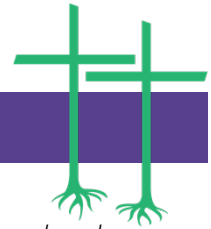


MINISTRY TOOL #8 – FOR INNER TRANSFORMATION

Addressing Bitter Roots



Bitter roots defile others. Sometimes a person's judgments and expectancies lock them in cycles of experiencing the same problems again and again. By uprooting the bitterness, the defilement is removed, and peace can return to certain present relationships.

Hebrews 12:15 – See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.

EXPLANATION:

Bitter roots are sinful judgments and expectancies that are harbored in the heart, affecting our relationships with others, often connected to past hurts or childhood experiences. These hopeless, anti-faith mindsets are strongholds that defile those around us, inviting them to treat us as we believe we will be treated.

Sometimes these roots are lenses through which we misinterpret other people's behavior, and sometimes our bitterness brings spiritual defilement on those around us, prompting them toward sinful interactions with us that reinforce the lies we believe. Either way, we reap the fruit of our own bitterness.

The most common bitter roots are connected to sinful judgments against parents. Occasionally the connection may be a sinful judgment against a person similar to the one with whom our relationship is strained (for example, a second marriage being affected by judgments held against a past spouse, or perhaps a person whose appearance or personality is reminiscent of an offender from the past). Also common are inner vows (see notes from Session 5).

GOSPEL SUMMARY:

The gospel brings death to the false lenses through which we see the world. God's Word is a lamp for our feet and a light for our path (Psalm 119:105). As we surrender our hurts and bitterness to the cross, God's truth illuminates our past, granting us clear lenses for discerning the present. Our judgments and expectancies come into line with truth, no longer skewed by sin. We become relationally healthy, and we no longer defile or misjudge those around us.

For freedom from bitter roots to be complete, a person needs to (1) exercise forgiveness toward the person who originally offended them, (2) receive forgiveness for bitterness and sinful actions that have defiled others, and (3) release any defiled person(s) from all our selfish demands that they must change their attitudes or behaviors. All sinful judgments and expectancies go to the cross as we forgive those who wounded us in the past, and with these things, we also crucify the unhealthy demands and expectations that we place on others.

HOW TO:

- ❑ **Identify the person** the ministry recipient has judged and needs to forgive.
 - Listen for situations in present relationships that include such terms as “always” and “never,” or terms that imply permanence of a false identity.
 - “My husband never listens to me!”
 - “My wife is always so clumsy!”
 - “I’m an idiot.”
 - Ask questions about relationships with father or mother that might relate.
 - Note: Resentment does not need to be consciously felt in order for the spirit to be wounded by another’s sin. Sin is only solved by Jesus’s blood.
 - Listen also for inner vows, which are declarations of the will that also express themselves with terms like “always” and “never.”
 - I always said I would never treat my kids the way my dad treated me, but here we are.
- ❑ Use Ministry Tool 12: **The Forgiveness Cross** in reference to any past issue.
 - *You may also need to employ the following as needed:*
 - Ministry Tool 10: Presenting Jesus
 - Ministry Tool 13: Renouncing and Replacing
 - Ministry Tool 15: Binding and Loosing
- ❑ Have the person **ask God’s forgiveness** for defiling the person(s) in their present relationship.
- ❑ **Have the person pray something like:**
 - “Father, I offer to the cross any sinful ways in my behavior, attitudes, or judgments that have defiled others.”
 - “I crucify any sense of reward within myself that I gain from my present relationship remaining as it is.”
 - **If a lie has been believed, renounce it.** For example, “I reject the lie that I am a noble martyr,” or, “I renounce the lie that my spouse will always be this way.”
 - “I choose to release [person in present relationship] from any and all demands that [he/she] change.”
 - “Lord, please help me love and receive them as they are, allowing them to grow according to Your wisdom and timing.”