Beating Bitterness

Greg Kline · Genesis 37:5–28

INTRODUCTION

- One of the most difficult, tricky, and yet easily understandable sins that we struggle with is bitterness.
- Too often it leads to us rejecting principles of Christ, that is mercy, love, forgiveness, even simple kindness.
- How do we overcome that? I think the key is perspective. And I think Joseph gives us a lot of that.

1 Joseph Thrown Into a Pit by His Brothers

Genesis 37:5–11; Genesis 37:12–28

- So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words.
- Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits.
- Can we be very clear and say that the brothers acted sinfully against Joseph? This was wrong.

2 Joseph Doesn't Respond With Bitterness

Genesis 45:1–15

- Note how Joseph doesn't respond with bitterness. He doesn't respond by lashing out at them.
- As for you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive as they are today.
- Thus he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.
- Whatever bitterness I'm struggling with that I'm about to confront head on in my heart and in my mind as we study the word of God, does it anywhere compare with what Joseph went through?

3 Let All Bitterness Be Put Away

Ephesians 4:31–32

- Ephesians chapter 4 and verse 31 is still a commandment for all of God's followers, for all of God's children.
- Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you along with all malice.
- We forgive others as what? As God has forgiven me.

4 Beating Bitterness Before It Happens: Perspective

Romans 5:8; James 4:13–17; Matthew 18:21–22

- Two types of bitterness. First one is caused when sin is against us.
- I need to take perspective first of all that what I'm facing probably isn't that big of a deal. And even if it is, people have faced far worse.
- For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes.

- The perspective we have to take every day is I need to offer grace because I have been offered grace.
- When I feel bitter, the person who did it to me might not even know. But I suffer because I'm holding on to it.

5 In the Middle of Problems, Handle It With Wisdom

Hebrews 12:12–17; Matthew 18:15–17; 2 Timothy 2:22–26

- See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God, that no root of bitterness springs up and causes trouble, and by it many defiled.
- If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone.
- When someone sins against me, it is not right to sit back and think mean things.
- The Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome, but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil.

6 Afterwards: Practice Loving Like God and Pray

Matthew 6:9–15; Ephesians 4:31–32

- We need to pray to God not just to remove bitterness, but to forgive us for our sin.
- Bitterness is a sin which has no part in the Christian behavior.
- For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.
- Bitterness isn't just something that ruins this life. Bitterness ruins my soul. We have to cast it away.

> THE CHALLENGE
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> **Take perspective this morning of your life when you're standing before God.**

MY NOTES