



Revive!
Hebrews 12:14-15

Heb. 12:14-15

14 Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: 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; NKJV

The Greek word for bitterness means acrid. **Acrid** is the nasty sting that you would feel in your nose if you breathed in tear gas. But God uses this word **acrid** to describe someone's attitude, tone, or general demeanor.

What does acrid look like to those who are being injured?

Bitterness is an attitude of the heart in which you are angry, condescending, and disrespectful. If you do not deal with this attitude of the heart, your attitude will turn into bitter words and actions.

God says it makes people feel defiled. The word defiled means contaminated. When other people are the object of your bitterness they want to get away from your contamination.

Bitterness is caused by our perception that someone has committed a trespass against us. What is a trespass?

We all have personal rights. Some of these rights are inherent at birth. Some of these rights are acquired as we enter into agreements with people. A trespass simply means someone has violated one of our personal rights. When this occurs it is natural for us to be tempted to become bitter in our attitude; angry, condescending, and disrespectful. And if we become bitter our bitter attitude will normally turn into bitter words and actions.

Since we live in a fallen world, we all experience violations of our personal rights.

Since we live in a fallen world, we are all selfish. Being selfish we all tend to perceive our personal rights to be greater than what they actually are.

When we perceive that our rights have been violated, we can either choose to be bitter or we can choose to forgive people.

Eph. 4:32

32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.

NKJV

Forgiving people does not mean that we never confront people that violate our rights or the rights of others. Beginning with the prophets of the bible and then Jesus, throughout world history those people that have been used most to confront evil and change the world for good have been forgiving people.

What is forgiveness?

Forgiveness is also an attitude of the heart. The word forgive simply means to release or send away.

What must we forgive or send away in order to avoid bitterness?

- We must release our personal rights of ownership to God

Psalms 24:1

1The earth is the Lord's, and all its fullness,
The world and those who dwell therein.

If God owns you, He owns all you own. A trespass against you is actually a trespass against Him.

- We must release our personal right to judge others to God

Ps 7:11

11 God is a just judge,
And God is angry with the wicked every day.

NKJV

God is a just judge. This simply means when all is said and done, God will make sure everyone pays what they owe for their trespasses.

Releasing our personal right to judge others includes our personal right to injure others.

Exodus 21:23-25

23 But if any harm follows, then you shall give life for life, 24 eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, 25 burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.

NKJV

Matthew 5:38-39

38 "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' 39 But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.

NKJV

Matthew 5:43-48

43 "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' 44 But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, 45 that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. 46 For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47 And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? 48 Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.

NKJV

When we send away to God our personal rights to ownership and our personal right to judge and hurt others, we can respond to others in love and we can receive from God wisdom about the perfect way to deal with others.

When someone commits a trespass against us there is a grace available from God to love the trespasser, if we will humble ourselves and forgive the trespasser; if we will give to God our rights of ownership and our right to judge.

What about the hurt that is caused by the trespass?

- Talk to God about the hurt
- Talk to someone in your church in confidence about the hurt

God will comfort you by His Spirit through His Word and through His people. 2 Cor. 1:3-4
3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.
NKJV

1 Cor. 14:3

3 But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men.

NKJV

Comfort means console. There are some hurts that we experience that will never go away. But God and His church can ease our pain and encourage us.

- Look forward to heaven.

God promises that one day this world as we know it will give way to a new earth and a new heaven where there will be no more hurt.

Rev. 21:4

4 And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."
NKJV

When you forgive people you and bless them you are not giving them what they deserve but you are giving them unmerited favor. This is called grace.

This is what God has done for us through Jesus Christ. He has given us grace. To receive the promise of eternal life on a new earth with a new heaven you must receive the grace of God through Jesus Christ.

Invitation

- Receive Jesus
- Receive prayer for your hurts and for someone you need to forgive