

# Speaking to the soul



## Bitterness

**Look after each other so that none of you fails to receive the grace of God. Watch out that no poisonous**



## **root of bitterness grows up to trouble you, corrupting many. Hebrews 12:15**

Life can be incredibly hard, and many people experience terribly difficult and painful rejections and brokenness in their relationships. It isn't difficult to understand why this can lead to bitterness, but the fact is that that is the worst possible response. The only person who is damaged by bitterness is the bitter person. It does nothing to get back at the person who has caused the wrong and is incapable of bringing resolution to the situation. Billy Graham wrote: "Bitterness is anger gone sour, an attitude of deep discontent that poisons our souls and destroys our peace." In fact, it's even worse than that because bitterness grows roots and so it keeps on destroying the people and relationships in its path. Bitterness can therefore be incredibly destructive in the life of a church.

There is only one way to escape the hideous damage of bitterness and that is forgiveness. If you have been wronged then forgiveness is the last response that will come naturally to mind. We naturally feel the desire to even the score and to secure justice, but through forgiveness you set yourself free from the appalling consequences of bitterness. The language of forgiveness is God's language. We have wronged him and the only way in which we could ever have a relationship with him is through his willingness to forgive all our sins. In turn he looks to us to pass on his forgiveness to others. Corrie ten Boon, who was imprisoned by the Nazis during the second world war speaks with great authority on this subject: "Forgiveness is the key that unlocks the door of resentment and the handcuffs of hatred. It is a power that breaks the chains of bitterness and the shackles of selfishness."

## **QUESTION**

How would you go about helping someone who was in the grip of bitterness?

## **PRAYER**

Loving Father, help me to love my Christian brothers and sisters so much that I will be willing to support and help them when they face difficult challenges. Amen

*Photograph - Spring hopefully*

