

A Common Sin that is Seldom Acknowledged

Bitterness



May Otherwise Be:

Doctrinally Sound
Faithful in attendance
Knowledgeable in the Word
Active in the church



Bible Addresses the Problem of

Bitterness



Ephesians 4:31

“Let all **bitterness**, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.”

Bible Addresses the Problem of

Bitterness



Colossians 3:19

“Husbands, love your wives and do not be **bitter** toward them.”

Bible Addresses the Problem of

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Hebrews 12:15

“looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any **root of bitterness** springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled”

Bible Addresses the Problem of

Bitterness



James 3:14

“But if you have **bitter envy** and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth.”



Since the Bible talks about it
I need to learn what it is
and what God says about it

- *What causes it?*
- *What is the problem with it?*
- *How do I get over it?*
- *Am I guilty?*

Ephesians 4:31

“Let all **bitterness**, wrath, anger, clamor,
and evil speaking be put away from you,
with **evil**.”

Colossians 3:19

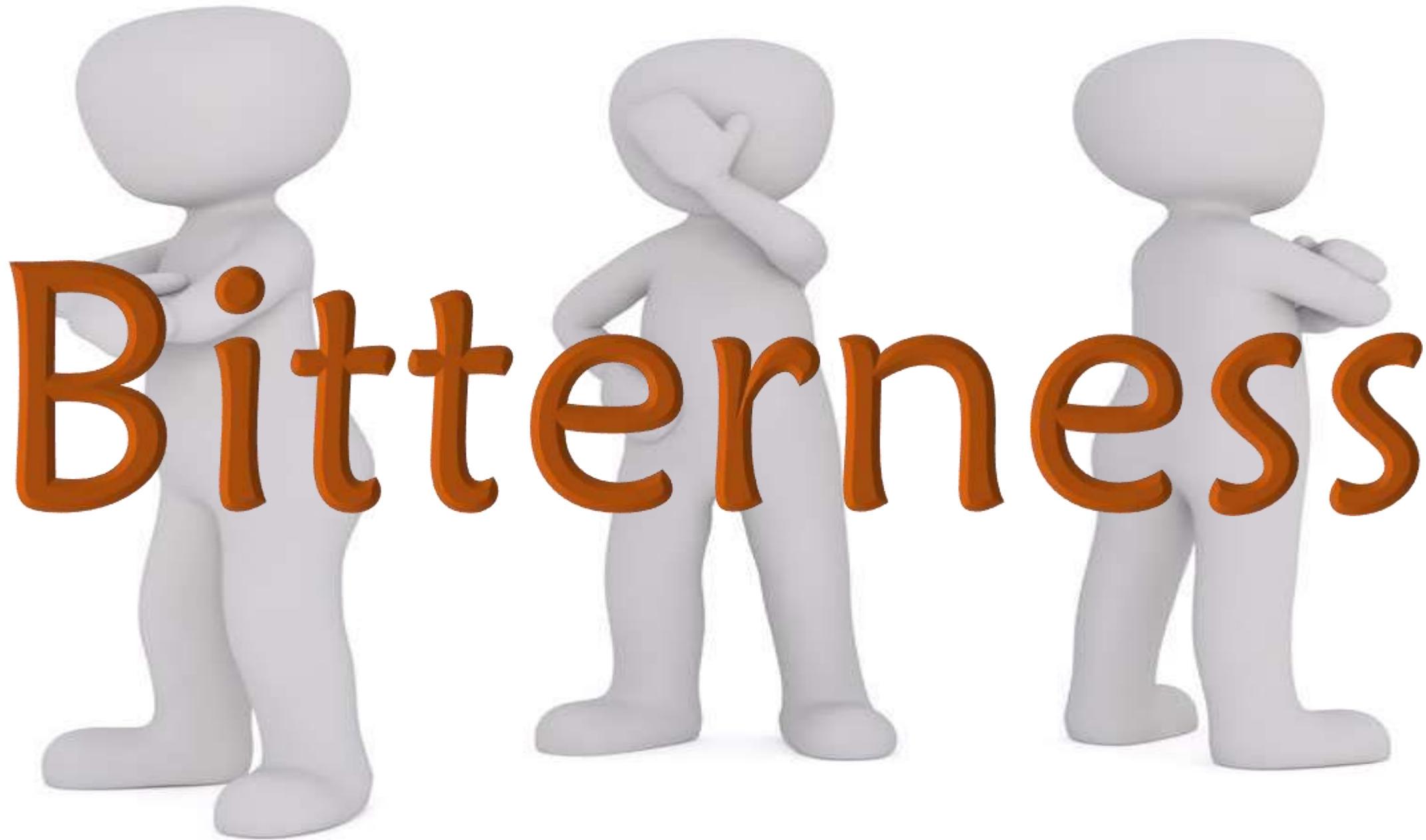
“Husbands, love your wives,
as the church loves herself,
to present herself to herself,
to be **bitter** toward

Hebrews 12:15

“looking carefully lest anyone fall short
of the grace of God; for **the**
bitterness springs up
and by this many are defiled;
the **root of**

James 3:14

“But if you have **bitter envy** and self-
seeking in your hearts, do not boast and
lie against the truth.”

The image features three stylized, white, 3D human-like figures standing in a row. The figure on the left has its arms crossed. The middle figure has its right hand on its forehead in a thoughtful or distressed pose. The figure on the right has its arms crossed. In the center, the word "Bitterness" is written in a large, bold, orange, sans-serif font. The figures are positioned behind the text, with the letters partially overlapping them.

Bitterness

Bitterness

I. Its Meaning





1. Its Meaning

A. Comes from *pikria*

1. *BDAG*: “State of being bitter in an affective sense, bitterness, animosity, anger, harshness.” (813)
2. *Swanson*: “bitter resentment”
3. *Thayer*: “Bitter hatred” (Eph.4:31); “bitterness of speech” (Rom. 3:14)
4. *Barclay*: “The Greeks defined this word as long-standing resentment, the spirit which refuses to be reconciled (183)
5. *TDNT (Kittel)*: Originally pointed or sharp, i.e. arrows; later to “shrill” of noise, then to bitter or sharp taste.



1. Its Meaning

A. Comes from *pikria*

B. It is hatred

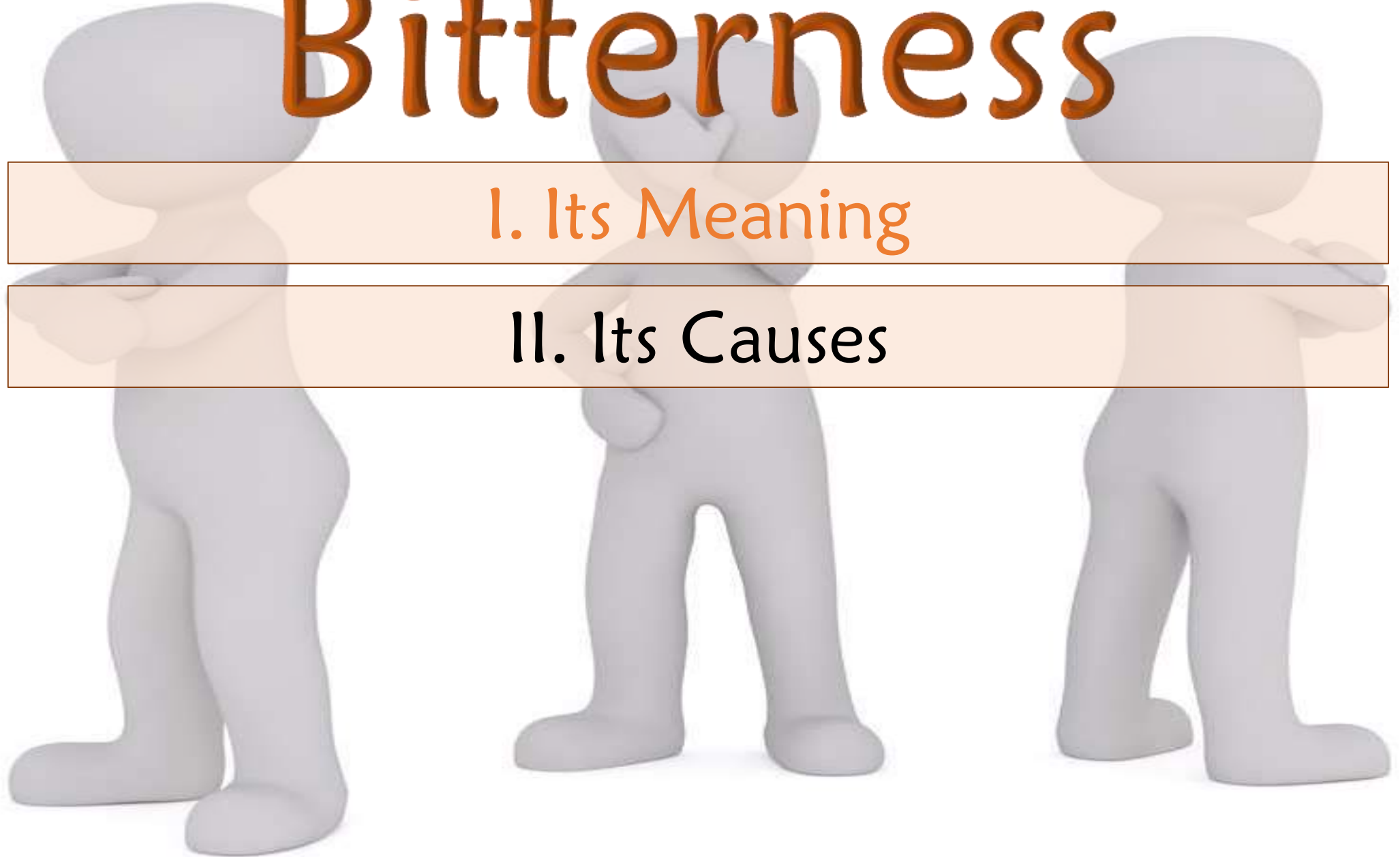
- 1. Animosity & resentment is hatred*
- 2. Lack of love = hatred (1 John 3:15)*
- 3. Closely related to wrath, malice, anger, etc. (Eph. 4:31)*



Bitterness

I. Its Meaning

II. Its Causes





II. Its Causes

A. Immaturity

- 1. The Corinthians had harsh feelings toward one another – were immature (1 Cor. 3:1-4)*
- 2. To love even your enemies is to be “perfect” (complete, mature) (Matt. 5:44-48)*
- 3. A person who hasn’t grown and developed spiritually – more likely to become bitter*



II. Its Causes

A. Immaturity

B. Lacking in Wisdom

1. *Prov. 10:18*
2. *It is part of wisdom from below (Jas. 3:13-18)*
3. *A person who doesn't seek or use wisdom – is likely to become bitter*



II. Its Causes

A. Immaturity

B. Lacking in Wisdom

C. Pride

- 1. Simon was poisoned by bitterness (Acts 8:23)*
- 2. Translated: "full of bitter jealousy" (NCV)*
- 3. Thinking only of self (Envious - very envious)*
- 4. By asking for the miraculous gift – shows a desire of recognition!*
- 5. When one is filled with pride (thinking only about self) likely to become bitter!*



II. Its Causes

A. Immaturity

B. Lacking in Wisdom

C. Pride

D. Lacking in Love

- 1. Contrast of love and being embittered (Col. 3:19)*
- 2. Love is the opposite of hate*
- 3. One who is bitter and resentful – don't know or practice love!*



II. Its Causes

A. Immaturity

B. Lacking in Wisdom

C. Pride

D. Lacking in Love

E. Never Put off the Old Man

1. Bitterness is part of the old man (Eph. 4:22-32)

2. One who is bitter has kept the old man of sin alive – never put him off! – Living like the world!



II. Its Causes

A. Immaturity

B. Lacking in Wisdom

C. Pride

D. Lacking in Love

E. Never Put off the Old Man

F. Listen to the Wrong Source of Guidance

- 1. Wisdom from above would not point you toward bitterness (Jas 3:13-18)*
- 2. Wisdom from the wrong source – feeds and strokes your anger, resentment, and hatred!*
- 3. When you get advice from the world – listen to the wrong people – don't be surprised if your bitterness doesn't grow!*



II. Its Causes

- A. Immaturity
- B. Lacking in Wisdom
- C. Pride
- D. Lacking in Love
- E. Never Put off the Old Man
- F. Listen to the Wrong Source of Guidance

Bitterness



I. Its Meaning

II. Its Causes

III. Its Danger



III. Its Danger

A. Not Easily Detected

1. *Pictured as a root (Heb. 12:15; cf. Deut. 29:18)*
 - a. Not seen on surface – but see what it feeds
 - b. Bitter plant that grows among the good
2. *The wrong done makes one feel justified in harboring resentment – thus don't see the bitterness*
3. *Possible that the bitter one doesn't see himself as bitter!*

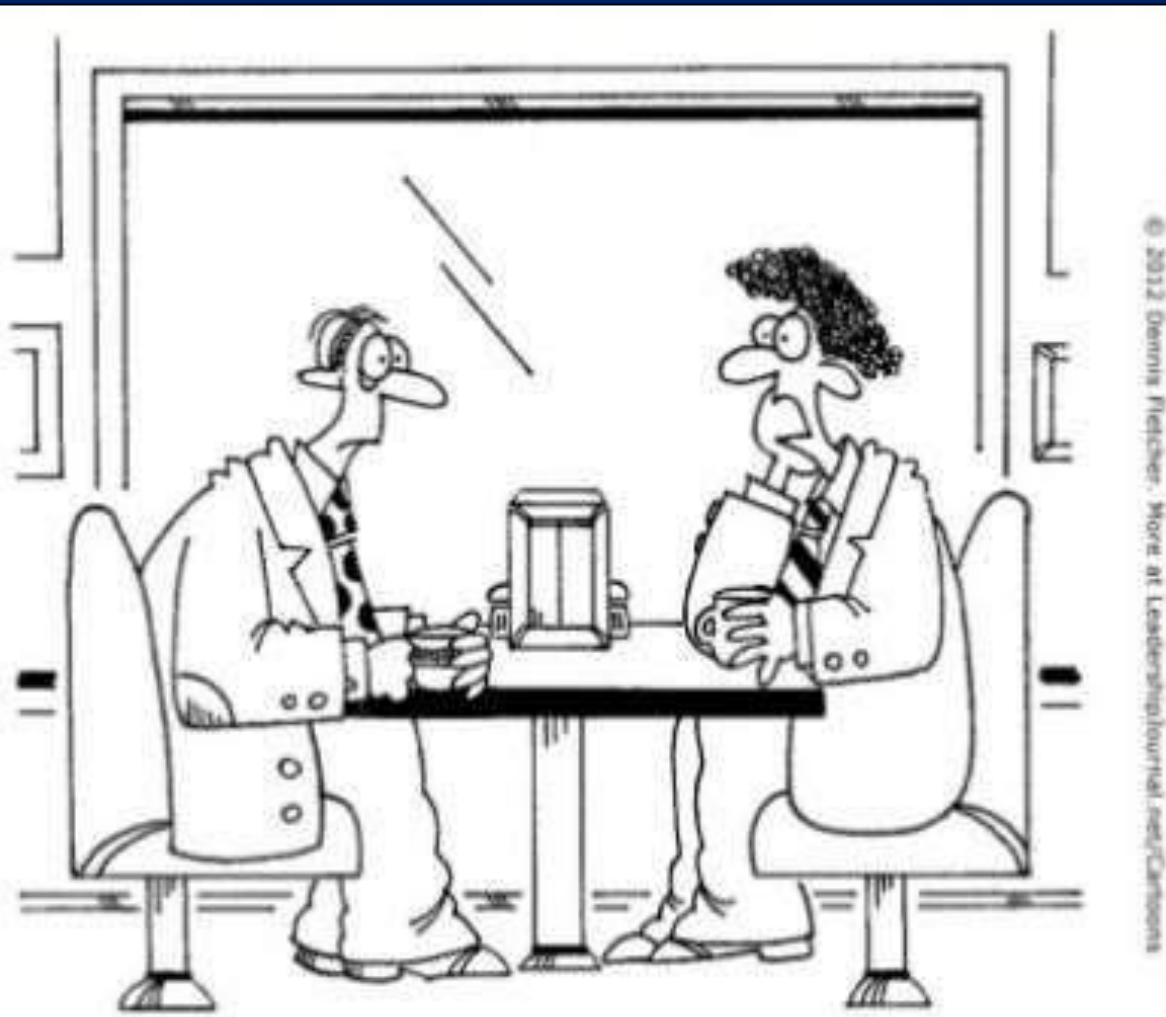


III. Its Danger

A. Not Easily Detected

B. Stirs Turmoil

1. *Prov. 10:12*
2. *Lead to other sins that are turbulent (Jas. 3:14-16)*
3. *Bitterness can cause us to make trouble out of something that we would tolerate in someone we liked!*



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“Why is it that a congregation that is still bitter about a 42-year-old misunderstanding can’t remember last week’s sermon topic?”



III. Its Danger

A. Not Easily Detected

B. Stirs Turmoil

C. Causes Us to Say Cutting Words

- 1. Mouth reflects our bitterness (Rom. 3:14; cf. Psa. 10:7)*
- 2. Hatred is cruel (Psa. 25:19)*
- 3. Words of hatred (Psa. 109:3)*
- 4. Our bitterness is what drives the cutting and stinging words we let fly!*



III. Its Danger

A. Not Easily Detected

B. Stirs Turmoil

C. Causes Us to Say Cutting Words

D. Robs You of Your Happiness

- 1. Bitterness makes you miserable*
- 2. Never see a bitter person who is happy*
- 3. Prov. 15:17*



III. Its Danger

A. Not Easily Detected

B. Stirs Turmoil

C. Causes Us to Say Cutting Words

D. Robs You of Your Happiness

E. Destroys You

1. Heb. 12:15

2. Becomes your master – it enslaves & controls you

3. Not always what you eat that destroys you – it was eats at you!

4. R. Nixon: “Others may hate you, but those that hate you don’t win – unless you hate them. And then, you destroy yourself.”



Bitterness is
like drinking
poison and
hoping it will
hurt someone
else.



III. Its Danger

A. Not Easily Detected

B. Stirs Turmoil

C. Causes Us to Say Cutting Words

D. Robs You of Your Happiness

E. Destroys You

Bitterness



I. Its Meaning

II. Its Causes

III. Its Danger

IV. Its Sinfulness



IV. Its Sinfulness

A. It is Sinful

1. *It is of the old man (Eph. 4:31)*
2. *It is of the devil (Jas. 3:14)*
3. *It is hatred (Col. 3:19)*



IV. Its Sinfulness

A. It is Sinful

B. Commanded to Put it Away

- 1. Old man to be put away (Eph. 4:31)*
- 2. Put away hatred by the grace of God (Titus 3:1-7)*



IV. Its Sinfulness

A. It is Sinful

B. Commanded to Put it Away

C. Conclusion:

- 1. Can't please the Lord with bitterness*
- 2. Can't go to heaven with bitterness*
- 3. As deep as it runs, and as long as it may last – it can be put away!*



IV. Its Sinfulness

A. It is Sinful

B. Commanded to Put it Away

C. Conclusion:

Bitterness



I. Its Meaning

II. Its Causes

III. Its Danger

IV. Its Sinfulness

V. Its Answer & Cure



V. Its Answer & Cure

A. Realize it is Sinful – Thus Must Change

Ephesians 4:31

“Let all **bitterness**, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.”

Colossians 3:19

“Husbands, love your wives and yourselves as the church loves herself, to present herself to herself in order to purify herself by water with the word, to present herself to herself in order to purify herself by water with the word, to present herself to herself in order to purify herself by water with the word, toward them.”

Hebrews 12:15

“looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; for if any **root of bitterness** springing up cause trouble, this many become defiled”

James 3:14

“But if you have **bitter envy** and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth.”



V. Its Answer & Cure

A. Realize it is Sinful – Thus Must Change

B. Pray

- 1. For strength to overcome (Phil. 4:13)*
- 2. For wisdom (Jas. 1:5)*
- 3. For the person for whom you harbor bitterness (Matt. 5:44)*



V. Its Answer & Cure

A. Realize it is Sinful – Thus Must Change

B. Pray

C. Try to Understand the Person You Resent

- 1. Phil. 2:4 – think about the other person*
- 2. Matt. 7:12 – treat him the way want to be*
- 3. 1 Cor. 13:7 – give the benefit of the doubt*



V. Its Answer & Cure

A. Realize it is Sinful – Thus Must Change

B. Pray

C. Try to Understand the Person You Resent

D. Learn to Love

- 1. Love is commanded & expected (Heb. 13:1)*
- 2. Love even our enemies (Matt. 5:44)*
- 3. Love will do (1 Cor. 13:1-ff)*
- 4. Love can be learned!*



V. Its Answer & Cure

A. Realize it is Sinful – Thus Must Change

B. Pray

C. Try to Understand the Person You Resent

D. Learn to Love

Bitterness



I. Its Meaning

II. Its Causes

III. Its Danger

IV. Its Sinfulness

V. Its Answer & Cure