



Bitter Root Judgments

Heb. 12:15 *"See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many."*

Jas. 2:12-13 *"... judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment!"*

Deut 5:16 *"Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God has commanded you, so that you may live long and that it may go well with you in the land the Lord your God is giving you."*

There are two Greek words for judgment in the Bible, and both are translated with the same English word.

1. *"But he who is spiritual judges all things . . ."* 1 Cor. 2:5. The word translated "judges" in this verse is *anakrino* in Greek which means **to investigate**.
2. *Mat. 7:1-2 "Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."* The word "judge" here is the Greek word *krino* which means **to put on trial or to condemn**.

When we are wounded, especially when the wounding occurs in our earliest years or even in the womb, we are likely to respond by making judgments.

- **We judge ourselves** to be bad, ugly, unlovable, stupid, dirty, failures, boring, etc. We may reject life and choose death.
- **We judge God** to be absent, uncaring, cruel, weak, etc.
- **We judge those who wound us** to be evil, worthless, worthy of death, beyond redemption, etc.
- **We judge those who should have protected us** as stupid, uncaring, weak, unloving worthy of punishment or so pathetic that they need our protection, etc.

We make these judgments and then forget we made them, but, they go underground into the soil of our unformed hearts and become roots from which grow fruit-bearing trees. At the proper season these trees bear fruit. No big deal, except that these roots are bitter and they bear bitter, destructive fruit. Unless the tree is rooted out, it will bear fruit. You cannot kill a tree by picking the fruit. This is why so many of us struggle so unsuccessfully with destructive behaviors. Most, if not all, judgments are accompanied by a subsequent Inner Vow. Judgments and Vows go together like handcuffs on a prisoner.

The Problem with Judging.

- A condemning judgment activates the following Universal Principle: **How you judge will determine how you will be judged.** *"Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. ... For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."* Luke 6:37-38
- Universal Principle: **If we sow judgment we will reap judgment.** *"Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life."* Gal. 6:7-8 When we judge others, we are dooming ourselves, because we WILL do the things for which we have condemned others.
- Universal Principle: *"There is only one Lawgiver and Judge."* Jas. 4:12 **Judging (condemning) sets you up as God** with all the subsequent responsibilities of that position, not to mention that playing God is a major "no no."

Do we turn a blind eye to the truth? Of course not.

1. **We are not to judge what God made (people), but we are free to judge their behavior.** (investigate to determine if it is good or bad) *"But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use, have trained their senses to distinguish good and evil"* Heb. 5:14
2. **We are not to condemn ourselves.** *"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death."* Rom. 8:1;
"Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price." 1 Cor. 6:20
3. **We are not to judge (condemn) God.** *"A man's own folly ruins his life, yet his heart rages against the Lord."* Prov. 19:3

But God does invite us to ask him questions and to reason with him.

"Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord." Isa. 1:18

"If any of you lack wisdom, he should ask God who gives generously to all without finding fault." Jas. 1:5

How are Bitter Root Judgments Formed?

- **Circumstances**
 - **Example One.** A baby girl is born severely allergic to many foods. It takes months of trying different formulas before one is found that does not produce burning diarrhea and vomiting. The only comfort this baby is able to enjoy is being held by her parents. Otherwise, she cries. Over time, her exhausted parents begin to leave her to cry ... alone ... in unrelenting pain and hunger. Her sensitive spirit tunes into their frustration and anger. Her heart soaks up the emotions in the atmosphere.
 - **Example Two.** A little boy is left in the care of his teenage brothers while Dad works and Mom goes to school. The big brothers are annoyed by his tagging along. One of them punches and kicks the child. The other takes him into the woods and leaves him. They just want to get rid of their pesky little brother. Oh. Did I mention that the little boy was his parents' last chance for a girl?
 - **Example Three.** An 8-year-old girl shops with her mother. She is looking for the perfect shoes. The child becomes so caught up in all the choices and wanting to find exactly the right shoes that she prolongs the shopping trip beyond her mother's patience. Her mother loses her temper and rages at the child who did not know she was doing anything wrong.
 - **Example Four.** Mark was born on the farm and worked as an unpaid farm hand. This boy believes very early that his father values him based upon how much work he does. There is no time for after-school activities. Dad decides what is watched on television, and vacations revolve around what Dad enjoys.
 - **Example Five:** Rachel had younger brothers who always loved to embarrass her. They were just boys but, none the less, as a young girl, she was always feeling embarrassed by them. Jacob as a kid had a prophetic gift and was also very distracted. He was often in a dream world and when he would come back into a conversation after dreaming, he found his comments were not in line with where the conversation had gone while he was dreaming. Jacob and Rachel marry because they "fit each other."
- **Resultant Beliefs (Vows &/or Lies) and Bitter Root Judgments.** We form bitter roots as children so they are, quite naturally, childish. So look for what a child would believe in the circumstances.
 - **Example One.** The allergic baby formed the belief that she is just too much trouble. **Her bitter root: Everyone would be better off without me.**
 - **Example Two.** The pesky little brother already "felt" something was wrong with him because of his parents' deep desire for a girl. The abandonment he felt when his parents left him in the care of his older brothers reinforced his sense that he was not wanted. **His bitter root: Everyone wants to get rid of me.**
 - **Example Three.** This little girl was loved and wanted, but, once before, her mother had overreacted badly when her daughter had committed an innocent and childish mistake. At that time, the child had purposed in her heart to be a "good" little girl. The shopping incident proved enough to shake the foundations of her being. She believed she should have known better, when it was impossible for her to have known at all. **Her bitter root: I'm slow and stupid.**
 - **Example Four.** This boy's heart filled quickly with resentment towards his demanding and insensitive father. He believed his father did not care about him. **His bitter root: It's never ok for me to have fun.**
 - **Example Five.** Rachel's bitter root life expectancy was "Men will mess up and embarrass me". Jacob's bitter root life expectancy was "I'm going to say stupid things and be criticized and laughed at." Jacob was a pastor who often had "foot in mouth" disease. He would preach in the morning and Rachel would preach in the afternoon on what he said that embarrassed her. They were praying for each other that they would be healed and changed rather than looking at their own sin. (Recognize there is a reaping law in place and that is why God can't always answer our prayers. Always look at your own heart.)

When there is a marriage, a wife will most likely do to her husband that for which he bitterly judged his mother, and the wife will likely reap through her husband the very thing for which she judged her father. It is painful when a couple begins to discover hidden things about one another; many conclude they've made a mistake and married the wrong person. God did not design our mates to make us comfortable; rather, we tend to marry someone who triggers whatever we have stored in our hearts. As we take our sins to the cross, we can enter into blessed relationship with our mates and others, fulfilling God's will for transformation in our lives.

We are affected by one another. When people marry, they get the problems that came with the person. But if Jesus Christ is brought into the mix to deal with the stuff in you, then you can submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Eph. 5:21 *"Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ."* The Lord calls us to confess our sin, not our mate's sin.

Uncovering Bitter Roots

- **Develop self-awareness.** Begin by paying attention to the fruit in your life. Do you see in your life these things reoccurring: Divorce, bad relationships, abuse, authority mistreating you, rejection, abandonment, disappointment, failure, repeated sinful behavior, struggle with God's love (your father not give love), need to earn love and approval?
- **Expectancy and Fear** rooted in the heart. What do you expect or fear will happen? Have the same bad things happened to you so much that you have come to expect them? Here's the problem. Our judgment against ourselves and others has the power to pull bad behavior out of another person. Does that make you responsible for their sins against you? No. But it does help explain why the same bad things happen throughout our lives. Your expectancies reveal your bitter roots. Do you expect to be rejected, to fail, to be misused or unprotected by authority, others to fail you, your prayers to go unanswered, to be alone, abused, sick, broke? What are your expectations? Ask God to help you identify them and track them back to their root causes.
- **What comes out of our mouths.** This is the first and easiest way to identify judgments. Pay attention to what we say and to what others are saying.
- We can locate judgments by **how we "feel" around a certain person or by how we feel in certain circumstances.** This requires that we tune in to ourselves and to others. Feeling is a primary way of discerning. Never discard how you feel around a person or in a circumstance. Ask the Lord to take you to the cause of the feeling. Here's an example. I'm a pretty talkative person, but, when I am around a certain man I know, I cannot push a word out beyond, "Hi. How are you?" I go completely blank. I've asked within my circle of friends and nobody can think of a thing to say when they are around this guy. We all go blank. It is very weird. In all likelihood, this man has a bitter root judgment. Maybe something like "No one wants to talk to me." Guess what? We do want to talk to him, but we can't think of a thing to say. That's how much our bitter root judgments can affect other people's behaviors.
- **Listening to what you are thinking** is very helpful. I learned in church to take every thought captive (II Cor. 10:5) and to rejoice in the Lord always (Phil. 4:4). I thought this meant I was supposed to push away bad thoughts and suppress bad feelings. I was wrong. Here's a better way. Listen to what you think and feel what you feel. Really feel those feelings and hear those thoughts. Then capture them by pulling the thoughts and feelings to you. Using your sanctified imagination, go before the Lord with your "prisoners." Ask the Lord questions. Say, "Look at what I caught. What would you like to do with them?" The Lord will show you what needs to be done with the imprisoned thoughts. (Heb. 4:16)
- **Reoccurring memories**, especially if they are painful, are a pretty sure sign there is work to be done in the heart. I used to respond to painful memories by rebuking the devil. Now, I press into them. That was hard to do at first because, like most of us, I'm afraid of pain. But I learned to embrace my pain and invite Jesus into the memory.
- **How we react, or how others react**, in a given situation also reveals the heart (Mark 3:1-6). Often God will lead us into circumstances that put us under pressure. The pressure will force to the surface what is in our hearts. God's purpose is not to embarrass us or cause us to despair. He wants us to know ourselves, so that we can repent and be healed.

Because roots are underground, they are hidden. But through listening prayer, God reveals to us the roots of our troubles.

"There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed or hidden that will not be made known." Mat. 10:26

"Wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts." 1 Cor. 4:5

Prayer: *Dear Creator God, please turn the lights on. Reveal the Bitter Root Judgments and hidden motives I have buried in my heart. Teach me to thoughtfully and truthfully examine myself, so that you may release healing into all that I am. I need to know what I truly believe deep within my heart, because it is not with my rational mind that I believe. It is with my heart (Rom. 10:10). I ask that You will protect me from the trap of self-hatred by covering me with Your love and acceptance. Amen.*

Please consider using the following list of steps as a guideline.

Recognize that you have overstepped God's boundaries when you judged with condemnation. Jas. 4:12

Repent for thinking you needed to do God's job for Him.

Ask the Lord to reveal to you how you have done the same thing.

Repent for thinking you are better than others.

Release the debt/sin you are holding against yourself or the other person. See Jn. 20:23.

Ask for the Lord to heal the hurt. The hurt is genuine and needs healing.

Ask the Lord to teach you new ways of thinking in this area.

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