



Bitter Roots

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- Focus** Whether we've been hurt by someone or feel God has wronged us, we can choose not to be bitter. Like Christ, we should turn away from resentfulness and forgive because bitterness is a poison that will deceive, defile, and depress.
- Fun** What's the strangest thing you've ever eaten? Have you ever eaten something that was bitter? Share with the group.
- Review** Key Scripture: Hebrews 12:14–17
- **Bitter roots deceive.**
2 Corinthians 11:3; Hebrews 12:14–15
Satan convinced Eve that God was holding something back from her. He deceived her using lies mixed with a little bit of truth. The original sin came from a root of bitterness toward God. When we become bitter, we believe God is holding out on us. We believe there's something better than what we have.
 - **Bitter roots defile.**
Hebrews 12:15; Genesis 25:29–34, 28:6–9
All sins go back to a root of bitterness toward God—the first sin started with bitterness in the Garden of Eden! Most of us can trace anger we have toward God to a root of bitterness. When bad things happen in our lives, sometimes we get mad at God. Those things happen because we live in a fallen world, and God has allowed us to make our own choices.

- **Bitter roots depress.**

Hebrews 12:16–17; Deuteronomy 29:18; Revelation 8:10–11

Esau was described as a profane person, or a person driven by appetite. Many people give up their family, business, or destiny for a moment of pleasure. This comes from a belief that God hasn't given them all He has for them. The Bible compares bitterness to wormwood and gall. Jesus refused to partake of this bitter substance on the cross and chose to forgive instead. We're all going to taste bitterness in life, but we have a choice whether or not to drink it.

Group Dynamics Idea

People gain a sense of purpose and unity when your group gives something together. Designate a person in your group who can organize a giving opportunity (like a shoe drive or baby formula collection) or who can connect your group with an existing service opportunity. Follow up and let your group know the results of their giving and the impact it made on the people who received the donations.

Discuss

1. When a person speaks with resentment, do they seem like a resentful person overall? Do you think it's possible to be resentful in just one area of life?
2. Esau was driven by appetite, and we live in a world that thrives on instant gratification. What ways do you tend to give in easily to the satisfaction in front of you instead of relying on the Lord?
3. Naomi said, "Call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me." What would you have said to Naomi? How would you respond to a person who says, "God did this to me"?
4. How does it make you feel when someone who has hurt you is blessed by the Lord? What is God's perception of that person? What does God think about the situation you experienced?
5. Think of a person who grew up experiencing a lot of relationships with resentment and describe what that person's life would be like if the root of bitterness was removed. How would their life change? How would their perception of God change?

Take Home

As we conclude, remember the following:

- Satan's deception of Eve shows us that all sin goes back to a root of bitterness toward God.
- Satan deceives us using truth mixed with lies.
- We've been deceived when we think God isn't doing something for us that we feel He should be doing.
- We may need to forgive God and not hold Him responsible.
- Jesus refused the bitter gall on the cross and instead chose to forgive.
- We have a choice to forgive and not be bitter.

Prayer

Lord, we ask that You bring to our minds any bitter roots we have. Reveal to us the people or circumstances that have crippled us with resentment and bitterness. Forgive us for holding it against You and bring Your healing. We give those situations to You and ask You to pull every last fiber of this root of bitterness out of our hearts. Heal us with your lovingkindness and help us to walk in Your grace in the days to come. Thank You, Lord; we love You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

New Leader Tip

People enjoy knowing they're remembered on their birthday no matter their age. As a new semester approaches, consider collecting birth dates in addition to everyone's names and emails. Send a birthday email and bless each member on their special day.