

Bitterness

A Psalm of David. O Yahweh, contend with those who strive against me; fight those who fight against me. Take hold of a shield and buckler, and arise as my help. Draw out the spear and close ranks to meet my pursuers; say to my soul, I am your Salvation (Y'shua). Let those who seek my soul be ashamed and disgraced; let them be turned back and brought to confusion, those who plot evil to me. Let them be as chaff before the wind, and the Messenger of Yahweh driving them away. Let their way be dark and slippery, and the Messenger of Yahweh their pursuer. For they have hidden their pit-net for me without cause; without cause they have dug for my soul. Let destruction come on him; he will not know; and let his net which he concealed catch him; let him fall in it, into destruction. And my soul shall be joyful in Yahweh; it will rejoice in His Salvation (Y'shua). All my bones shall say: O Yahweh, who is like You, who delivers the poor from those stronger than he; yes, the poor and needy from his plunderer?

Witnesses of violence rise up; they asked me what I did not know; they rewarded me evil, bereaving my soul. But in their sickness, my clothing was sackcloth; I humbled my soul with fastings; and my prayer returned to my bosom. I walked as a friend, as to my brother; as one who mourns a mother, I was bowed down mourning. But they rejoiced in my limping; and assembling the defamers assembled themselves against me; and I did not know; they tore and were not silent; with the wicked they were mockers for a cake, gnashing their teeth on me. O Yahweh, how long You look on? Bring back my soul from their desolations, my only one from the lions.

I will thank You in the great assembly, and I will praise You among a mighty people. Let not my lying enemies rejoice over me; do not let those who hate me without cause wink the eye. For they do not speak peace; but they devise deceitful things against the quiet ones of the earth. And they open their mouth wide against me; they say, Aha! Aha! Our eyes have seen, You have seen, O Yahweh; do not keep silence, O Yahweh do not be far from me. Stir Yourself and awaken to my judgment, to my cause, my Elohim and my Adonai. Judge me, O Yahweh my Elohim, according to Your righteousness; and do not let them rejoice over me. Let them not say in their hearts, Aha! Our soul! Let them not say, we have swallowed him up. Let them be ashamed and be confounded together, the ones who rejoice at my evil; let them be clothed with shame and dishonor, the ones who magnify themselves against me.

Let those who delight in my justification shout and rejoice; and they shall say continually, Yahweh be magnified, delighting in the peace of His servant. And my tongue will speak of Your righteousness and of Your praise all the day. ***Psalms 35:1-28***

Do you understand the words David wrote when he cried out to Yahweh because you have experienced a similar situation? Whether you made mistakes or not, have you ever felt that everyone was against you? You try your best to rebuild the bridge that was broken and

keep your peace, but the more the attacks come at you the harder it is to deal with. Even when forgiveness has been exchanged, there remains a feeling of bitterness or resentment deep within you toward the person or situation that is difficult to get rid of.

Through our own pride we start to develop a “whatever” or “I don’t care” attitude, but deep down inside it’s eating away, stealing your peace. Of course we must run to the arms of our Father in heaven for comfort and guidance to surrender it all to Him, but we are still in the flesh. The Spirit is willing, but the flesh is truly weak.

The harder the situation, the bigger and deeper the scars are. But, there are two choices to make when it comes to this, because in the end who is really hurting? If seeds of bitterness are planted, one can never truly move forward in life because past mistakes are always being brought up. There really was no true forgiveness because forgiveness also means to forget and move on. The bitterness will lead to a cold and defensible attitude toward any future confrontations. If seeds of forgiveness are planted, peace will be untouched in your life and only then can you truly move on, forgetting and leaving the past behind you.

Before really understanding what bitterness really is, we need to first look at the definition.

Bitterness: The quality or state of being bitter, sharp, or acrid, in either a literal or figurative sense; implacableness; resentfulness; severity; keenness of reproach or sarcasm; deep distress, grief, or vexation of mind. A state of extreme impiety or enmity to Elohim. Dangerous error, or schism, tending to draw persons to apostasy. Hard to bear; grievous; distressful: causing pain; piercing; stinging: characterized by intense antagonism or hostility: hard to admit or accept: resentful or cynical.

Now let’s look at the Hebrew meaning of bitter.

The Hebrew word for bitter is “mar” which literally means bitter, bitterness, angry, discontented or heavy. It’s taken from the root “Marar” which mean “to trickle”.

The pictograph is a picture of water for Mem, and the picture of a head is Resh. Combined these mean "water head" or headwaters.



The headwaters of a river are only a trickle and have stagnant pools causing the water to be bitter. Something that is bitter of taste or attitude. Rebellion is one with a bitter attitude.

This is very interesting because the definition of trickle is: to flow or fall by drops, or in a small, gentle stream. To come, go, or pass bit by bit, slowly, or irregularly. This is exactly what bitterness does in our lives! It starts out very small, just a trickle, and then before we know it, it causes a stagnant pool of bitterness that has built up inside of you. If we don’t cut off the trickle when it starts, then it will be harder to get rid of the whole pool later. **Galatians 5:9** – A little leaven leavens all the lump.

**Bitterness stems from feelings of anger and an unforgiving attitude towards others.
Here are some examples on how to avoid it.**

When we allow ourselves to become bitter against others, we create walls difficult to overcome. This will isolate us from others.

Proverbs 18:19 – An offended brother is worse than a fortified city; yea, their contentions are like the bars of a castle.

It can also lead to sin, and something that needs to be repented of if it's not overcome.

Acts 8:22-23 – Repent. Then, from this wickedness of yours, and petition Elohim if perhaps you will be forgiven the thought of your heart. For I see you being in bitter anger and the bonds of iniquity.

We need to always be on guard against it because even a little root of bitterness can do much harm to you and others.

Hebrews 12:15 – Watch diligently that not any lack from the grace of Yahweh, that “no root of bitterness growing up” may crowd in on you, and though this many are defiled.

Satan knows our weaknesses and he knows how to destroy people sometimes to the point of falling away.

Jacob 3:14-15 – But if you have bitter jealousy and contention in your heart, do not boast and lie against the truth. This is not the wisdom coming down from above, but is earthly, sensual, and devilish. For where jealousy and contention are, there is confusion and every foul deed.

If you allow bitterness a place in your heart, it will eventually come out of your mouth in murmuring and complaining.

The scriptures show us some examples of people who showed bitterness:

Job: Job's self-righteousness caused him to become bitter against Yahweh, thinking he knew better. He felt sorry for himself in the beginning when he started going through all his trials.

When his friends came to visit, he complained to them:

Job 6:2-3 – Oh that my vexation were carefully weighed and ruin lifted in the balances together. For now it would be heavier than the sand of the sea; on account of this my words have been rash.

Job 10:1 – My soul loathes my life; I will leave my complaint on myself; I will speak in the bitterness of my soul.

Job 23:1-14 – And Job answered and said: Even today my complaint is bitter; my hand is heavy over my groaning. Oh that I knew where I might find Him, I would come into His seat; I would order my cause before Him, and I would fill my mouth with arguments. I would know the words He would answer me, and understand what He would say to me. Would He plead against me with greatness of strength? No surely He would put it in me. There the righteous might reason with Him; and I would be forever delivered from my Judge. Behold, I go forward, but He is not there; and backward, but I do not see Him; to the left where He works, but I cannot see; He turns to the right, but I do not see Him. But He knows the way with me. When I am tried, I shall come forth as gold. My foot has held fast in His steps; I have kept His way and not turned; nor have I departed from the command of His lips; I treasured the Words of His mouth more than my portion. But He is in one mind, and who can turn Him? Yea, His soul desires and He does it. For He fulfilled my lot, and many like these are with Him.

Job being prideful, was justifying himself leading to the bitterness he had. It was not only self-righteous and self-serving, but it got him nowhere. He was later reprimanded by Yahweh for such behavior and it eventually opened his eyes to humble him.

Absalom: Absalom, son of King David, bitterly hated his half-brother, Amnon, for having raped Tamar, Absalom's full sister. This unbridled bitterness grew for two years until Absalom had Amnon killed.

2nd Samuel 13:22 – But Absalom did not speak either good or evil with Amnon, for Absalom hated Amnon, because he had humbled his sister Tamar.

We see that because of this bitterness it led to more and more evil and sin. He eventually rose up against his own father, trying to kill him to take the throne. In the end, it only led to his death.

Saul: Saul started out good but he grew bitter and jealous towards David which tormented him, giving him no peace, leading to him make terrible decisions and eventually ending with his death. **1st Samuel 16:14** – And the Spirit of Yahweh departed from Saul, and a spirit of adversity from Yahweh terrified him.

1st Samuel 15:23 – For rebellion is as the sin of divination; and stubbornness is both iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the Word of Yahweh so He has rejected you from being king.

If you are not careful, bitterness can overtake you, taking away all your joy, love and peace and may overcome you to the point of taking you out of the kingdom. There are no good decisions that come from bitterness and it will ultimately destroy you.

But there's hope! Yahweh, in His love, can deliver you and help you overcome from bitterness.

Examples of people who overcame bitterness:

Joseph: If anyone had cause to be bitter, it was Joseph. His brothers despised him; they brutally sold him into slavery and lied to their father that he had been killed by a wild animal. He spent time in prison on false charges of rape and was left there for two years longer because Pharaoh's forgetful chief Cupbearer forgot his promise to help get Joseph out of jail. But, in spite of all his troubles, Joseph reconciled with his brothers and forgave them. He overcame his bitterness towards them. **Read Genesis 45:1-15**

Hannah: Hannah, mother of Samuel, was sorely provoked every year by Peninnah, the second wife of her husband, Elkanah. Peninnah had children and purposely tried to make Hannah feel badly because she had no children. After years of Peninnah doing this, Hannah, became bitter, did not eat well and felt that she somehow was not blessed by Yahweh. She took her bitterness to the Yahweh in desperate prayer, openly confessing her grief, both to Yahweh, and to Eli, the priest. Finally, a great victory was won, first by faith, followed by Yahweh opening up her womb and blessing her with her heart's desire. **Read 1st Samuel 1:9-10; 13-17;**

By faith, Hannah had given her bitterness to Yahweh, and because of it, was able to return to her family, having been freed from sadness. She was then even able to eat normally. Later the blessings came: Yahweh not only blessed her with Samuel, her first born who she gave to Yahweh, but also with three other sons and two daughters.

David: David had every right to be bitter, but just like the other two examples; he overcame by giving it to Yahweh and trusting in Him. We see this constantly throughout the Psalms.

There are many more examples in the bible of people who overcame and those who didn't. All of these are examples given to us to use in any given situation of our own lives.

We don't want to carry or keep bitterness in our hearts, but we need to replace it with love, kindness and forgiveness.

Leviticus 19:17-18 – You shall not hate your brother in your heart; you shall certainly reprove your neighbor, and not allow sin on him. You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people; but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am Yahweh.

We are commanded to love our brothers and respect them.

Luke 6:32-38 – And if you love those who love you, what thanks is there to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what is your blessing? For even the sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you

hope to receive the equal things. But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, and do not cut off the hope of man; and your reward will be great; and you will be sons of the Most High, for He is kind to the evil and cruel ones. Therefore, be merciful, even as your Father also is merciful.

We are told to "renew our minds," which implies letting go of the old; any past grievances and bitterness's can be applied to this as well, **Romans 12:2** – And be not conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, in order to prove by you what is the good and pleasing and perfect will of Elohim.

Bitterness is caused by holding on to bad or angry feelings about someone or something that happened in the past, but Yahweh tells us to forget the things that are past. **Philippians 3:13-14** – Brothers, I do not count myself to have reached the goal, but one thing I do, forgetting the things behind, and stretching forward to those things before, I press toward the goal to receive the prize of victory of the highest calling of Elohim in Messiah Yahshua.

Love can overcome bitterness, but we need to be careful about opening up the old wounds. It's better to forgive and forget, then to remember and be terrorized. **Proverbs 17:9** – He who covers a transgression seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates friends.

Forgiveness is key: **Matthew 6:14-15** – For if you forgive men their transgressions, your heavenly father will also forgive you. But if you will not forgive men their transgressions, neither will your Father forgive your transgressions.

The parable of the unforgiving servant in Matthew 18 is a good lesson! **Matthew 18:34-35** – And being angry his Master delivered him up to the tormentors until he pay back all that debt to him. So also My heavenly Father will do to you unless each of you from your hearts forgive his brother their offenses.

Hypocritical, judgmental self-righteousness can cause us to harbor bitterness, while feeling justified for doing so, it ends up bringing Yahweh's punishments upon ourselves. **Romans 2:1-6** – Therefore, O man you are without excuse, everyone who judges, for in that in which you judge the other, you condemn yourself; for you, those judging, practice the same things. But we know that the judgment of Elohim is according to the truth on those that practice such things. And, O man the one judging those practicing such things, and doing them, do you think that you will escape the judgment of Elohim? Or do you abuse the riches of His kindness and forbearance, and the opportunity He has given you, not knowing that the kindness of Yahweh leads you to repentance? But because of the hardness of your unrepentant heart, you are treasuring up a store of wrath against the day of wrath, and against the revelation of the righteous judgment of Elohim: He "will give to each according to his deeds."

Ephesians 4:31-32 – Let all bitterness, and anger and wrath, and tumult, and evil speaking be put away from you, along with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as Yahweh has forgiven us through Messiah.

If we are truly hungry to learn from Yahweh, even bitter experiences are looked upon as "blessings in disguise. **Proverbs 27:7** – One who is full tramples a honeycomb, but to a hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet.

Even if someone has mistreated or wronged you, Yahweh's love is love enough to forgive. **1st Peter 4:8** – and above all things having fervent love to yourselves, because love will cover a multitude of sins.

We don't need to keep a record of every time we've been wronged by someone or justify the action by giving a reciprocal unjust deed. Paul stated in **1st Corinthians 6:7** "Why not instead be wronged? Why not instead be defrauded? Yahweh knows and let Him handle it, we just have to continue to forgive those who have hurt us and keep on that straight and narrow path.

Colossians 3:12-13 – Therefore, as the elect of Yahweh, holy and beloved, put on bowels of mercy, kindness, humility, meekness, long-suffering, bearing with one another and forgiving yourselves, if anyone has a complaint against any; even as Messiah forgave you, so also you should forgive.

Bitterness is also described as feelings resulting from something that is difficult to accept; so it's important to always remember that Yahweh has a good purpose in everything and He has allowed it to happen to us. **Romans 8:28** – But we know that to the ones loving Elohim all things work together for good, to those being called according to purpose.

Trials are for our own purification and they come from many different sources. **1st Corinthians 10:13** – No temptation has taken you except what is human; but Elohim is faithful, who will not allow you to be tested above what you are able. But with the trial, He will also make the way out, so that you may be able to bear it.

Question yourself, how do I want to handle it when that trial comes? **Deuteronomy 30:19** – I call Heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. Bitterness or forgiveness.