

## A Root of Bitterness

Hebrews 12:12-17

### A Root of Bitterness:

- Definition: "A 'root of bitterness' in Heb 12:15 means a wicked person whose life and behavior is now offensive to God and obnoxious to men cf. Deut 29:17; 32:32; Rev 8:11. Bitterness in the sense of bitter anger Eph 4:31; Sept.: Jer 15:17; of bitter and reproachful language Rom 3:14, quoted from Ps 10:7, bitterness of speech; see Sept.: Job 7:11." (from The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament © 1992 by AMG International, Inc. Revised Edition, 1993)
- "bitter hatred, Ephesians 4:31; of speech, Romans 3:14 after Psalms 9:28." (from Thayer's Greek Lexicon)

### Examples Of Bitterness

- Cain. Genesis 4; Jude 10-11
- Esau. Hebrews 12:17; Genesis 25:33ff
- Naomi. Ruth 1:13, 20-21; 4:15
- Naaman. 2 Kings 5:10-12
- Possible for husbands. Colossians 3:19
- All bitterness must be put away. Ephesians 4:31-32

### Causes Of Bitterness

- A feeling of entitlement produces bitterness. James 3:14-16
  - Example of Esau. Genesis 25; cf. 27:41
- Suffer loss or have been wronged by another.
  - Real or imagined. cf. Naomi. Ruth 1:13, 20-21

### Elimelech Takes His Family To Moab

- Reasons not to go to Moab.
  - Incestuous origin between Lot and his daughter. Genesis 19:30-38
  - King of Moab hired Balaam to curse Israel. Numbers 22-24
  - Recent oppression by Eglon, king of Moab. Judges 3:15-30 – Killed by Ehud
  - Moabite culture and god, Chemosh. cf. 2 Kings 3:27
- Yet, there was rain in Moab. cf. 1:1

### Elimelech Takes His Family To Moab

- Why was there famine/drought in Israel?
  - Leviticus 26:3-8
  - Leviticus 26:14-16
  - Deuteronomy 11:13-17
  - Deuteronomy 28:4-5
  - Deuteronomy 28:12
  - Deuteronomy 28:17-18
  - Deuteronomy 28:24-26

## How Do We Overcome Bitterness?

Hebrews 12:14-15,

*“Follow after peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord: looking carefully lest (there be) any man that falleth short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble (you), and thereby the many be defiled”*

## How Do We Overcome Bitterness?

Hebrews 12:14-15:

- Be a peacemaker, not a grudge-holder.
- Pursue holiness; sanctification of heart and life.
  - 1 Corinthians 1:30
    - Do not give an opportunity to the devil, but sanctify the Lord God in your heart. Ephesians 4:27; 1 Peter 3:15
- Look carefully at yourself. 2 Corinthians 13:5; cf. Romans 5:1-2
  - Judgment is personal. 2 Corinthians 5:10; Romans 14:12
  - Right standard. John 12:48; 2 Corinthians 10:12
  - Thorough. cf. Psalms 139:23-24
  - Continuous. 1 Corinthians 9:27; Revelation 2:10

## How Do We Overcome Bitterness?

- DO NOT LET BITTERNESS TAKE ROOT!
  - Bitterness is a choice; a sinful way of viewing and treating God and others. (Example: *“Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them”* Colossians 3:19.)
  - Bitterness is contagious! *“... lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble (you), and thereby the many be defiled”* Hebrews 12:15

## Conclusion:

1. Honestly evaluate the situation. (cf. Naomi, Ruth 1)
2. If the bitterness is caused by a person, work hard to forgive him. cf. John 8:7
3. Read the Bible regularly. Matthew 11:28, *“learn of me ...”*

➤ Bitterness is a poison that can prove fatal!