

Free in 2023 - Week 1 – Jan. 11, 2023

Theme for the year. Way to have Focus.

Bitterness. Bad things happen. Unfair. Happens to all of us.

W/o dealing with a hurt - festers. Bitter root grows. Loved ones water it.

Signs you might have bitterness:

1. You feel cheated; unfair; feelings of injustice
2. You replay a conversation or experience over & over in your head
3. You have become cynical; find the negative in others
4. You are easily offended and usually complain
5. You aren't grateful for what is good in your life
6. You remember details of hurts from months or years ago
7. You are keeping a list of offenses ... hold a grudge

Nelson Manddela: "As I walked out the door toward the gate that would lead to my freedom, I knew if I didn't leave my bitterness behind, I'd still be in prison."

- May effect sleep, eating, change personality & self-image.
- Makes us cynical, paranoid, harsh, negative, & chip/shoulder
- Wastes time & energy, affects relationships & drains others
 1. David's prayer - **Psm. 64:3** – "Hide me from the scheming of the wicked . . . who **sharpen** their **tongues** like swords and **aim** their **bitter words** like **arrows**" What we do!

How to be Free of Bitterness in 2023: B – I – T – T – E – R

1 – **Be Aware.** We can't change/prevent what we don't acknowledge.

- See bitter thoughts when they happen.

2– **Interrupt** your Thoughts.

- a. Neutralize the negative. Remember: what God allows, purpose.
- b. Stop planning retaliation... get even.
- c. Don't shame yourself for having negative thoughts.
- d. Pray **Eph. 4:31** – "Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice."

- 3 – **Tell it** to God
 - a. Talk to God honestly about how you’re feeling
 - b. Pray to be better, not bitter.
 - c. “See to it that . . . no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.” – **Heb. 12:15**
- 4 - **Trust God** to take care of the justice/handle the person.
 - a. Forgive. It doesn’t let off the hook. Give to God.
 - i. **Matt. 6:14** – “For if you forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you.”
 - b. Forgo the need to see them “get what’s coming”
 - c. Focus on you; stay in your lane
 - i. **Jesus/Peter - John 21:22**: “what is that to you? You follow Me!”
- 5 – **Expect** God to make it better
 - a. **Rom. 8:28** – “we know that God works all things together for the good of those who love Him” Know it for yourself.
 - b. **Joseph** – what his brothers intended for harm, God intended for good.” - **Gen. 50:20**
 - c. Don’t just quote scripture; believe it...hold on to it.
- 6 – **Re-do.**
 - a. Dealing with bitterness isn’t a one day process.
 - b. Hurts that cause bitterness cut deep.
 - c. Give it time. Give it to God. Empty your cup, so He will fill it up.
 - i. Yesterday’s coffee does me no good today.

Stay positive. Test negative. Vaccinated.

Song of the week: I WILL GO ON – Vocal Band