

## 10. Avoid a Root of Bitterness

How do we deal with unrighteous anger when we find it rising within us? Do we simply label it as wrong, turn from it, and decide instead to be considerate and kind? That is part of the answer but much more, I think, is required of us. In Psalms 37:1-40 we are told to do three things: to be still before the Lord, to wait patiently for Him, and to refuse to fret.

These three principles can be applied, I believe, to those occasions when we feel unrighteous anger building up inside us. First, be still. When angry be still and stop. "Anger," say Drs Allender and Longman, "is a catalyst that stirs us into battle, but most of the battles that anger draws us into are not worthy of our blood." They add: "Detoxification of anger is writhing with the desire to strike out and choosing not to release the anger - either toward another person or an inanimate object." Contain the rage. Be still.

Next, wait. This involves reminding ourselves of the text we have already looked at: "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord" (Rom.12:19, RSV). Waiting also prevents us experiencing the repercussions of ill-chosen words that we might speak when angry. Just don't say those things you want to say.

Third, do not fret. This means not going over the injustice in your mind because, as sure as night follows day, the more you fret and fume the stronger will be your desire to attack. One writer says: "Usually anger is a starting gun that signals us to leap from the starting blocks to control, consume, and destroy. Instead anger should be a starting gun that calls us to sit down and think."

- Adapted from "Every Day for Jesus" by Selwyn Hughes

### Avoid a Root of Bitterness Daily Quiet Times

Date	Week 10
23-Jul	Ephesians 4:31-32
24-Jul	Hebrews 12:14-15
25-Jul	Proverbs 14:9-10
26-Jul	James 3:13-14
27-Jul	Romans 12:16-19
28-Jul	Psalms 73:21-24
29-Jul	Psalms 1:1-3

# Avoid a Root of Bitterness

## PART 1

### Passage(s) to Study

Wouldn't it be great if we Christians could always get along with each other? It seems as though we should. We have so much in common—one Lord, one revealed Word from Him, one Body of which we are all members, one common desire to glorify Jesus Christ, one common goal to share Him with others. And yet we seem to have a reputation for misunderstandings, disagreements, dissension and division. If not dealt with, these can often lead us to develop bitterness in our hearts.

**Read:** Psalms 73 and write down 5-10 observations that you make about on how apparent disillusionment and bitterness were avoided. How might we build in his response of vs. 25-26 into our lives to avoid the root of bitterness from controlling us?

## PART 2

### Questions to Ponder

**[Q]** Have you ever considered what bitterness produces? According to the following verses what types of characteristics accompany bitterness? What are the thoughts that stick out to you from these verses? How have you experienced bitterness from others?

**Read:** Job 7:11, 10:1, 21:25; Psalms 64:3; Ephesians 4:31-32; James 3:13-16

**[Q]** What does Hebrews 12:14 say about what happens when a root of bitterness takes hold in our lives. Summarize in your own words how this affects others.

**[Q]** Do you think it is important for us to understand what bitterness is and its impact on our lives & relationships? Why or why not?

**[Q]** Are you ever controlled by emotions that hinder your spiritual growth, such as bitterness, envy, inferiority, or rejection? Read Colossians 3:12-15 and write down how we are supposed to live out our lives and why.

**Time for action:** Take action to forgive – the choice is yours. Do you have unforgiveness towards: Your parents? A family member? Yourself? Towards God? A former boyfriend or girlfriend? Someone in authority over you? Your friend(s)? Spend time with God, and then record any course of action that he brings to mind on how to proceed with your specific situation(s).

## PART 3

### Making it Stick

**Write out 1-2 of the main things that God impressed upon you this week from your time reading the daily devotions on Avoiding a Root of Bitterness.**

**Write out in your own words a prayer to God asking him for a heart that is not bitter towards anyone. A sample has been provided below:**

**Prayer:** *Father, You have given me the formula; please enable me to put it into practice the very next time I feel unrighteous anger rising within me. Help me to not ignore it and stuff it and cause bitterness in my soul. In Christ's Name I pray. Amen.*

### Recommended resources:

*Battling Unbelief* by John Piper