

## BE A BRINGER

*“40 One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. 41 He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which is translated, the Christ). 42 And he brought him to Jesus....”* John 1:40-42a

A bringer makes one touch each week by investing and inviting someone to Christ and church.

Name three people you will pray for their salvation this week:

## PRAYER REQUESTS FOR THE WEEK

*“Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you;....”* I Samuel 12:23a

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**Kevin & Pam Barthel**  
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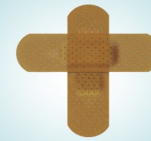


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# Forgiveness

## Letting Go Of Your Hurt

GROWTH GUIDE



Handout: 04/15/18

Study: 04/22/18

## Why Forgive?

No one sets out to be a bitter person. Nor do we encourage others to pursue bitterness. Bitterness is bad. Everyone agrees on that.

And yet there are so many bitter people. In fact, one of the reasons we agree that bitterness is bad is because we witness what it does to people. We all know sour people who kick dogs, yell at children cutting through their yards, and shout with red faces at church business meetings about insignificant issues. They are cynical at work. They are unappreciative of how they have been blessed, and they resent the successes of others.

The Wicked Witch of the West, for instance, was bitter. If nothing else, her vendetta against Toto gives her away: “I’ll get you, my pretty— and your little dog too!” Bitter.

But before we begin to feel too self-righteous because we do not terrorize munchkins or light scarecrows on fire, we need to remember that even a little bitterness is bad. We have all stewed about some injustice. And thus bitterness begins. After an offense, few of us would hop on a broomstick or hire a bunch of flying monkeys, at least not immediately. But a little pouting is the seed from which a root of bitterness germinates. And bitterness kills.

When I was in junior high, some friends and I discovered mercury. We were in an out-of-control science class, and we had too-easy access to the chemical cabinet. We started experimenting with different chemicals, and mercury was our favorite. It is an amazing substance. It is physically dense. Even a small container of mercury weighs a lot. It is shiny, like liquid aluminum foil. And it has a high viscosity (surface tension). You can slide mercury around on a piece of paper, break it into little droplets, and then put it back together— unless everyone decides to keep some of it, which they did (except for me since I was planning to become a pastor).

We were fascinated by mercury, and we were extremely foolish. Much later, as a chemistry major, I learned that mercury is highly toxic. Get mercury in your system, and it will go to your brain and make you crazy (literally). The Wikipedia article on mercury poisoning says:

Mercury damages the central nervous system, endocrine system, kidneys, and other organs, and adversely affects the mouth, gums, and teeth. Exposure over long periods of time or heavy exposure to mercury vapor can result in brain damage and ultimately death.

Other than that, mercury’s great for you.

Bitterness is like mercury. It is tempting to play with it. We can stew for hours on end thinking about how we have been treated unfairly and how we hope that someday justice will be done. We slide bitterness around in our minds and slip some of it into our pockets. And we are oh so foolish because all the while it is attacking our bones (Proverbs 14:30). Fooling around with bitterness is like drinking poison and hoping that someone else will die.

Brauns, Chris. Unpacking Forgiveness: Biblical Answers for Complex Questions and Deep Wounds (pp. 153-155). Crossway. Kindle Edition.

## KEY VERSE

Hebrews 12:15

*looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled NKJV*

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## WEEKLY READINGS

**Monday: Hebrews 12:14-15**

### Introduction

1. How would you define bitterness?
2. According to this passage, what is the result of bitterness?

**Tuesday: Psalm 73:21-24**

### Bitterness Produces Mental Trouble

3. What affect did bitterness have upon the Psalmist's mind in these verses?
4. Has there been a time in your life when bitterness dominated your thoughts?  
What impact did this have on you?

**Wednesday: Proverbs 17:22; Job 23:2**

### Bitterness Produces Physical Trouble

5. In what ways can bitterness affect your health?
6. Has there been a time in your life when this has occurred?

**Thursday: Proverbs 18:14; James 4:1-2; Leviticus 19:17-18**

### Bitterness Produces Emotional Trouble

7. How can bitterness affect your emotions?
8. Has there been a time in your life when this has occurred?

**Friday: Ephesians 4:26-27; I John 4:20-21**

### Bitterness Produces Spiritual Trouble

9. How can bitterness affect your relationship with God?
10. How can God help you overcome bitterness?
11. How can remembering God's forgiveness towards you help you to overcome bitterness towards others?