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Harvest Warriors NEWSLETTER



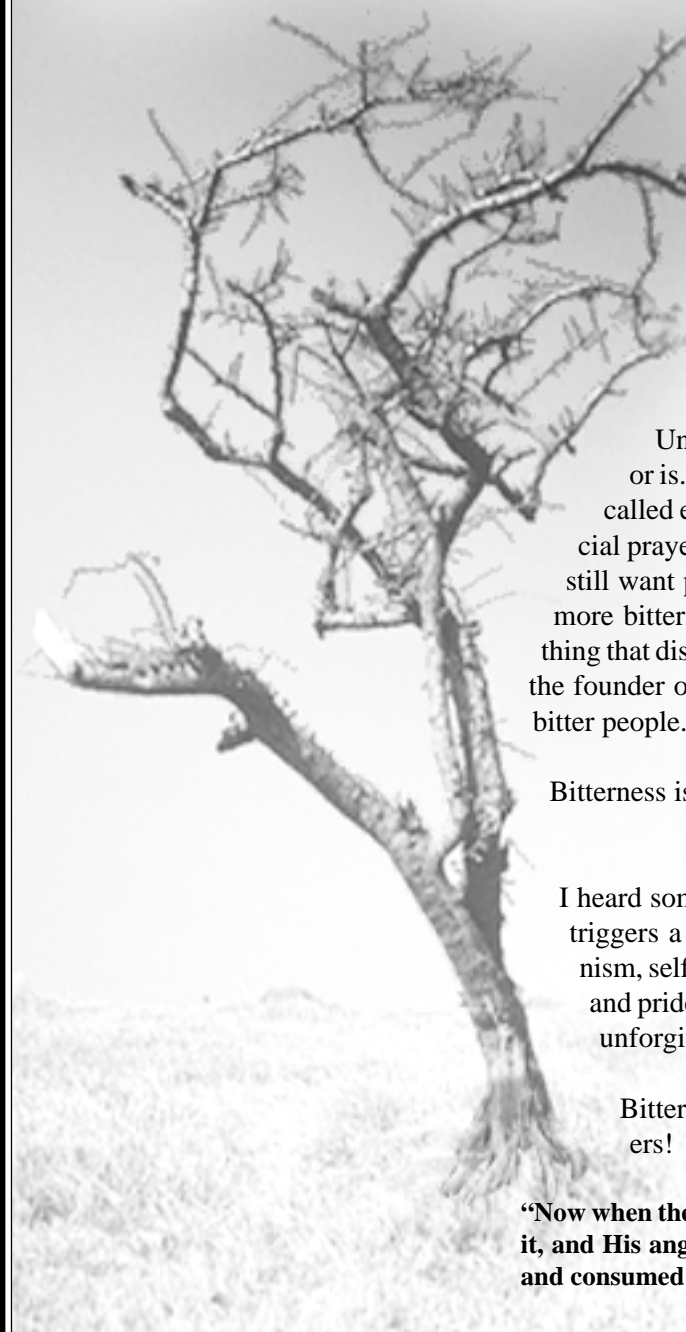
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The Root of Bitterness



Are you familiar with the phrase, “his nose is out of joint?” What does it take to put your nose out of joint and to get you miffed? What are the feelings you experience when you get miffed? Are they positive, uplifting, joyful emotional vibrations? I want to come at this from another direction. Are you familiar with the word “sulk?” The dictionary says sulking is: “Keeping aloof from others in moody silence.” I’ve just described to you emotional expressions of our hearts. Emotions that all of us are intimately familiar with, emotions that demonstrate bitterness.

Until recently, I’ve truly never understood what bitterness was, or is. Yet I’ve seen it displayed on the covers of tabloids, and in so called exposes of other people or ministries. We’ve called for a special prayer request for the P.F.O. and its founders on our web site. (We still want prayer for these people.) They’re latest writings show even more bitterness, stating that I (Daniel) am a “red herring,” (i.e. something that distracts you from the real issue) comparing me to Anton LeVay, the founder of the First Church of Satan. These are the writings of very bitter people.

Bitterness is a sin of the heart and is a condition that brings devastation into the lives of many people.

I heard someone once say, “Bitterness is a devastating attitude sin.” It triggers a wide range of other sins, such as: hatred, cruelty, antagonism, self-pity, unteachableness, vindictiveness and desires for revenge and prideful, ambitions (arrogance). Bitterness is characterized by an unforgiving spirit and negative, critical attitudes.

Bitterness motivates habitual complaining. God hates complainers!

“Now when the people complained, it displeased the Lord; for the Lord heard it, and His anger was aroused. So the fire of the Lord burned among them, and consumed some in the outskirts of the camp.” Numbers 11:1

Bitterness brings about suffering and great anguish.

**“Therefore I will not restrain my mouth;
I will speak in the anguish of my spirit;
I will complain in the bitterness of my soul.” Job 7:11**

**“My soul loathes my life;
I will give free course to my complaint,
I will speak in the bitterness of my soul . . .” Job 10:1**

Bitter people find great delight in gossip.

**“Hide me from the secret plots of the wicked,
From the rebellion of the workers of iniquity,
Who sharpen their tongue like a sword,
And bend their bows to shoot their arrows – bitter words,
That they may shoot in secret at the blameless
Suddenly they shoot at him and do not fear.
They encourage themselves in an evil matter;
They talk of laying snares secretly;
They say, ‘Who will see them?’
They devise iniquities:
‘We have perfected a shrewd scheme.’
Both the inward thought and the heart of man are deep.
But God shall shoot at them with an arrow;
Suddenly they shall be wounded.
So He will make them stumble over their own tongue;
All who see them shall flee away . . .” Psalm; 64:2-8**

“For I fear lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I wish, and that I shall be found by you such as you do not wish; lest there be contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, backbitings, whisperings, [gossip] conceits, tumults . . .” 2 Corinthians 12:20

Bitterness destroys other peoples’ lives. “Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord; 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.” (Hebrews 12:15)

Bitterness is a self-induced misery, and it produces chain sinning. A chronically bitter person is his or her own worst enemy and is difficult to maintain a relationship with.

Doctors call high blood pressure the “silent killer,” that’s because you cannot see nor feel the presence of high blood pressure until it has already done its damage. Bitterness is to our spiritual and emotional being what high blood pressure is to our physical bodies.

Everytime I go to my doctor they take my blood pressure. I’ve found it to change with my mood. This got

me to thinking about how important it is to give ourselves a regular spiritual check-up on the root of bitterness. Perhaps this is the real silent killer, the cause of sleepless nights, ulcers, agitation, irritability, angry words, lost friendships, ruined marital relationships, separated families, and a host of other expensive consequences.

Bitterness is very costly for both the innocent victims and the perpetrator. I’ve found this out as we, Rebecca and I, were given the task by God of building a Christian based drag strip as an outreach to a 7 to 8 county area. I have never seen, felt, heard or even thought how the root of bitterness could affect a complete community. The lies, the deceit, the shady underhanded tricks that people who go to church believe in God and seem to be Christian, could even consider doing. I see now how a little disagreement can lead to spiritual destruction and anger, even hatred.

Like Rebecca and I, everyone should have plans and dreams of what we can do for the Kingdom of God and His son Jesus Christ. We have dreams for the unsaved, the youth, and even the saved. And if they are big, beautiful godly dreams, they can only be realized through the power of the Holy Spirit filled life. But bitterness can rob the power to achieve these dreams. When other people become angry and bitter toward the call God has given us, most of the time we quit – tucking our tails between our legs and just give up.

Peter told Simon that the Holy Spirit and bitterness cannot co-exist in the same person. One or the other has to go. For example: if we harbor a root of bitterness, we infect and damage out children, spouse and workplace. When a pastor harbors the root of bitterness he has infected his whole congregation. A root of bitterness will impact the bottom line of your business. It throws a wet blanket over a complete community. It grieves the Holy Spirit, stops church growth, snuffs out revival and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. None of us can afford to allow bitterness in our lives. The consequences are too costly. We have two clear choices. We can choose bitterness and risk losing everything we hold near and dear, or we can choose the Holy Spirit power to renounce the root of bitterness. *The only way to pluck out a root of bitterness is first to recognize its presence, then to get on our knees and repent and ask God to forgive us for the sin of being bitter. Then we must totally forgive everyone who has ever hurt us, and ask the Lord to remove bitterness far from us. We must renounce bitterness and*

command it to leave our lives. From then on, we must discipline our thoughts and rebuke any thought of hatred, anger or bitterness. The power of the Holy Spirit can enable us to do this.

“Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.” Ephesians 4:29-31

Understanding the words bitter and bitterness: in our language the concept of mental bitterness comes from the idea of something that has a sharp or unpleasant taste. We speak of something being bitter if it causes grief or is hard to bear, such as: “a bitter defeat,” “a bitter failure,”. We also speak of a “bitter loss,” when someone’s death has caused deep grief.

The Greek words for “bitter” and “bitterness” originally meant “sharp, or pointed.” Then it was used more generally for anything that had a pervasive smell or a “shrill unpleasant noise.” The word was used for the bitter taste of some plants. Finally it was used of personal experience when something was unpleasant and undesirable. Here are some instances in the Bible using the word “bitterness.”

“And Peter remembered the word of Jesus who had said to him ‘Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.’ So he went out and wept bitterly.” Matthew 26:75

“Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God ‘if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you.’ For I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity.” Acts 8:22-23

“As it is written:

**‘There is none righteous, no, not one . . .
Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.
Their feet are swift to shed blood . . .’ Romans 3:10-15**

“The heart knows its own bitterness . . .” Proverbs 14:10

King Solomon was a very wise man. He examined his own heart and realized when it held bitterness.

In the Bible, except when it is obvious that the actual taste of something is meant, bitterness refers to intensity of suffering of mind and body, an event that is

difficult to bear or that causes animosity or antagonism. Once again we have two clear choices. We can choose bitterness or a Spirit filled life with the fruits of the Holy Spirit. **THAT CHOICE IS YOURS AND MINE.**

The experiences of our lives can cause us to be bitter. Women are bitter because they can’t have children. (1 Samuel 1:10) the rebellion and foolishness of our children can cause bitterness. (Proverbs 17:25) a negative response to divine chastisement has caused bitterness in many people.

Each of us has our own belief or sense as to what we feel is right or wrong. When we feel we are wronged, it is natural to react in a negative way. This can cause bitterness in our hearts if we are not quick to forgive a perceived wrong perpetuated upon us. If we do not forgive and let God handle the situation, hatred and bitterness take root and quench the activity of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

When Job complained in Job 9:17-18, he was making a statement of the bitterness in his heart. He felt he had been treated unfairly by his friends.

Anger and unforgiveness are the root causes of bitterness. Most bitter people will protest that they are not bitter. A lot of Christians enjoy being bitter. They somehow like it, and they feed on it. They wouldn’t know what to do if they got rid of it. They wouldn’t have a purpose for living. They like being bitter. They like holding things against other people. They don’t feel guilty for their bitter backstabbing ways. Instead, their whole life centers around gaining revenge on those they are bitter toward.

WE need to guard against bitterness in our own hearts and among God’s people. Bitterness in Christians most often turns the unsaved away from accepting Christ and also turns new Christians away from God. These bitter Christians are best described in Deuteronomy:

**“For their vine is of the vine of Sodom
and of the fields of Gomorrah;
Their grapes are grapes of gall,
Their clusters are bitter.
Their wine is the poison of serpents,
And the cruel venom of cobras.” Deuteronomy 32:32-33**

A Note From Rebecca

Daniel and I have learned much about bitterness and hatred through our recent adventure of building and opening a drag strip as an outreach to the youth of our area. The neighbors who live in the area where we built the drag strip all attend church and claim to be Christians. BUT, they have all become intensely bitter people. They are furious that we built the drag strip in their area, even though it sits in the middle of an 80-acre parcel of land, not close to any of them. Their anger quickly turned to bitterness and hatred toward us. For the first time we truly learned the demonic strength of these emotions. Demons follow the emotions of bitterness and hatred. They follow those emotions directly onto the people who are the objects of the hatred, anger and bitterness. We were amazed at the power of these demons! *When someone hates you or is angry or bitter toward you, you need to understand that demon spirits follow those emotions to you and attack you just the same as if a witch sent a curse onto your life.* As the bitterness of these people swept into our lives, not only were we afflicted by the physical actions they took, we were afflicted directly from the spirit realm as well.

These people tried every way possible to destroy our reputation within the community – even going so far as to publish all sorts of lies about us in the newspapers. They also tried to stop the track from opening with all sorts of legal attacks. But the attacks in the spirit realm were just as severe. The demons caused tremendous physical illness and pain in both of our bodies. Many times we felt like someone had beaten us all over with a baseball bat. Many nights we felt such heaviness in the spirit realm that it was impossible to sleep. One of our employees was very affected by all of this and became angry and bitter toward us as well. For a short while this person cooked at our concession stand. Amazingly, we quickly discovered, that even the physical cooking utensils that this person touched carried demons of anger and bitterness. When I brought them home to wash them, every time I had to anoint them with oil and command the demons off of them before bringing them into our home. If I neglected to do this, we were terribly afflicted with nightmares and sleeplessness at night. Over and over again we had to command all curses from bitterness and anger to be broken off of our lives.

A break through came when a dear Christian brother who intercedes for us continually called me one day.

We had just been attacked anew that morning. He realized it as he prayed for us and called me. I was in terrible pain, so much so that I was having a difficult time functioning. He told me, “Rebecca, the Lord told me to tell you that you need to ask Him to send out the angels of Zechariah chapter 5 to deal with this situation.” The Holy Spirit confirmed that word to me, and that night we joined with some other Christian brothers and sisters and went down to the drag strip and proclaimed this scripture into the spirit realm. It fit the situation amazingly well. I share this with you because this is a very powerful weapon of warfare that you yourself may need to use at some point.

“Then I turned and raised my eyes, and saw there a flying scroll. And he [an angel] said to me, ‘What do you see?’ So I answered, ‘I see a flying scroll. Its length is twenty cubits and its width ten cubits.’

Then he said to me, ‘This is the curse that goes out over the face of the whole earth: ‘Every thief shall be expelled,’ according to this side of the scroll; and ‘Every perjurer shall be expelled,’ according to that side of it.’

**‘I will send out the curse,’ says the Lord of hosts;
‘It shall enter the house of the thief
And the house of the one who swears falsely by My name.
It shall remain in the midst of his house
And consume it, with its timber and stones.’” Zechariah 5:1-4**

Because of the bitterness of their hearts, these people were trying to steal the drag strip from us and keep it from opening. They were also “swearing falsely” trying to destroy our reputations throughout this whole community. We have had to stand for months in the midst of all these attacks. Finally, we are breaking through to victory. The drag strip is still open, and lives are being changed as a result. We thank God for the important lessons we have learned through all this. *Never underestimate the power of the demons associated with the emotions of hatred, anger, jealousy and bitterness. If you are the object of these emotions by someone, you need to stand and rebuke these demons off of your life in the name of Jesus. The demons attacking you through the emotions of someone else may be the source of all sorts of illness and every problem imaginable.* There is power in the name of Jesus to deal with these spirits, but you have to recognize the source of your problems before you can deal with them.

Ministry Update

Two-Lane Blacktop Drag Strip opened on September 1, 2006. We have been open every weekend since. God is doing wonderful things at the drag strip. As I work amongst the many youth who come there, the one remark I hear over and over again, especially from the girls, is: "I love it here, I feel so safe here." Isn't that wonderful? Daniel and I walked around the whole property and put an oil line around the whole thing, and asked the Lord to station His angels all around it and keep everyone safe. Obviously, the people feel the presence of those angels even though they don't know what they are feeling. One young lady I lead to the Lord is 22 years old, and has 4 children. She is single. She told me, "If I had had something like this to go to when I was a teen, I wouldn't be in the mess I am in now."

So far, we have had no problems with alcohol or drugs. Occasionally people do bring alcohol to the track, but we do a quick search of every vehicle as it comes in, and once explanations are made, they willingly allow us to keep their alcoholic beverages for them at admissions while they were at the track. Daniel talks continually to the young men about treating the girls like ladies. Interestingly, one weekend, a teenage girl came to the track dressed very immodestly. We didn't have to say anything to her. The Lord just convicted her about her dress, or lack thereof, and she came to Daniel and said, "I'm not dressed appropriately, am I?" He told her that she was not, and she immediately went to one of her friends and borrowed a long sleeved shirt and put it on for the rest of her time at the track.

The county sheriff and his deputies love the track! They have told us that crime in our county has dropped by more than 50% in the first 4 weeks after we opened. Another deputy told us that the county next to ours has not issued a single speeding ticket to anyone under the age of 25 since the track opened, and drag racing on the streets has almost completely stopped. There has not been a single death of a young person on any of our roads in our county or those next to us since we opened. This is incredible as we were averaging 1-2 deaths per week amongst the youth from illegal drag racing!

Copies

You are welcome to copy any of our newsletters to give to other people. If you know of someone who would like to receive our newsletter, if they live inside the U.S., please send their name and address to us. We will be happy to add them to our mailing list.

Young and old alike come to the track. This is wonderful, because the older men and the young ones are now talking to one another – in many cases for the first time in their lives. One mother races with her son every weekend to see who has to do the chores for that week. She has a SUV (we call them a "grocery getter") and he has an old car he is rebuilding. The boy's father was killed in an auto accident 6 months ago, and his mother told us that he is coming out of his shell for the first time since they have started coming to the track.

We haven't been able to get our electronics set up yet, so sometimes one of the deputies will come out and sit in his car at the end of the track and time the kids on his radar. The deputies and the kids have been making friends this way, which also helps drop the crime rate.

We have had two couples tell us that their marriages have been put back together since coming to the track. In both cases the husband was terribly depressed and withdrawn. Now they have something to do and are reaching out to other people. Everyone helps everyone else if there is a problem with one of the vehicles.

Anybody can race anything. We have motorcycles, 4-wheelers, and vehicles of every description. The other night, one youngster raced against a 4-wheeler on foot – he won! The 4-wheeler wasn't in very good condition. Now that the evenings are cool, we have a bonfire every evening we are open, and allow the kids to roast marshmallows over the fire. I could go on and on about the wonderful things happening at the track. Many of the youth have told Daniel that they consider him to be their father. Most all of them now call Daniel "Big Daddy."

We plan to stay open all winter as long as the weather permits. We ask for your continued prayers for this outreach and us. The website for Two-Lane Blacktop Dragstrip is:

www.two-laneblacktopdragstrip.com

Love Offerings

We are a faith supported ministry. That means, that whether the financial needs of this ministry are met or not depends on your hearts. It is only as you give to us that we are able to continue on and expand the work God has given us to do. We deeply appreciate those of you who do support us. As your letters and checks come in, we lay hands on each one and pray fervently that our Lord will bless you in return.

Please send your offering in the enclosed envelope.

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_____ copies of *A Shepherd Looks At Psalm 23* and *Lessons From a Sheep Dog*, by Phillip Keller (\$16 and \$10, both can ship together for \$5)

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_____ bottles of the Holy Anointing Oil, (\$40 per bottle plus \$5.00 postage.

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