



STUDY GUIDE

March 20, 2022

Message Series:

NO OFFENSE

Message Title:

Bitterness

Teaching Pastor:

Ellis Hopson

Warm-up/Icebreaker:

- What is your favorite plant or flower?

Pray:

Dear Lord, it is Your wisdom and understanding that we need. Sometimes we end up hurt and without even realizing it, seeds of bitterness are sown. Help us to be strong and allow You to fight on our behalf. We are encouraged to know that You have equipped us with what we need to persevere and heal. It is only through Your strength that we can grow and move toward the same mindset of Christ Jesus. Help us to humble ourselves and remember that we have much to learn from You and each other. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Get Started:

- Share the biggest challenge you have ever faced doing yardwork or gardening. How did you fix the issue?

"We can't allow the root of bitterness to grow and expect beauty to sprout - in our yards, or in our hearts. And it's not enough to find a temporary fix - we have to *kill* bitterness at its roots. The first step is to look within ourselves, examine the things that cause anger, and ask ourselves: "Have I been carrying this with me? For how long? Has it become bitterness?" We can't kill what we can't see. So, in order to deal with the bitterness in our hearts, we first have to identify that it's taken root." -Pastor Ellis Hopson

Read Hebrews 12:14-15.

- Why do you think Scripture compares bitterness to a root?
- Do you periodically do a self-inventory check for signs of unresolved hurts or bitterness? If so, what helps you do this (i.e. writing, counseling, silence, etc.)?

Watch and Discuss Video: (running time 5 minutes)

"Bitterness is a kind of darkness that grows slowly within us. And if it goes unchecked over time, it can completely consume us. It's a destroyer of our souls and our relationships. And it holds onto the past. While others move on - while the world around us moves on - we're still stuck. But it doesn't have to be that way. We have a solution rooted in the pages of the Bible." -Pastor Ellis Hopson

Read 1 John 2:7-11.

- Hatred and holiness cannot coexist in the same heart. How can bitterness be harmful? How can we begin to let go of bitterness and extend forgiveness instead?

Reflect and Commit:**Read Isaiah 5:20.**

“With the help of God, you can deal with your anger and work to resolve it. You can identify that your anger has become bitterness. You can expose it - to yourself, and then to people who can help you. And then you can put measures in place to stop that root from growing again. You can decide today that you’ll no longer allow this to be rooted inside you. You can kill bitterness - and you can take the first step RIGHT NOW by making room for God to move in power in your life.” -Pastor Ellis Hopson

Read Isaiah 5:20.

- Do you have an offense that has unknowingly taken root? How can you begin extending grace? Talk about ways your small group can help you during this process.

Read Ephesians 4:17-32.

- All bitterness starts out as a hurt. The next time you feel angry or resentful, what can you do to prevent a seed of bitterness from being planted in your heart?
- Is there anything that stands out in these verses that could help you to prevent bitterness and live lives filled with compassion and forgiveness?

Pray:

Dear Lord Jesus, help us to make every effort to live in peace with everyone. We need to continually remember the grace that was given to us and that we need to be ready to extend that grace to others. Doing so will prevent the seeds of bitterness from taking root. Whoever has hurt us or whatever situation has left us feeling disappointed and hopeless we turn it over to You now and ask for You to replace the struggle with hope, healing and holiness. We pray all this in Jesus’ name. Amen.