



TRANSFORMED

DEVOTIONS CONNECTING TEENS TO CHRIST

Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.
Ephesians 4:31-32

Confronting monsters: Bitterness

The monster we're looking at today is the monster of bitterness. Bitterness is so sneaky. It can show up in our lives in ways we've never expected.

Perhaps all the time you've been spending with your family due to social distancing is making you bitter at your parents. It snuck up so quietly, and now, you realize that you've really begun to resent your mom or dad. Perhaps it's a bitterness toward a sibling or even toward a friend.

Bitterness can show up in our lives in all kinds of negative ways. It starts in the heart as an attitude toward or about someone or something. Then, that attitude grows from a bitter root into unkind words, harsh actions, silent treatment, and cold shoulders.

As bitterness takes root in our hearts, it also destroys our happiness and steals our joy. It's hard to be happy when you're upset and bitter at someone or something.

So, what should we do about it? Paul tells us to get rid of it. But how? How do we get rid of bitterness? Confess it. Come clean about it.

Confess it to God. Confess that you're struggling with bitterness and a bad attitude toward people in your life. Ask for his help to kill bitterness in your heart. We often think it is helpful to keep our feelings to ourselves. But it's not. The silent treatment never really helps anybody. Bitterness will simply grow in our hearts.

Confess it to the person you're bitter against. You will be amazed at how cleansing it is to simply confess your feelings to that person. Then, they can work with you to address whatever made you bitter in the first place. If they sinned, the two of you can work through your bitterness toward reconciliation.

Since you care deeply about the relationships in your life, bring this out into the open. Confess it to God and to the people you care about. With God's help you will strangle the bitterness in your heart before it destroys you and your relationships. Together you will move into a new day of joy and gladness as you live in the forgiveness of our God.

Your God so deeply desired a relationship with you, he killed the justified bitterness, anger, and wrath he had towards you on the cross. Because of Jesus, God has no feelings of bitterness, anger, or frustration toward you.

Since God has done this for you, let's do the same for each other and kill the bitter root in our hearts. "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you" (Ephesians 4:32).

Prayer: Lord God, I can feel a bitter root growing in my heart toward certain people in my life (Confess specific bitterness here.) Help me to bring this out into the open and kill bitterness in my heart so that I might live with joy. Amen.