirit (I/HS)
- F/HS – under the influence of God the Holy Spirit (GHS) – surrendered to the will of GHS
- F/HS is an absolute – Gal 5:16 walk/Spirit & won't fulfill desires/flesh – ouk me indicates that you will be absolutely free of the flesh
- Confess sin – 1Jn 1:9 – admit your sin & GHS cleanses you of your sins
- Walk GHS means to stay filled – refuse to sin, refuse to go back to bitterness

3. Repent Logic that Justifies sin - Repent – metanoia – change of mind

- Examine the reasoning that decided sin was the appropriate strategy as a response to your circumstances – your justification
 - Gen 4 Cain – God's rejection of His offering □ pain/anger □ eliminate rival
 - Gen 37 brothers – Jacob/Joseph's failure □ pain □ sin/vengeance: excuse to sin
 - 2Sam 11 David – adultery/Bathsheba □ murdered Uriah □ excuse: fear of exposure
- Natural, flesh reaction to adversity & pain is to commit sins: self-pity, anger, fear
- Realize that God has a better way – Jam 4:1-10 – 1-4 sinful reaction; 5-10 spiritual response; Gal 5:19-21 works/flesh; 22-23 fruit/Spirit
- Rom 8:28 – God works even our pain for divine good – trust Him w/out sinning
- Heb 13:5 – reject love/money; be content; God won't leave you

4. Reject Old Man belief that set you up for disappointment Rom 13:12; Col 3:8; Heb 12:1; Jam 1:21; 1Pt 2:1

- Old Man (OM) is a satanic, human built belief system designed to meet our human needs w/out the provision of God – fig leaves solving our own problems
- False objects of desire & hope; False strategies for relating
- OM belief: need-desire/man □ set up to fail □ hurt/disappoint □ justify sin
- Repeating pattern with changing partners – different place/face – same result
- Discover and reject old belief that causes us to choose same destructive pattern

5. Renew mind with new man logic Eph 4:22-24, Rom 12:2; Col 3:10; 2Cor 4:16

- Rom 8:29 destined to be conformed to the image of his Son – temp □ eternity
- 1Cor 2:16 word of God is the mind of Christ – thinking of God expressed in the bible
- 2Cor 3:18 as we behold the glory of the Lord in the word □ transformed into image
- Eph 4:22-24 we take off the old belief system and put on the divine belief system
- 2Tim 2:15 rightly dividing word of truth – **orthotomeo** – cut straight
- CBD principles developed and taught in categories – renders big picture

6. Render obedience to God Jn 14:15, 21, 23-24

- Jn 14:15 – If you love me keep my commands – obedience expresses love
- Momentum - Spiritual momentum is built by learning and obeying the word of God
- Momentum is the mechanics of spiritual strength – Eph 6:10; 2Tim 2:1; 1Jn 2:14