

It Will Spill, Part Two

What is the root of bitterness, and how does this root begin to grow beneath the surface of our lives? A bitter person is usually one who has been hurt. Is there a person among us that has not been hurt? I have never come in contact with anyone who has not been wounded emotionally or spiritually at some point in their life. When we are hurt our inclination is first to withdraw into a defensive shell, then react with anger and resentment, and this could result in a desire to get even. If we are Christians the desire for revenge is absolutely wrong. That is the old nature acting and showing its ugly head. When this happens we must confess it, deal with it, and put it behind us. Then it will not become a root of bitterness.

How you deal with how you feel is very important. I read in an excerpt titled “The Root of Bitterness” that bitterness or resentment damages relationships – and this is true.

Bitterness and resentment spreads like wildfire: it grows, causes trouble, defiles, deteriorates the personality, damages spiritual vitality, and finally it destroys. When a bitter person is hurt, they do not pause to grapple with their hurt but allows it to fester. They dwell on it, mull it over in their mind. In order to justify this nasty emotion, they try to uncover and bring to light the problems of others.

If another person hurts them, even if that person did it unknowingly, the bitter one looks for faults. The embittered or resentful person majors on the negative. They seldom (some believe that they are incapable of majoring on the positive) major on the positive. If you are looking for faults in others you will find them, and in most cases, you will find them in abundance. Except for Jesus all of us have flaws.

The more faults one finds, the more one feels confirmed in their state of bitter guilt. Oddly enough, people capable of deep-seated bitterness are usually intelligent people. It has been said, “Naïve people are often a blessing because they overlook hurts and putdowns, perhaps not even being aware that anyone is intending to slam them.”

I must confess. I have met some Christians (well they claim to be Christians) who are just sour at life. Well, if they are not sour at life, they are just sour. They want to get under your skin, so that they can make you react with hostility toward them.

They remind me of a poem that I read:

I went to see my psychiatrist to be psychoanalyzed.
To find out why I killed my cat and blackened my wife's eyes.
He put me on a downy couch to see what he could find,
And this is what he dredged up from my subconscious mind.
When I was one my mommy hid my dolly in the trunk.
When I was two I saw my father kiss the maid one day,
And that's why I suffer now from kleptomania [stealing].

When I was three I suffered ambivalence [conflicting feeling] from my brothers,
And so it follows naturally that I poisoned all my lovers.
I'm so glad I have learned the lesson it has taught,
That everything I do is someone else's fault.

The poem is facetious – at the same time true. The embittered person is not merely angry, depressed, or hurt. He/she is not willing to wrestle with his/her hateful, vindictive spirit. Rather, to them it is always somebody else's fault – I am the way I am because of, they say.

Scripture: King James Version: Ephesians 4:30-31; Hebrews 12:15.

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