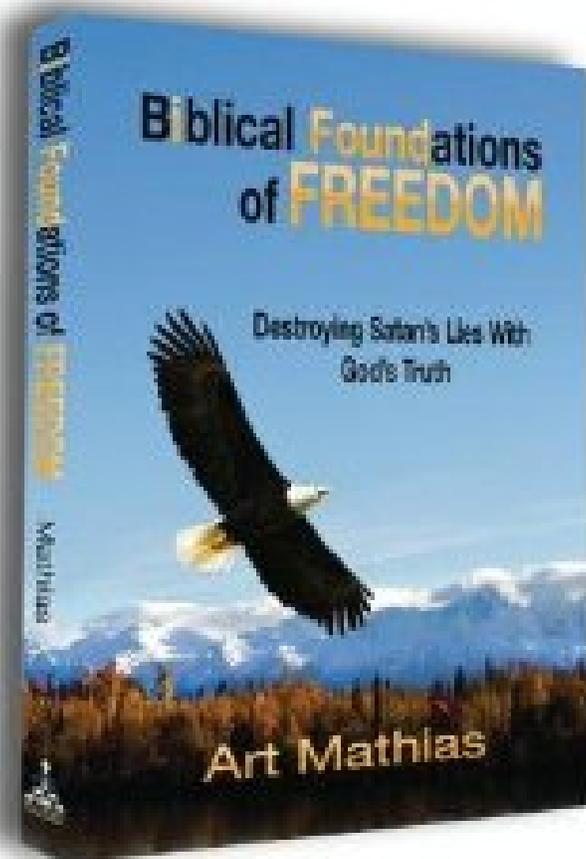


Book's Author: Dr. Art Mathias

# Biblical Foundations of Freedom Program & Study Guide

Destroying Satan's Lies With God's Truth



Dr. Dorothy E. Hooks, PsyD  
Senior Lecturer

“Biblical Foundations of Freedom Destroying Satan’s Lies With God’s Truth” was written  
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#### About the Authors:

Dr. Mathias has lived in Alaska for more than twenty five years. He is a businessman, bush pilot, outdoorsman, and has authored several books and booklets. He and his wife Patti, of 38 years have two grown sons. Patti is an accomplished teacher and along with her husband are founders of Wellspring Ministries. Dr. Mathias has earned his master and doctorate degrees in counseling. Both Patti and Dr. Mathias travel extensively teaching about and demonstrating a powerful God that has answers.

I had the opportunity to attend one of Dr. Mathias’ “Biblical Foundations of Freedom” seminars a couple of months ago and it was a life changing event for me. I saw firsthand what God was doing at his seminars; I witnessed how powerful forgiveness is – people were getting set free because they decided to forgive – some had been holding onto unforgiveness for years - and that is why I decided to adapt his book into my Recovery program. Forgiveness is powerful because when we decide to forgive, we are obeying God’s Word and when we obey God, we will be blessed.

I am using these materials from Dr. Mathias’ book and other training aids by permission from him and his wife Patti.

Welcome to the journey that is going to change your life!

God bless,  
Dr. Dorothy E. Hooks, PsyD

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### **Class Dates & Topics:**

February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2010 – June 6<sup>th</sup>, 2010 - all classes will be held online:

- Preface & Introduction (2 hour) – February 21<sup>st</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup>.
- What Is Sin – Chapter One (2½ hours) – February 28<sup>th</sup> – March 6<sup>th</sup>.
- Discernment – Chapter Two (2½ hours) – March 7<sup>th</sup> – March 13<sup>th</sup>.
- Accusing Spirits – Chapter Three (2½ hours) – March 14<sup>th</sup> – March 20<sup>th</sup>.
- The Major Strongholds, or Principalities, of Satan – Chapter Four (1½ hours) – March 21<sup>st</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup>.
- **Principality of Bitterness – Chapter Five (2½ hours) – March 28<sup>th</sup> – April 3<sup>rd</sup>.**
- Principality of Self-Bitterness, Unloving Spirits – Chapter Six (3½ hours) – April 4<sup>th</sup> – April 10<sup>th</sup>.
- Forgiveness – Chapter Seven (2 hours) – April 11<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup>.
- Principality of Jealousy & Envy – Chapter Eight (2½ hours) – April 18<sup>th</sup> – April 24<sup>th</sup>.
- Principality of Rejection – Chapter Nine (3½ hours) – April 25<sup>th</sup> – May 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Principality of Fear – Chapter Ten (2½ hours) – May 2<sup>nd</sup> – May 8<sup>th</sup>.
- Principality of Occultism, Pharmakia & Sorcery – Chapter Eleven (2½ hours) – May 9<sup>th</sup> – May 15<sup>th</sup>.
- The Kinsman Redeemer – Chapter Twelve (1½ hours) – May 16<sup>th</sup> – May 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- The Armor of God – Chapter Thirteen (5½ hours) – May 23<sup>rd</sup> – May 29<sup>th</sup>.
- Our Power and Authority in Christ – Chapter Fourteen (3 hours) - May 30<sup>th</sup> – June 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Class Location:** [www.abusedwoman.ning.com](http://www.abusedwoman.ning.com) – Main Web Site



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**Winter Semester 2010**

**BFOF Class Syllabus**

**March 21<sup>st</sup> – March 27<sup>th</sup>**

Instructor: Dr. Dorothy E. Hooks, PsyD

Campus: [www.abusedwoman.ning.com](http://www.abusedwoman.ning.com)

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**Topic & Goal:**

- **Principality of Bitterness – Goal: to define and explain the principality of bitterness. To accomplish this goal, we will:**
  - ✓ Define Bitterness
  - ✓ Describe The Antidote For Bitterness
  - ✓ Discuss "Forgiving Others"
  - ✓ Explain How Often To Forgive Other
  - ✓ Give The "Bitterness Affidavit"
  - ✓ Give The "Prayer For Overcoming Bitterness"



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## Chapter Five: Principality of Bitterness

### Definition

This chapter explores one of Satan's principalities in his evil bureaucracy: bitterness. We will look into the invisible world of the second heaven, from where Satan seeks to rule and control us.

We will explore a group of demons (devils, evil spirits) that answer to a principality, or higher authority. There are differing levels of authority and power in Satan's realm. Each specific evil spirit answers to another spirit higher up the line of authority. Just below Satan in this pecking order are his principalities. It is through this hierarchy of evil spirits and principalities that Satan continually seeks to draw us into captivity, taking control of our lives.

The evil spirit who presides at each step up in the hierarchy of a principality is more evil than the ones below him. Luke 11:24-26 says, "When the unclean spirit is gone out he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out. And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first." (Also see Matthew 12:44-45.)

The original house refers to mankind — us. Even if we are "empty and swept clean," the evil spirits try to come back, and bring along seven more who are even more evil than the one who left. To prevent these spirits from moving in, we must be continually filled up with God's Word, and the knowledge of God, "precept upon precept, line upon line" (Isaiah 28:10). **Being filled with God's Spirit is the antidote to Satan's ploys.** This is why it is so essential to teach, and teach, and teach, and study, and study and apply, and apply, and apply God's Word.

When, not if, the enemy comes back to attack us in areas where God has already delivered us, we need to be prepared for him. When that evil spirit comes knocking on the door of our minds with a seductive temptation — a feeling, a thought, a mental picture - seeking to lead us back into captivity we need to say, "Get behind me, Satan. I know you." Tell him, "I've been there, and I'm through with that thought and action. I order you leave me alone because I belong to Jesus Christ and speak in His authority.

We must be prepared to fend off evil spirits and order them out of our lives. I know what I've been delivered from . . . but ... do you? I purposed to rid myself of every thought and action that's not of God. I want my "stinkin' thinkin'," my old nature, to be changed. I want to replace all of Satan's lies with God's truth. How about you?



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## **Principality of Bitterness (continued)**

### **Definition (continued)**

We have been created to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. The questions are: Are we enjoying daily fellowship with God? Do our lives honor God, freed from Satan's principalities? Luke 11:21-22 says, "When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armor wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils."

The strong man referred to here is one of Satan's principalities. He is armed. What does this mean? The Greek word means to fully equip with armor. The strong man is fully equipped, and this brings him peace.

The one stronger is Jesus. Since we have been granted Christ's power and authority, we also are the one stronger. Many times Scripture grants believers the right to use the name of Jesus. Mark 16:17-18 says, "And these signs shall follow them that believe; In My name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."

As the one stronger, through Jesus, we will strip the strong man (the principality) of all his armor; once that happens, that principality must flee because he will be left standing naked and weak, unable to war against us. Of what does the armor of the strong man consist?

**A principality is a ruling demon that has several lesser demons answering to it. Bitterness is a ruling demon. Answering to it, giving it protection and providing its armor are: 1) Unforgiveness, 2) Resentment, 3) Retaliation, 4) Anger, 5) Hatred, 6) Violence, 7) Murder.**

In the hierarchy of the principality of bitterness, resentment is worse than unforgiveness; unforgiveness answers to resentment. Retaliation is worse than resentment; resentment answers to retaliation, and so on. Each lower demon protects the armor for the next higher demon.

Hebrews 12:14-15 says, "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled." To "follow peace with all men" means to actively seek for peaceful relationships with others. If we cause trouble, slander, stir up gossip, or are resentful, are not following peace; we have serious issues with which to deal. This Scripture is very clear. If we don't seek peace and holiness we won't see the Lord, because we will have failed to receive God's grace. (The original Greek translation indicates that we'll "be late for" His grace.)



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## **Principality of Bitterness (continued)**

### **Definition (continued)**

We are commanded to be holy, as He is holy (Leviticus 11:44). Holiness requires removing sin from our lives. Vessels of honor fit for His service remove all iniquity from our lives. Vessels of dishonor do not (II Timothy 2:20-21). God has given us the tools to become overcomers in this life if we will do His word. Great rewards are promised, in this life and the next one, to those that overcome (Revelation 2-3). I hope we are each at a point where we actively seek after God and His righteousness as our first priority. Our salvation is at stake.

What does Hebrews 12:15 say? That we should look casually when we feel like it or when somebody's nice to us? No! It says, "looking diligently." This means active searching, the kind that requires constant effort. Scripture goes on to say, "lest any man fail of the grace of God."

What does "fail of the grace of God" mean? Galatians 6:1 defines it. It says, "if man be overtaken in a fault ...." What's a fault? A spiritual defect. If another believer is overtaken in a fault, those who consider themselves spiritually mature are to restore that person in a spirit of meekness. They are to guard against falling into the same spiritual defect, the end result of which will be falling away from faith. This is "the knowledge of God" in this matter. To help you with this, ask yourself, "What does God do when a person is overtaken in a fault?" God restores that person to fellowship with Him; He does not immediately destroy the person. We should restore that person to God by reintroducing them to Jesus and Jesus will lead them to the Father. Our responsibility is to lead people to Christ and Christ will lead them to the Father; we cannot by pass Christ.

In Romans 2:1, Paul says that the very thing of which you accuse another, you are also often guilty. You accuse another of having a spiritual problem but excuse the same problem in yourself. Romans 2:1 says, "Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things."

We need to be careful to build and restore relationships, not to tear them down. We are to restore other one another in gentleness and love. Galatians 6:2 says to go one more step by bearing a brother's burden. How many of us ever even come close to doing this? We carry one another's burdens by leading them to Jesus (as I stated above) so He can take the burden.

If we ignore this sound advice, we will be contaminated by a demon, and a root of bitterness will spring up to trouble us (Hebrews 12:15). When this root takes hold it not only defiles us, but branches out to affect everyone around us. It is highly contagious.

Have you spent time with a bitter person? Have you ever been bitter? Are you able to discern bitterness in yourself, or in others? Usually, when we encounter a bitter person, we copy our own attitude. Bitterness begins to flow from our spirit toward them. We play a game of bitterness ping-pong with them. It becomes my bitterness against their bitterness. We both become defiled. Does this sound familiar? It should. It's a common daily experience.



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## **Principality of Bitterness (continued)**

### **Definition (continued)**

**Bitterness gains entrance to us through unforgiveness, the first piece of the armor surrounding bitterness.** That evil strong man banks on unforgiveness to be an active part of our life. He counts on us never forgiving others or ourselves so that he can have his place, his habitation, within us. Once taking up a home in us, he can act out his evil nature through us and give his boss, the devil, a victory.

Unforgiveness whispers in our ear, "No, you're not going to forgive them, you don't need to forgive them, there's no way you need to forgive them." Unforgiveness keeps a record of wrongs against another person. Satan banks on the spirit of unforgiveness to remind us of the bitterness that somebody else has toward us. Unforgiveness reminds, rehashes, projects and torments us with past negative events. It reminds us of what others have done to us, and what we have done to others.

The strong man, the principality, uses the spirit of unforgiveness to constantly accuse us. But, **unforgiveness is a smaller entity, a lower spirit. It's just the beginning.**

**After unforgiveness has done its work, the strong man sends out the spirit resentment. Resentment builds on the foundation laid by unforgiveness. The record of wrong ferments and resentment begins to grow.**

**Resentment generates a feeling of ill will toward a person who has wronged us. Resentment says, "I don't like Mary," or "I will never forgive Alex," or "I don't trust my neighbors." Resentment constantly reminds us of past events, seeking to stir up negative sentiments that stew and ferment within us.**

**Unforgiveness formed the first piece of armor to provide protection for bitterness. Now Satan trusts that resentment will gain a foothold. Resentment feeds off of unforgiveness. Resentment is a stronger evil spirit, because unforgiveness supports it. And it is more dangerous than unforgiveness.**

Satan employs millions of evil spirits in his attempt to control or tempt us. This is why resentment can exist in many people at the same time. It can multiply its growth and so defile us that it can completely take over an individual, a family or a church. Because of the work of resentment, families and churches become dysfunctional. They maintain their own records of wrongs that generate stronger resentment. One person shares their resentment, and soon, everybody is doing the same. Then the church splits or the family ends up in divorce, and the devil has won a battle in his war against good.



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## **Principality of Bitterness (continued)**

### **Definition (continued)**

Unforgiveness is like instant replay, replaying the words, voices, sights and sounds of wrong events from our past. Unforgiveness flashes negative thoughts and images of everything someone ever said or did to us. Have you ever had that happen? **The accusing spirit continuously replays a record of the evil music of our lives to reinforce itself, so this strong man of bitterness can find a home in us. Resentment adds fuel to the fire. Resentment and unforgiveness stem from thoughts. They find their homes in our memories.**

**After unforgiveness and resentment have gained a foothold in our minds, the strong man (principality of bitterness) sends out the spirit of retaliation. Now it's time to get even.**

Have you ever seen a bumper sticker that said, "I don't forgive, I just get even?" Retaliation projects these kinds of sentiments: "Bill should pay for what he did to me," or "I am going to make Jane pay for what she said." "I am going to make sure Bob gets what he deserves, if it is the last thing that I do!"

The spirit of retaliation is much more dangerous than the spirits of unforgiveness and resentment. Retaliation's presence shows progressive demonization. Each spirit is much more dangerous than the previous one.

If you are in ministry, you must understand, when someone wants to get even, and they say, "Well, they're gonna pay," that a spirit of retaliation is speaking. Also, know that spirits of unforgiveness and resentment are present, and know that the strong man of bitterness is behind it all. Know that this person is harboring a record of wrongs against others or themselves. Then you will know how to get the person delivered.

When you see evidence of any of these spirits, you know that all the others down the line are present as well. So, if we're going after the spirit of retaliation in ministry, go after the spirits of unforgiveness and resentment as well.

As we see evidence of higher orders of spirits, we know that the underlying spirits are there as well, reinforcing the one just above it. What reinforces retaliation? Resentment fuels retaliation. What fuels resentment? Unforgiveness. And at the top of this principality of bitterness. There is an entire kingdom of evil spirits, and we name each spirit by the word that describes its nature.

**Bitterness is the strong man; he wants to occupy the house. He trusts in his armor (all the spirits protecting him – unforgiveness, resentment, retaliation, etc.). If people are going to achieve healing, this armor must be stripped off of them. Bitterness will remain until its entire armor is stripped away. If a person has pain in a memory that is evidence that there is bitterness there. We need to take hurt to the Lord in forgiveness or repentance and then He heals the broken heart and the pain (anger, resentment, hatred, guilt, shame, etc.) is gone. Every bit of the pain must go or there is still bitterness.**



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## **Principality of Bitterness (continued)**

### **Definition (continued)**

As unforgiveness gains a foothold, then resentment gains a foothold. Next, retaliation gains a foothold. Each of these manifests itself in ways that are progressively worse than the prior spirit.

**When retaliation wins its foothold, bitterness sends out anger and wrath.** Anger and wrath are outward expressions that remind others that we are not going to forgive them, that we resent them, and that we plan to get even. With anger, we have crossed a line. Anger gives the evil spirit a voice. Unforgiveness, resentment, and retaliation can be kept unspoken, eating away at a person's own spirit through self-deception.

Once the line is crossed to anger and wrath, the demons start to show themselves physically. Have you ever seen anger in a person's eyes? It is very real and very observable. This is anger caused by the root of bitterness, because of unforgiveness, resentment and retaliation. Maybe you have experienced this yourself. We all have.

**We need to understand, when our anger buttons are being pushed, it is the strong man of bitterness fighting to gain a foothold. Bitterness puts on the armor of anger and wrath to protect himself.** You have sensed it yourself, when resentments fester over time, anger isn't far behind. Anger and wrath never occur without the first three spirits being in place.

We get angry when a trust has been breached, resulting in hurt. We feel victimized. Then unforgiveness, resentment and retaliation well up and overflow with the fourth spirit, anger and wrath.

**After anger and wrath have gained their foothold, hatred moves in.** Bitterness gains fuel from unforgiveness, resentment, retaliation, and anger and wrath. **Now hatred starts a process of elimination.** Hatred says, "I live on this planet and so do you. And one of us has to go and it ain't going to be me." Maybe hatred says, "This church ain't big enough for both of us. I think you'd better leave." Hatred seeks to eliminate the other person.

**Retaliation ferments anger on behalf of bitterness. Anger vocalizes bitterness, and next comes hatred to act out of bitterness. Hatred reveals your feelings toward an offender, tells them that they don't belong in your world, and you absolutely hate their guts. Hatred says, "I will do what it takes to get even."**

**Hatred provides the fuel for our final victimization by Satan.** When we observe hatred in someone, we know that anger, retaliation, resentment and unforgiveness are there as well. And we know that bitterness is in the driver's seat, trusting in the armor provided by these lesser evil spirits.



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## **Principality of Bitterness (continued)**

### **Definition (continued)**

**What makes up the armor of bitterness? It is the seven levels of spirits under his principality.** Bitterness banks on the fact that when we are finally ready to forgive, unforgiveness will show us flash cards of voices, sights, sounds, and smells reminding us of how someone harmed us. Resentment joins in saying, "Now, let me help you really feel it right here, deep inside you."

You may try to argue against resentment saying, "But, I'm trying to forgive Ruthie," but resentment answers, "No, you really resent her." Retaliation joins in, "Yeah, besides you never did get even with Ruthie, did you? She needs to pay she did to you." Anger rears up, saying, "Yeah, and I'm going to go tell Ruthie just what I think, and if I don't tell her, then I'll tell somebody else."

You're getting emotional now, and hatred says, "Yeah, I'm not only going to get even, I'm not only going to retaliate, but I know how to hit her where it hurts. I hate Ruthie."

We see this scenario repeated daily in the lives of families, businesses and churches. This is evidence of how progressively more evil influences break up human relationships; the strong man, bitterness, causes it all.

**The sixth level of bitterness is violence. Violence is anger and hatred set into motion. Our emotions erupt into physical or sometimes hate-filled verbal attacks. At this point, we see pots and pans thrown across the room, wrenches fly and punches being thrown. Fights erupt. Physical, sexual and verbal abuse result.**

**The seventh and worst spirit in the principality of bitterness is murder.** Just as Cain slew Abel because of his bitterness, so we see others murder their children, spouses or friends in fits of rage.

The spirit of murder includes more than taking someone's physical life. God's Word teaches how we can murder someone with our words. Murder starts in the heart, because the ultimate level of the spirit of bitterness is the elimination of someone's person-hood. 1 John 3:15 says, "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him."

Murderous hate-filled speech, driven by bitterness, kills a person's own spirit. Whether it is the person who is doing the screaming and his speech crucifies his own sense of decency, or a person who receives a verbal attack, whose spirit shrinks in fear, the end result is a death of a Godly, peaceful spirit.



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## **Principality of Bitterness (continued)**

### **Definition (continued)**

Satan was the first murderer, and introduced murder to the world through Cain (John 8:44; 1 John 3:12). Cain's murder of Abel illustrates the progression of the root of bitterness, starting with an unwillingness to forgive, to resentment, to retaliation, to anger, and then to murder during a short period of time (Genesis 4:1-9).

As we have been reviewing these levels of bitterness, have you sensed any bitterness in your spirit? Have you reflected on others who have failed to forgive you, or identified unforgiveness that you have toward someone else? Have you experienced, resentment, a desire to retaliate, and anger directed at others, or even at yourself? Have you hated others, or been hated? Have you had violence committed against you, or committed violence? Have you angrily cursed others, or yourself, or had others curse you?

Does your heart ache because these things have happened to you? Can you sense these spirits interacting with your spirit right now? Are you recalling someone or something that has happened to you? **If there is pain in this and other memories, there is bitterness. The solution is to forgive and repent. Then the Lord will heal your broken heart.**

**What do you want to do about all this? You can choose to continue on as you are, or you can face these things and cast them out of your life. You choose.**

Before anything else can be resolved, bitterness must be expelled from your spirit. If you harbor bitterness against others or yourself, God will not forgive you of your sin. In Mark 11:25-26 Jesus says, "And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses."

In Matthew 18:34-35 Jesus says, "And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall My heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses."

I believe the tormentors of Matthew 18 are stress, anxiety, fear, depression, bitterness, etc., and the physical diseases that can follow. **Bitterness and its supporting spirits form the root of many of our diseases.**

Hebrews 12:14 says that we are to follow peace with all men, and pursue holiness. Achieving holiness is tough. We self-talk, "God is perfect. I'm rotten. How can I be holy as He is holy?" Isaiah 35:8 calls holiness a highway to be traveled. What does this mean? Holiness comes through a progressive process of identifying the lies and sins in our lives and replacing them with God's truth.



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## **Principality of Bitterness (continued)**

### **Definition (continued)**

As we become holy, our nature is transformed from old man — Satan's nature — into God's nature. This process is called sanctification. The way we think, talk and act is changed to conform more and more to the image of the living God. We regain what we lost in Adam's fall from grace: the nature of God. We are holy, as He is when we are manifesting His nature through us. In the time that love, joy, peace, long-suffering, etc. is manifesting through us, we are holy as He is because His nature is being displayed.

Genesis 1:26 says, "Let Us make man in Our image." The image of man was the image of God's nature, but even more than this. God gave us a soul, spirit and body. We lost the ability to assume God's nature because of sin. That is why our spirit needed be born again, so we could come alive to God. Our nature had been dead to God.

Once we are born again, our spirit desires to conform to God's image because that is who we are spiritually in our creation; it is what constitutes the real person. This is the person with whom God wants to spend eternity in heaven.

It's amazing that we accept and expect God to be perfect, and yet we don't think He asks the same of us. The true believer is on a journey toward Godly perfection that is called sanctification. And it is available to every believer who appropriates the power and authority of Christ.

As we become sanctified, we know that Satan stands ready to condemn us using our weaknesses against us. He finds any opening he can to thwart our progress or cause us to backslide. Despite this reality, we still are responsible to live each day according to God's precepts. He does not leave us alone in this, giving us the power of Christ and the prodding of the Holy Spirit to defeat Satan's wiles.

What is human perfection from God's perspective? The Greek word for "perfect" is teleios. As it concerns our knowledge and application of Christian principles, it describes mature, full-grown people, not children. These are believers who, through thorough instruction and deep experiences, walk in the light with Christ. Hebrews 5:14 describes maturity as knowing the difference between good and evil, and choosing to do that which is good: Godly discernment. Being perfect, we live in a state of forgiveness where God declares us righteous because we have close, personal communion with Jesus Christ.

Being holy, as He is, is to abide in Christ. It is to manifest His nature. The high calling of God that Paul strove for all of his life was to manifest the nature of God one hundred percent of the time. God commands us to forgive. To defeat an unforgiving spirit, and prevent a root of bitterness from springing up, we must learn to forgive moment by moment, offense by offense. We must give up our hold on the offender and hand them over to God (Matthew 18:21-22.)



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### **Principality of Bitterness (continued)**

#### **Definition (continued)**

As we forgive, we also defeat resentment. We have released all the ill will formerly directed at others or ourselves.

Jesus said the thought of retaliation comes from an evil spirit. When James and John sought to rain fire from heaven on the Samaritans who rejected them, Jesus rebuked them saying, "Ye know not what manner of spirit you are of" (Luke 9:55).

The Word of God forbids us from seeking retaliation or revenge. We are told not to avenge ourselves, or to bear grudges (Leviticus 19:18). Proverbs 24:29 tells us not to ponder doing to our neighbor what he has done to us. Paul taught us not to repay evil with evil, but instead we are to give the offender over to God (Romans 17-19).

There is such a thing as "righteous anger," but it flows from a sense of an offense committed against God, not our own unforgiving spirit. A righteous anger is never expressed at a person. It is always expressed at evil. Revenge is never the motive behind righteous anger. Whatever the source of our anger, we are taught not to sin as its result, or retain anger in our spirit overnight (Ephesians 4:26). We are taught to be slow to wrath because man's wrath never brings forth the righteousness of God (James 1:19-20).

According to Galatians 5:20, hatred is one of the works of the flesh, our evil nature. The natural condition of all unregenerate people is to be "hateful and hating one another" (Titus 3:3).

Satan is the author of violence (Ezekiel 28:16). Satan used the spirits associated with bitterness to introduce violence and murder by influencing Cain to kill Abel. Cain's progression of bitterness as it grew from an unwillingness to forgive, to resentment, to retaliation, to anger, to hatred, to violence, and finally, to murder during a short period of time (Genesis 4:1-9).

Employing the spirits of bitterness, Satan brought so much violence to mankind that God destroyed all the people, save Noah and his family (Genesis 6:11-13).

These evil spirits seek to separate us from God and from His peace. They also destroy our peace, and separate us from living in peace with other people.



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## **Principality of Bitterness (continued)**

### **The Antidote For Bitterness**

First, we must recognize that we are bitter. This is harder than it sounds. A short time ago, I didn't see my own bitterness. If someone had told me I was bitter, I would have denied it. I was ignorant to the fact that resentment formed a part of bitterness. Maybe that is what God meant in Hosea 4:6 when He said, "My people are destroyed for a lack of knowledge."

If there is any evidence of unforgiveness, resentment, retaliation, anger, hatred, violence, or murder in our lives, we have bitterness. If there is any pain in any memory, there is bitterness. If we go to bed at night leaving issues unresolved we will wake the next day with the root of bitterness already having budded in our spirit. I learned to accept this as truth and admitted that I did have bitterness because of offenses. Admitting that we have bitterness is the first step to recovery.

Secondly, we must repent of the sin of bitterness. Repent means that we fall out of agreement and turn away from it. And we ask God to forgive us.

Thirdly, we must forgive others and ourselves. What does it mean to forgive? There are several aspects to consider.

### **Forgiving Others**

Matthew 18:15-17 says, "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." If the church adheres to this Scripture there will be fewer problems in the church.

What are we supposed to do when someone has offended us? We are to go to them personally and privately, seeking to regain their fellowship and friendship. Instead, we usually find somebody else to talk to first, involving someone who had nothing to do with the problem in the first place. We do this to win someone to our side, or build confidence that we are justified in being offended. But we seldom provide these confidants with all the facts. We load the gun with accusations and fire rumors at random. These spread and destroy any hope for restoration and reconciliation.

The correct principle is to go to our brother privately, telling him honestly, "We're not right together man, what's going on? I care about you and I want a good relationship!" If he doesn't hear us, we come back with two or three trusted brothers, "Brother, we've got to resolve this." If that doesn't work, our spiritual leaders will go and ask, "Why didn't you receive your brother? What's the problem? Come with me and let's deal with it so we can have fellowship with you."



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## **Principality of Bitterness (continued)**

### **Forgiving Others (continued)**

If we fulfill the obligations of this system of forgiveness and reconciliation, not only will we have harmony in our churches, but our churches would attract more people.

But we're afraid of each other. We're afraid of losing somebody as a friend. Yet, if we don't deal with problems by seeking forgiveness and restoration according to this Scripture formula, we will lose them anyway. Why not lose them over the issue of righteousness?

An open rebuke is better than a secret love (Proverbs 27:5). My part is to be willing to come and deal with you face to face. Are you willing to do that with others? I don't know about you, but I want to release the power of love and forgiveness on the earth. I'm fed up with the hatred and bitterness that dominates human relationships. Are you?

If we handle forgiveness in the manner God intended, the result will usually be peace, if peace is at all possible. If the other person refuses to forgive or to stop their destructive behavior, we still can be set free from our own resentment and receive God's forgiveness.

The ultimate resolution of all human problems comes from God. If we say, "I'll give up bitterness when I have resolution with George," then George becomes an idol to us. We put him in the position of receiving our attention, and that is the place God desires to occupy. Bitterness places us in bondage to the one we are bitter at. God grants us spiritual freedom and forgiveness; whatever the outcome of our effort to reconcile with another person.

God still wants us to have a heart for resolution of differences and reconciliation with our brothers. But if their own root of bitterness keeps them from responding properly, if they're into unforgiveness, resentment, retaliation, anger and strife, that is not your problem. We can trust God to deal with their hearts through His Holy Spirit.

### **How Often Do We Forgive?**

Matthew 18:21-22 says, "Then came Peter to Him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, until seventy times seven."

Jesus said forgiveness is a moment by moment occurrence. With every breath, we are to forgive others and, of course, ourselves. Each minute of the day we are to forgive the same person for the same offense. Forgive them and then release them. If we don't, we give the strong man of bitterness a chance to come in and begin to build his stronghold in us. Our bodies are to be the temples of God, not Satan's stronghold.



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## **Principality of Bitterness (continued)**

### **How Often Do We Forgive (continued)**

The first spirit bitterness sends to accuse us of the breach in our relationship is unforgiveness. We must forgive! It is imperative if we ever desire to be healed. It makes no difference whether or not we feel like it. Forgiveness is not about how we feel; it is about what we choose to do. We must learn to separate the person from their sin, just as God separates us from our sins and forgives us.

God forgave and accepted us before we were made right with Him, when we were still "in our sins." And do you know what? We still don't have it all together, yet He still accepts us and forgives us each minute of the day, doesn't He? Thank You Father, Thank you Jesus.

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9). It doesn't bother me at all to confess to God. Why should it bother me? He knows all my sins anyway. I can't conceal them from Him. I want to be clean (forgiven) before Him. But sometimes we need to confess our sins to others that we may be healed (James 5:16).

Matthew 18:34-35 says that we are to forgive from our heart, or we will be turned over to the tormentors. What does it mean to forgive from the heart? If we have from our hearts, the emotional pain from past hurts will be gone. I discovered that I had forgiven many times, but the emotional pain was still there. Satan still came and accused me day and night. I hadn't forgiven from my heart, just my mind.

Forgiveness is a matter of the will. We either choose to forgive or not to forgive. It doesn't matter how we feel.

One of Satan's favorite tactics is to accuse us in areas with which we had previously dealt. So it is a good idea to make a list of every person you need to forgive; or thought you have forgiven. It need to be a detailed list of people and the offenses they have committed; a comprehensive record of the wrongs these people committed against you - James 5:16 says that we are to confess our faults to one another to receive healing.

At the end of this chapter is a "Bitterness Affidavit." We suggest that you use this form in making your list of those that you need to forgive. Then proceed through the list one item at a time, using the prayer printed at the end of the chapter. It might be hard, but when you expose the bitterness to the power of Jesus Christ, the hurt, pain, anger, unforgiveness, bitterness, etc. will go. And in their place there will be a peace and joy that passes all understanding.



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## **Principality of Bitterness (continued)**

### **How Often Do We Forgive? (continued)**

As you finish this process of forgiveness, date and sign the affidavit, stating that you actually have forgiven others from your heart. This not only is witness to your forgiveness but also is a way of silencing accusing spirits who fight your desire to forgive.

I have learned that the emotional pain associated with past hurts is form of self-pity. People often ask, "Why did this have to happen to me?" If we harbor self-pity very long, it can lead to full-blown depression. I found in my own life that the emotional pain was the sin of self-pity. I repented and the pain went away. God forgave me and was faithful to grant peace that passes all human understanding (Philippians 4:7).

### **The Bitterness Affidavit**

Make the list of all the bitterness you have against others (as stated above). We need to confess and repent before Almighty God for holding onto this bitterness and believing it, instead of believing Him. The stronghold that bitterness has held in your life will be destroyed, and Satan's power over you will be legally cancelled. Be thorough, and pray through each bitterness individually. Do not give the devil any "legal" access to you. Here is an example of a prayer you can use to deal with bitterness, and eliminate it from your life (**Remember, bitterness gains entrance to us from unforgiveness – think about each person who have ever hurt you and write out their name and what their offenses were – pray the "Prayer of Release" for each item on this list – this is the process of forgiveness**):

#### **Prayer of Release**

In the name of Jesus, I purpose and choose to forgive (the person) from my heart for (what they did). In the name of The Lord Jesus, I cancel all their debts and obligations to me.

Dear Lord, I ask You to forgive me for my bitterness towards (the person) in this situation.

In the name of Jesus, and by the power of His blood, I cancel Satan's authority over me in this memory because I have forgiven.

In the name of Jesus, I command that all the tormentors that have been assigned to me because of my unforgiveness leave me, now.

Holy Spirit, I invite you into my heart, and to heal me of this pain. Please speak your words of truth to me about this situation.





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## **BFOF Study Guide**

### **Topic: Principality of Bitterness**

**March 28<sup>th</sup> – April 3<sup>rd</sup>**

#### **Study Guide Goals:**

- To know what bitterness is and the armor that supports the principality of bitterness.
- To identify any area of bitterness in your life.
- To apply forgiveness, submit to God and resist the devil.

#### **To Think About:**

Read Luke 11:24-26. List every detail you can identify about an evil spirit.

Define these terms:

Original house (Luke 11:24-26).

Strongman (Luke 11:21-22).

One Stronger (Mark 16:17-18).

What is the armor in which the principality of bitterness trusts?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_



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## **BFOF Study Guide**

### **Topic: Principality of Bitterness**

**March 28<sup>th</sup> – April 3<sup>rd</sup>**

If we have any of the above 7 things in our life in any way, do we have a root of bitterness?

What does Hebrew 12:14-15 say about bitterness?

Explain Romans 2:1.

How do we apply Gal. 6:1-2?

What is unforgiveness?

What is resentment?

What is retaliation?



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## **BFOF Study Guide**

### **Topic: Principality of Bitterness**

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What is anger?

What is hatred?

What is violence?

What is murder?

What are the tormentors in Matthew 18:34?

What is the antidote for bitterness?

Is forgiveness a choice?

Does forgiveness have anything to do with our feelings?



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## **BFOF Study Guide**

### **Topic: Principality of Bitterness**

**March 28<sup>th</sup> – April 3<sup>rd</sup>**

Is forgiveness an act of obedience to God?

How often are we to forgive someone who has hurt us?

What does this mean?

How can forgiveness be our breastplate of righteousness?

Matthew 18:15-17 gives us three steps in restoring relationships. What are they?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Remember: Gossip is repeating something that is true about someone behind his or her back. Slander is repeating something that is not true behind their back. In either case it is sin. We are never to say negative things about someone else except in the third step in Matt. 18:17 and then it is only to the leadership of the church and no one else.



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## **BFOF Study Guide**

### **Topic: Principality of Bitterness**

**March 28<sup>th</sup> – April 3<sup>rd</sup>**

What should I do if I have sinned against someone else?

James 4:7 says that we are to submit to God, resist the devil and he will flee. How do we submit to God?

Submitting to God is our responsibility, how do we do it?

Is forgiving others and asking God to forgive us for our sins submitting to God?

Resisting the devil is also our responsibility, how do we do it?

Is saying "NO" to Satan in the Name of Jesus, resisting him?

Is saying "In the name of Jesus, I cancel all of Satan's power and authority over me in this issue," resisting or rebuking the devil?



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## **BFOF Study Guide**

### **Topic: Principality of Bitterness**

**March 28<sup>th</sup> – April 3<sup>rd</sup>**

#### **Personal Responsibility:**

Make your bitterness affidavit as suggested at the end of the Bitterness chapter. This is a list of every memory that has any unforgiveness, resentment, any desire to get even, anger toward others, hatred toward others, violence toward others, or any way that you put others down. If there is emotional pain in a memory there is bitterness.

#### **Application:**

Then pray through each item individually using this prayer:

Dear Heavenly Father, in the name of The Lord Jesus, I purpose and choose to forgive (name) for (what they did).

I release (name). I cancel their debts and obligations to me in this issue.

Dear LORD I ask you to forgive me for my bitterness toward (above name) in this situation.

In the name of Jesus I cancel all Satan's power and authority over me in this issue because I have forgiven them. And God has forgiven me. It is done and over with.

Holy Spirit please come and heal my heart. And tell me your truth about this situation. (Listen for the Holy Spirit and write down what you hear or feel.)