

When you are offended or disappointed by others and allow the hurt to germinate in your heart, bitterness and resentment can take root. Characterized by an unforgiving spirit, these are often expressed in a negative critical attitude. Bitterness and resentment are sinful and self-defeating. They will color your conscious and unconscious thoughts and actions. Allowed to fester, they will destroy and kill (Galatians 5:19-21). In Joseph's story, it would appear he could have easily become a bitter and resentful man. If you were Joseph, would you have been bitter? Would you have been bitter towards your brothers? Potiphar and his wife? The baker and the cupbearer? Today we learn how to overcome the challenge of resentment and bitterness with forgiveness.

The Cause of Bitterness and Resentment:

Bitterness is resentful cynicism that results in an intense antagonism or hostility towards others.

1. Mistreatment by others
2. Jealousy
3. Circumstances
4. Unfulfilled dreams

The Cure for Bitterness and Resentment:

Key thought: You can overcome resentment and bitterness by trusting God's sovereign plan for your life and by treating those who have harmed you with grace.

- a. Trusting God's sovereign plan (*Romans 8:28*)
- b. Treating others with grace
(You cannot treat others with grace without the Holy Spirit of God enabling you to do so. You must be a Spirit filled believer!)
 1. Grace is undeserved
 2. Grace must be unreserved
 3. Grace must be unending

God used a famine to bring a family back together. What must He use to bring your family back together, or what must He use to reconcile you with friends?

"Forgiveness is not an emotion, it is a choice." *Adrian Rogers*

Personal Application: (Ephesians 4:31-32)

Steve Canfield: Five Steps Toward Freedom

1. Make a list—Make a list of the people who have wronged you. (Be honest with God and with yourself. You can't take the steps of forgiveness if you haven't acknowledged the need.)
2. Clear your conscience—Confess to God, and then to the offender, any wrong responses you may have had (e.g. hatred, bitterness, gossip). (Acts 24:16; Matthew 18:15-17)
3. Thank God—Thank God for each person who has wounded you. (1 Thessalonians 5:18)
4. Choose to forgive—As Christ has forgiven you, fully forgive each offender. (Ephesians 4:32)
5. Rebuild relationships—Confirm your Christian love to the people on your list. (2 Corinthians 2:8)