

Introduction: According to our passage, no believer has a “right” to be bitter. We are told that we are to release, “*All bitterness,*” and that it is to be completely put away from us. This requires action on our part. You must release the bitterness, because it will never release you.

I. The Contamination of Bitterness Hebrews 12:14–15

The word *follow* means to make an eager pursuit—to run swiftly in order to catch a person.

Bitterness troubles both you and, regrettably, many around you.

II. The Cause of Bitterness

A. Willful Ignorance of the Providence of God Ruth 1:20

This ignorance results in a failure to accept the messenger of God.

B. Refusing to Release the Offender 2 Samuel 15:31

Ahithophel was the most trusted counselor of King David. Many have wondered why Ahithophel went from being a trusted counselor to a vengeful enemy.

While there can be no doubt that David did wrong by the granddaughter of Ahithophel, it is also obvious that Ahithophel was the one consumed and eventually destroyed by the wrong. He refused to release his offender.

C. Removal of Assumed Rights Jonah 4:9

When we believe we have a “right” to something and it is removed; anger, frustration, and bitterness develop.

III. The Characteristics of Bitterness

A. Bitterness Remembers Details

Memory is helped by review. We use this in school, and we use it with bitterness. It is that which we replay often in our minds so that we won’t forget.

B. Bitterness Accuses Others and Excuses Self James 3:14-18

Bitterness believes what it wants to believe. This is “lying against the truth.” vs. 14

C. Bitterness Lives Alone Matthew 6:15

The other person ceases to be the real issue. Oh, you may not believe this but it is true. You live the life of the unforgiven, carrying around the baggage of unforgiveness—that is a heavy load to carry.

Bitterness refuses to be reconciled (primarily to God, although we think it is to the person who has done the offending).

In other words, the offender could offer an apology, or even be dead, but the offense and bitterness lives on.

