



"Humility is the only soil in which true unity can grow."
—Michael Reeves

13-Mar-26

The Bitter Truth (Part Two)

In [Part One](#), we saw how corrosive bitterness and resentment can be to our relationships, considering the well-known example of Esau toward his brother, Jacob. Another example of bitterness in the Bible appears in the story of Naomi. After moving from Judah to the land of Moab during a famine with her husband and two sons, she had to deal with at least two significant tragedies. She lost not only her husband, Elimelech, but also both of her adult sons ten years later.

After being left with just her two daughters-in-law in a foreign land, she says in [Ruth 1:13](#), "No, my daughters; for it grieves me very much for your sakes that the hand of the LORD has gone out against me!" Naomi believed [God](#) had dealt her a harsh hand. She later goes so far as to change her name to reflect this feeling:

But she said to them, "Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, and the LORD has brought me home again empty. Why do you call me Naomi, since the LORD has testified against me, and the Almighty has [afflicted](#) me?" ([Ruth 1:20-21](#))

Mara, meaning "bitter," has its origin in *marar* (*Strong's* #4843), which means "to be or make bitter or grieved." From a carnal perspective, Naomi certainly had a right to envy the lives of those around her who had not experienced the same kind of trials she had. She likely felt resentment in the months and years following her return to Judah.

However, her story does not end in her embracing permanent bitterness. Naomi remained faithful, as evidenced by her drawing closer to God by returning to Judah and by providing spiritual guidance to her daughter-in-law, Ruth, in her interactions with Boaz. Naomi lamented the loss of her family, but she never turned her back on God. Through Ruth, her [faith](#) was rewarded, and she was blessed to become a caretaker to Obed, her "grandson" and the grandfather of David ([Ruth 4:17](#)).

The apostle James writes in [James 4:11](#):

Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge.

We learn earlier in this chapter that words are a major source of war and conflict. But conflict can also come from invisible sources. Envy, jealousy, judging others for their actions without the full context of the situation, and gossiping about peers can all sow irreconcilable differences if left unresolved. The resentment we might feel toward brethren for perceived wrongdoings or slights strains our relationships with one another in ways that often are not easily recognized on the surface.

Our assumptions about others are often the culprit. We must be very careful in our assumptions about why others act, look, or dress a certain way, as we do not always know the full content of their hearts or the context of their actions. When we pass judgment on one another, we often do so without insight into the journey the other has taken to reach that moment. Instead, we base our opinions on the limited information we have, often a minute portion of a much bigger picture. Only God knows the true nature of human hearts, which is why we should leave judgments to Him.

Our judgment is frequently based on groundless assumptions, which may, in turn, be based on [gossip](#) and rumors that paint marred images of others. Also, we tend to categorize others into groups or "boxes," which affects how we interact with one another. We do this when we pass judgment on others, jumping to conclusions about stories we have not read in full.

The apostle Paul writes in [Galatians 6:7](#), "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap." If we choose thoughts and actions that sow discord, we will reap discord. We are all aware of the Third Law of Motion: "For every action, there is an opposite and equal reaction." Every effect has a cause. Nothing is done in a vacuum. There are present and eternal consequences for casting judgment, harboring resentment, and failing to practice godly [love](#).

Forgiving others, even if we believe we are on the right side of a situation, is often a "bitter pill to swallow." Forgiveness takes humility. Thus, we can conclude humility is also required to cure resentment. Controlling our thoughts of jealousy and envy of others around us takes significant effort. Social media has created a world that easily deceives our perceptions of others' lives. We must not get trapped into comparing our lives and our situations to those of others.

The spiritual consequences of resentment and bitterness are eternally significant. The darkness these negative emotions cast on our attitudes and actions poisons everything and everyone around us. Paul appeals to us in [I Corinthians 1:10](#):

Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord [Jesus Christ](#), that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

Let us all work together, asking God to help us discover and weed out the roots of toxic bitterness that undermine our unity, learning to forgive one another and avoid judgment, moving forward with one mind in Jesus Christ our Savior.

- Steven Skidmore

New Transcripts

[1775bs: Psalm 133](#)

Given by Richard T. Ritenbaugh on 03-Aug-24

[1856: Proverbs 31 and the Wife of Christ \(Part Four\)](#)

Given by Mark Schindler on 24-Jan-26

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

[Overcoming Discouragement and Depression](#)

by Martin G. Collins

Even loyal servants of God, the stalwart pioneers of faith, have had to contend with major depression and discouragement. Following the categorizing of several types of depressive conditions, he analyzes the major contributory spiritual and electro-chemical factors in these psychological states. Godly antidotes to depression include rest, refocus, right expectations, and obedient actions. If we 1) focus on the awesome Creator, 2) remember the spiritual goal, 3) pray and study daily, 4) be patient with self, others, and God, 5) be content, 6) be positive, making each day count, and 7) be faithful to God, we can overcome depression. Not eliminating stress but perceiving God's sovereign control will determine our success in this struggle.

From the Archives: Featured Article

[Living by Faith and Humility](#)

by John W. Ritenbaugh

People resist God because of their pride, but pride can be neutralized by humility, a character trait that allows a person to submit to God and have a

relationship with Him. John Ritenbaugh provides many examples to reveal that God wants us to evaluate ourselves and recognize our dependence on Him, which draws God's attention and favor.

Featured Audio Schedule

Friday Night Bible Study

The next Bible Study (Friday 13-Mar-26) will be **Abraham (Part Seven)**, given by **John W. Ritenbaugh**. The Bible Study will be featured on the [CGG homepage](#) from **6:00 pm Friday (EST)** and all day Saturday.

If you would like to subscribe to the C.G.G. Weekly newsletter, please visit our [Email Subscriptions page](#).
