

The Enemy Within

Week #3 - Naomi

What are you bitter or angry about? What is it that you are holding on to right now because someone purposefully hurt, inconvenienced, slighted, or wronged you? Are you prone to rage when someone hurts you and doesn't apologize? When we are hurt anger rears it's ugly head, it often leaves an ugly trail in it's wake within us: resentment, bitterness, longing for revenge and and sadly at times an unforgiving heart. Instead of letting the enemy within remain, God wants us to remove it by replacing it with one thing - forgiveness.

How's your **heart**?

- Hebrews 12:6 - *See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.*

Bitterness **contaminates** everything.

- Ruth 1 - *In the days when the judges ruled, there was a famine in the land. So a man from Bethlehem in Judah, together with his wife and two sons, went to live for a while in the country of Moab. 2 The man's name was Elimelek, his wife's name was Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Kilion...3 Now Elimelek, Naomi's husband, died, and she was left with her two sons. 4 They married Moabite women, one named Orpah and the other Ruth. After they had lived there about ten years, 5 both Mahlon and Kilion also died, and Naomi was left without her two sons and her husband. 6 When Naomi heard in Moab that the Lord had come to the aid of his people by providing food for them, she and her daughters-in-law prepared to return home from there....19 So the two women went on until they came to Bethlehem. When they arrived in Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them, and the women exclaimed, "Can this be Naomi?" 20 "Don't call me Naomi," she told them. "Call me Mara, because the Almighty has made my life very bitter. 21 I went away full, but the Lord has brought me back empty. Why call me Naomi? The Lord has afflicted me; the Almighty has brought misfortune upon me."*
- Ephesians 4:31 - *Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.*

How To Remove A Root Of Bitterness

1. **Identify** the object(s) of your bitterness.

- Ephesians 5:11 - *Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them.*

2. **Validate** the W's behind your bitterness.

- Luke 6:27-28 - *"But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.*

3. **Align** your heart with God's heart.

- Ephesians 4:32 - *Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.*
- Colossians 3:13 - *Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.*

Healthy Heart Habit #3

Choose to **forgive** because bitter is never **better**.

Points to Ponder

- 1) With whom are you bitter right now or what in your life right now is causing you bitterness? If you don't think there is someone or something, ask your spouse or someone in your life group what they see?
- 2) How does that bitterness show itself in your life? If bitterness is left unaddressed on the inside, what is it that others end up seeing on the outside in your life?
- 3) Consider Ephesians 4:32 and Colossians 3:13 again. When dealing with bitterness why is it so vital to begin with the fact that we are forgiven? How does remembering our debt to God has been cancelled help us cancel the debt of others?

Homework: 1 John 4