

BIBLE BAPTIST CHURCH OF ERIE
James M. Duncan, Pastor
NOVEMBER 3, 2019

SERIES #3 - CHALLENGING YOUR GIANTS

“CHALLENGING THE GIANT OF BITTERNESS”

Ephesians 4:30 – 5:2; Hebrews 12:14-15

Of all the human emotions (anger, depression, fear, loneliness, sadness), the one that I personally and actually fear the most is **the giant of bitterness**. Bitterness is an emotional cancer that will eat you up from the inside out. Some of you today maybe in bondage to the **GIANT of BITTERNESS** or have you ever known someone who is **BITTER**? Bitterness is the result of feeling that someone has done us wrong. I would define bitterness this way: **Bitterness is harbored hurt hidden in the heart**. In my estimation there is not a more dangerous emotion than the emotion of bitterness. Bitterness is a soul disease. It is a response to life that comes about as a result of something going on within me. Bitterness is always directed toward a person. We don't hold bitterness toward our car for having a flat tire. Bitterness results from failure to properly respond to offenses. Everyone gets offended. Not everyone becomes bitter. Clearly, offenses do not cause bitterness. We choose to cultivate bitterness. Remember that:

- ⇒ **I can't control what happens to me, but I can control what happens IN ME**
- ⇒ **I cannot control how others act toward me, but I can control HOW I REACT TO THEM.**

Disappointment and offense by people are unavoidable. **Bitterness is!** Bitterness demands payment and imparts pain to the perceived offender. I want the offender to pay me back and to hurt like I hurt. The opposite of bitterness is love. Love dismisses debt and imparts favor to the perceived offender. I want to release the offender and to grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ. I'm here to tell you today that the issue of bitterness has to do with **me** and **NOT** with anyone else. Look at our scripture text again with me. I find three truths on

“Challenging the Giant of Bitterness”.

First, we must understand....

I. THE DEEP ROOT OF BITTERNESS

Look at our Scripture text again in **Eph. 4:30-32**. Notice in **V-31** it says, **“put away bitterness”**, in **Heb. 12:15** we see that bitterness is **describe as a root**. A root is something that is beneath the surface, invisible to the eye, but none the less real.

It is so easy to plant the seed of bitterness, but so difficult to weed it out.

We get bitter for basically one of four reasons. [1] First of all, because of what is said about us. [2] Secondly, because of what is done to us. [3] Thirdly, because of what is taken from us. [4] And lastly our Jealousy of others – why has the other person been so blessed and happy and I am not? It is amazing how Jesus dealt with all four of these problems in the Sermon on the Mount.

As we **Challenge the Giant of Bitterness**, we must also understand . . .

II. THE DESTRUCTIVE FRUIT OF BITTERNESS

We are expressly warned in **Hebrews 12:15** that if the root of bitterness does spring up, it **“causes trouble.”** It is a **terrible emotional giant**. A bitter root always brings forth bitter fruit. The destructive fruit of bitterness is seen in three ways:

- 1. IT SATURATES THE MIND**
- 2. IT SADDENS THE SPIRIT**
- 3. IT SICKENS THE BODY**

Lastly, we see the third truth about **Challenging the Giant of Bitterness** and that is . . .

III. THE DEFEATING PURSUIT OF BITTERNESS

Remember that a root is something that is underground. If you want to get rid of it, you have to go after it. You have to find it. You have to dig it up. You have to get rid of it. So how do you uproot and root out the root of bitterness?

1. FORGET THE PROBLEM

WHATEVER CAUSED THE PROBLEM THAT BROUGHT BITTERNESS INTO YOUR LIFE, MUST BE PUT BEHIND YOU.

Look what Paul said in **Eph. 4:31**.

2. FORGIVE THE PERSON

In **Eph 4:32 - 5:1-2**, what are we told to do? “forgive and be Followers of God and walk in Love...” After **Eph. 4:31** comes **4:32**, look at it. You talk about a remarkable example of **forgiveness** over **bitterness** was witnessed this past October 2, 2019. A Dallas police officer **Amber Guyger** was found guilty of shooting **Botham Jean** as he sat on his couch eating a bowl of ice cream.

3. FORSAKE THE PRACTICE

It is not enough just to forgive and forget. **Hebrews 12:14** reminds us, **“Pursue peace with all men, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord.”** (NKJV) The word follow/pursue (NKJV) means **“to go after in an aggressive fashion.”** We are to actively pursue peace. In Jesus, you can find rest ... and peace ... and healing ... and forgiveness. **Jesus knows all about BITTERNESS ... it nailed Him to the cross.** AND ... on the **cross**, He took that **bitterness** of the religious and political leaders and turned it into **forgiveness for all.** AND ... when He rose from the dead, He brought victory over all **BITTERNESS**. It's available to everyone this Morning.