

WHITE COLLAR SINS

Series with Skip Heitzig

SERIES:	White Collar Sins
MESSAGE:	The Destructive Harvest of a Bitter Heart
SPEAKER:	Skip Heitzig
SCRIPTURE:	Hebrews 12:14-15

MESSAGE SUMMARY

We all know someone who has become embittered in life. They have planted kernels of unresolved anger and resentment and have become entrapped by the overgrown jungle of the bitter fruit it has created. To choose the bitter path (and it is a choice) is to walk down a self-destructive road that banishes peace and promotes self-centeredness. Let's consider several Scriptures and the four attributes of a heart poisoned by bitterness.

DETAILED NOTES

- I. Introduction
 - A. Most people say they know a bitter person; few are willing to admit that they are a bitter person
 1. More people struggle with bitterness than we think
 2. Of all the human emotions, this is the one you should fear the most
 - B. Bitterness is emotional cancer
 1. Bitter people are hard to get close to
 2. Anger that has morphed into something
 3. Cold, aloof
- II. Bitterness Begins with Small Seeds (vv. 12-14)
 - A. The biggest challenge to your peace is people
 1. People can hurt us
 2. What we fail to see is that perhaps God is using those difficult people to get our attention (see Hebrews 12:3-6)
 - B. Bitterness comes from a seed of anger planted by someone who has hurt you
 1. It germinates when something happens to you that you don't think you deserve
 2. Bitterness is internalized anger that festers
 3. All bitterness starts as hurt
 4. Smoldering resentment
- III. Bitterness Requires Right Soil (v. 15a)
 - A. You can never outrun the grace of God (see Romans 5:20)
 1. You can lose sight of the grace of God
 2. When you forget how gracious God was to you, you cease being gracious to other people
 3. We need to grow in grace or bad things will grow in us, like bitterness
 - B. Some people's hearts are ripe for growing bitterness, like people who hold on to things and never let them go

1. If we hold on to the past, it affects the present and becomes an essential part of who we are
 2. Naomi was like this (see Ruth 1)
 - a. Her name means *pleasant*
 - b. She blamed God for the bad things that happened to her
 - c. She identified herself as a bitter person by taking the name *Mara*
 - C. Bitterness turns you into a perpetual victim
 1. If you are always the victim, you can justify your anger
 2. It's always someone else's fault
 3. Bitterness is really a form of pride
 - D. When a hurt comes your way, don't let it take root in your heart
 1. If you hold on to it, it will grab hold of you
 2. People who do not deal with past hurts are critical, notice bad things around them instead of good things, are fault-finders and sin-sniffers, and put people down
- IV. Bitterness Develops Deep Roots (v. 15b)
- A. The author of Hebrews referred to what God said to His people in the Old Testament
 1. Deuteronomy 29:18
 2. Referred to those who were superficially identified with God but returned to their pagan lifestyle
 - B. People who let bitterness grow eventually develop a root system that becomes immovable
 1. A root is hidden
 2. As it grows, hidden, it becomes stronger
 3. Ephesians 4:31
 - C. People can be bitter toward many things and people
 1. Parents
 2. Churches
 3. Leaders
 4. Spouses and ex-spouses
 - a. Bitterness destroys homes
 - b. Colossians 3:19
 - D. Bitterness is a big problem among God's people
 1. It holds back the power of God
 2. When your heart is bitter, God will not be real to you
 - a. Hatred and holiness cannot dwell in the same heart
 - b. Instead of letting bitterness grow, plant your life in better soil (see Ephesians 3:17-18; Colossians 2:7)
- V. Bitterness Produces Bad Fruit (v. 15c)
- A. The root of bitterness always grows in two directions
 1. Toward you as you harbor it
 2. Toward others who are defiled by it
 - B. Bitterness is like taking poison and hoping your enemy will die
 1. It is a form of emotional suicide, a slow form of destroying peace of mind
 2. You are the one being corroded
 - C. Bitterness can ruin your relationship with God (see I John 4:20)
 - D. It grows toward others

1. Acts 8:5-23
2. The difference between *bitter* and *better* is *I*

VI. Closing

- A. We must surrender our bitterness to God
- B. Though Jesus was tortured and crucified, the cross was the best thing that ever happened to humanity
- C. God can use the bad things in our past to make us better

Figures referenced: Lady Astor, Winston Churchill, Stephen Diamond, Michelangelo, Raphael, Dr. Leon Seltzer

Cross references: Deuteronomy 29:18; Ruth 1; Acts 8:5-23; Romans 5:20; Ephesians 3:17-18; 4:31; Colossians 2:7; 3:19; Hebrews 12:3-6; 1 John 4:20

Topic: Bitterness

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