

DFO

The “Hope of
the Future”

BITTERNESS!

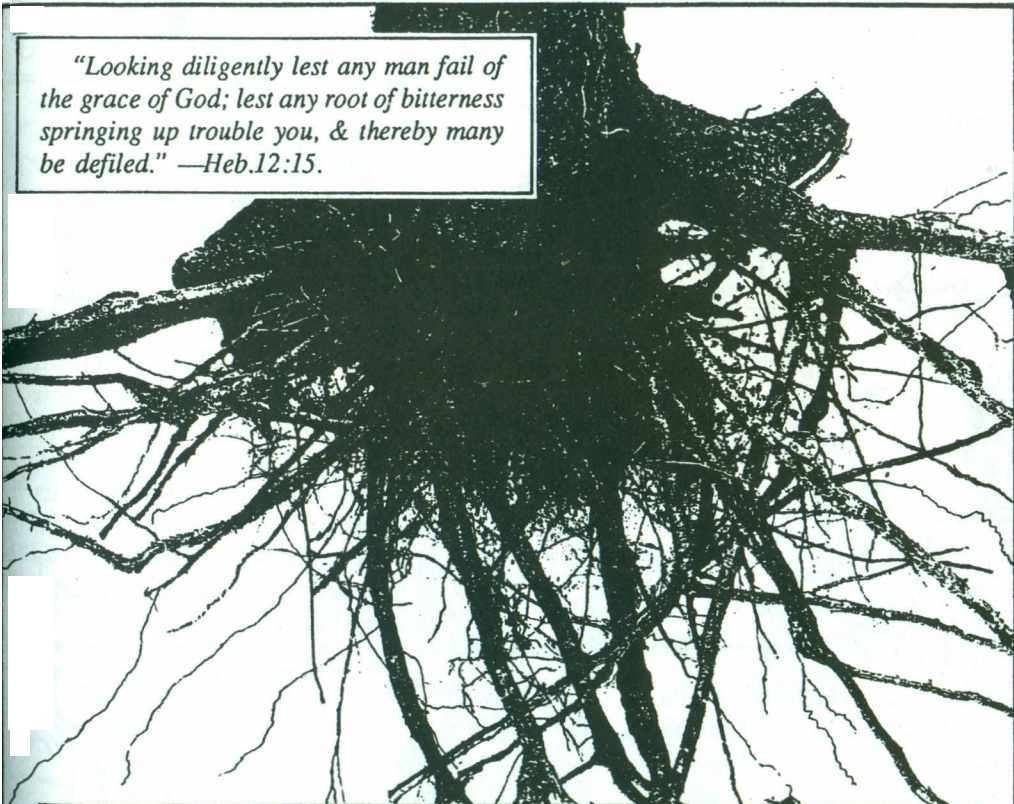
—The Deadly Root that Devours & Destroys!

“BITTERNESS” —Part I

ML 2672

• FROM DAD & MAMA'S LETTERS • COMPILED BY APOLLOS • ART BY ZEB

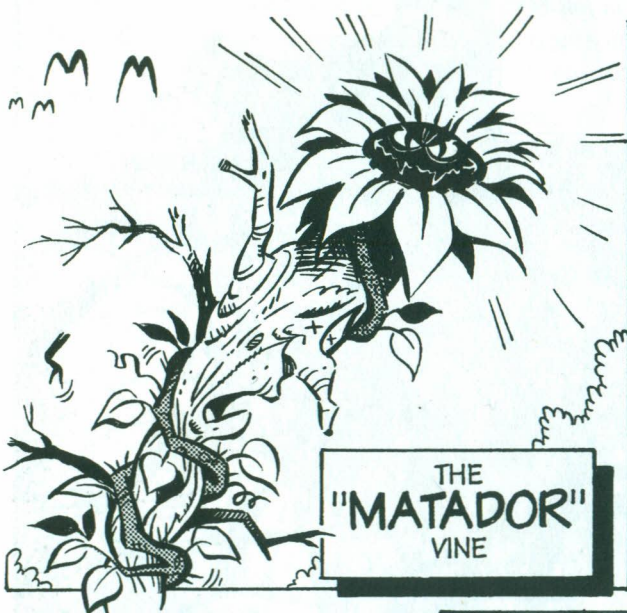
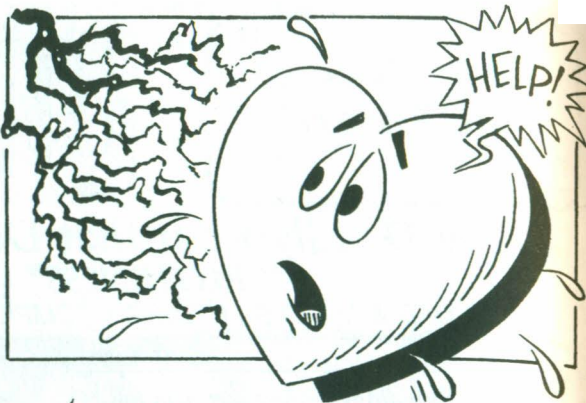
“Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, & thereby many be defiled.” —Heb.12:15.



Thus says God's Word about the adverse results of bitterness, a very poisonous root that can defile your whole spirit, & seriously hurt & defile many others as well!

One reason that bitterness is so extremely dangerous is because it can take root & begin to grow & spread & spiritually contaminate & defile your heart & spirit before you even realise what's wrong with you. Sinful human nature makes it very easy for us to rationalise & justify ourselves for harbouring hurt feelings or a grudge against others when we feel that they have wronged or mistreated us. In fact, we can even feel this way towards God!

Like the roots of most plants, little “roots” of resentment & bitterness usually lie below the surface where they remain unseen. But there they begin to spread & grow, going ever deeper & deeper. If allowed to continue, such roots of bitterness will eventually eat away at your very heart & spirit, until they will finally devour & destroy you spiritually!—Ultimately leaving you spiritually dead & virtually useless to the Lord!



Bitterness is very much like the South American vine known as the “matador.” Beginning at the foot of a tree, the matador vine slowly works its way to the top. But as it grows, it kills the tree, & when at last the top is reached, it sends forth a flower to crown itself. Matador literally means **KILLER**. Bitterness may appear harmless when it is small, but if it is allowed to grow, its tendrils of resentment, malice & hatred soon clasp themselves around the heart & eventually kill the soul.

This is why God’s Word exhorts us to “Let all bitterness, & wrath, & anger, & clamour, & evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice.”—Eph.4:31. And that’s what this lesson is all about: How to recognise, deal with & get rid of the deadly root known as bitterness, so that you may freely love & serve the Lord & others unhindered by this destructive device of the Devil!—That we may “lay aside every weight & the sin which doth so easily beset us!”—Heb.12:1.



BITTERNESS WILL HINDER YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LORD & YOUR SERVICE FOR HIM!



If you allow bitterness & resentment & a critical spirit to grow in your life, you will lose your anointing & your inspiration from the Lord. You can't keep complaining about & resenting your lot in life, & criticising & murmuring about things that God or others have done to you, & keep God's Holy Spirit on you at the same time. You just can't do it. The Lord dwells in the praises of His people, & He draws near to us when we draw near to Him, "offering the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name."—Psa.22:3; Jam.4:8; Heb.13:15.

"But without faith it is impossible to please Him."—Heb.11:6. If you don't accept the things that the Lord sends into your life, if you not only doubt & wonder about His treatment & care of you, but actually murmur & resent & rebel against it, that's certainly not faith, & surely displeases the Lord!

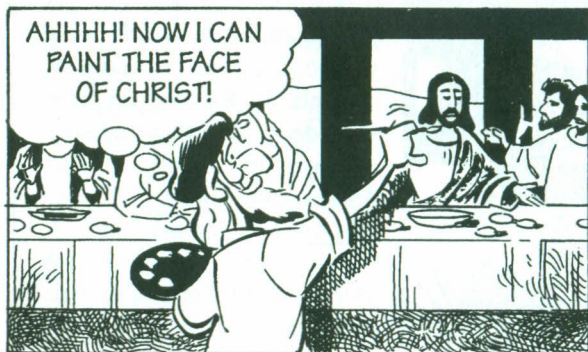


And if you allow that root of bitterness to take hold in your heart & life, it will cause you to fail both the Lord & yourself. Such a root can grow very deep, & can ultimately destroy you.—It can at least destroy your ministry, & your effectiveness for the Lord, & it can even harm the entire Work of God that you're supposed to be helping.



The way that bitterness can hinder your ministry & effectiveness is illustrated in the following true story about the great artist & engineer, Leonardo da Vinci: Just before he commenced work on his famous painting of "The Last Supper" he had a violent quarrel with a fellow painter. He was so enraged & bitter that he decided to paint the face of his enemy, the other artist, into the face of Judas, & thus take his revenge by handing the man down in infamy* & scorn to succeeding generations. The face of Judas was therefore one of the first that he finished, & everyone could easily recognise it as the face of the painter with whom da Vinci had quarreled. (*infamy = disgrace)

But when he came to paint the face of Jesus, he could make no progress. Something seemed to be baffling him, holding him back, frustrating his best efforts. At length he came to the conclusion that the thing that was checking & frustrating him was the fact that he had painted his enemy into the face of Judas. He therefore painted out the face of Judas & commenced anew on the face of Jesus, & this time with the success which the ages have acclaimed.



How clearly this incident shows us that we cannot at one & the same time be painting the features of Christ into our own life, & be painting another face with the colours of enmity* & hatred. To become more Christ-like, & to accomplish what the Lord wants you to do, surely all bitterness & hatred must be "put away" & "laid aside." (*enmity = hostility)

BITTERNESS OPENS THE DOOR TO THE ENEMY!

I CAUGHT YOU, YOU LITTLE BITTER WEED!--BEFORE YOU GET A CHANCE TO GROW ANY BIGGER!



To wilfully allow little roots of bitterness to grow in your life is like knowingly letting the Devil in! Such discontentment & resentment & murmuring in your heart will just grow & grow & begin to cover & affect everything around you. That's what bitterness does.—Which is why you've got to try to catch it at the very beginning before it takes root too deeply, & root it out!

Do you remember the pictures & story God gave me in "Alice in the Magic Garden"? The evil seeds that Alice received from the Evil Sorcerer grew into those huge, bitter, nagging, gnawing, choking weeds of discontent, dissension, bitterness & strife. And if that wasn't bad enough, they then made the way for the wicked & destructive giants of the Devil's discouragement, doubt, fear & despair to enter into her garden!



TRY MY LITTLE SEEDS OF RESENTMENT, JEALOUSY, DOUBT & FEAR!



—What a fitting picture & warning of the terrible effects of allowing little seeds of resentment, jealousy, doubt & fear to take root & begin growing in your heart! Accepting such seeds from the sly old Sorcerer is just like giving in to the Enemy, & when you do, he's then allowed to oppress & attack you temporarily until you repent & get right with the Lord, & start thanking & praising the Lord & get back on the right track.

This is why the Lord tells us, “Neither give place to the Devil!”—Eph.4:27. This verse shows that you can sometimes give the Devil place & room to operate & get in without necessarily being completely taken over or possessed by him. But let me warn you, he’ll use whatever you let him get ahold of, so you’d better resist & give him no place!—So beware of letting the Enemy in through the little seeds & tiny roots of jealousy, murmuring or bitterness that he may try to sow in your heart!



BITTERNESS WILL EVEN AFFECT YOU PHYSICALLY!



The affairs of the heart & affairs of the spirit can affect you physically! In medical science they call such afflictions “psychosomatic” illnesses, which means they are caused by your mind. But we’d say they’re caused by your spirit, by an improper attitude of heart, primarily a lack of love for the Lord & others. If you allow little roots of bitterness to start growing in your heart, they will begin to eat on you from within.—Until pretty soon they will crop out in very obvious or even physical manifestations.



Doctors have found that people who are bitter & have a lot of hatred in their hearts, have much more arthritis than those who are at peace. Similarly, they've discovered that those who have a lot of fear in their minds—worries, tension, phobias*, etc.—have a lot more mental trouble & more stomach trouble, as well as more heart trouble. (*phobias = fears)

Thank God that the elimination of fear by faith gives peace of mind & rest to your stomach & to your heart, & actually eliminates various poisons from the blood which cause illness. In other words, your state of mind & heart can actually poison your body. Science knows this & has proven it true.

NOW THAT I HAVE FAITH IN GOD
I CAN HAVE PEACE OF
MIND & I FEEL
TERRIFIC!

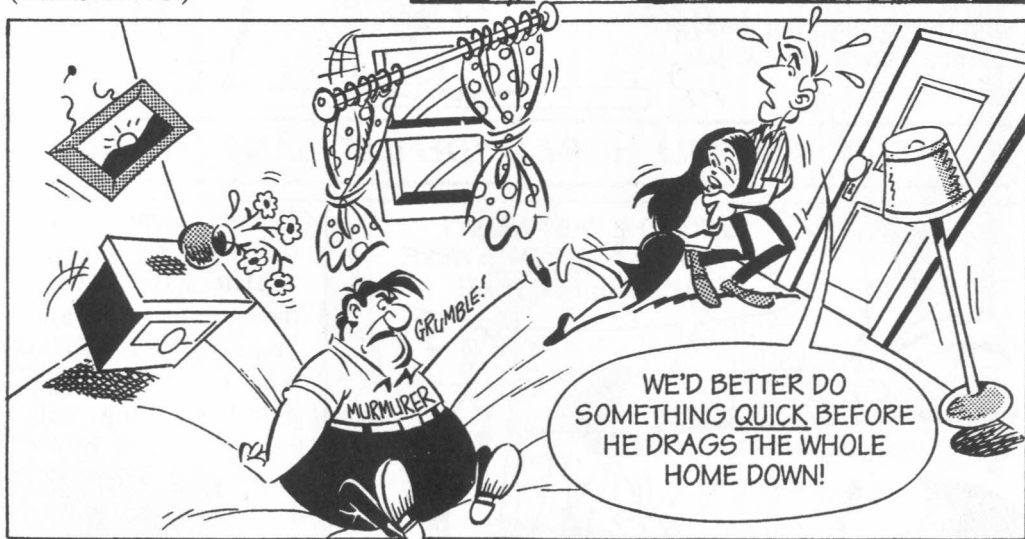


BITTERNESS WILL HURT & "DEFILE" MANY OTHERS!



How can one individual's bitterness "defile many"? Well, there are several ways. For one thing, people who are really bitter about one thing, will easily become bitter about other things too. It's usually because they never blame themselves for anything that seems to go wrong, they're always blaming other people, similar to the self-righteous hypocrite who never blames himself either.

People who are discontent & murmuring & resentful & critical are usually never satisfied unless they can persuade others to agree with them. Misery loves company, & they love to have other people agree with them; & sad to say, it's usually easy to find 'm. Belly-aching, murmuring & complaining is a very common ailment of the human race & something that is very easy to fall into. But from God's point of view, it is a sin that is absolutely intolerable. Just read the story of the wandering Children of Israel & you'll see how He let millions of people rot in the Sinaitic Desert for their murmuring & their complaining, & they never got into the Promised Land! (Num.32:11-13.)



Bitterness & murmuring are a very infectious spiritual disease, diabolical, & can spread & poison others very quickly if left unchecked. The Bible warns us, "Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump!"—1Cor. 5:6,7. Just like a tiny pinch of yeast will spread throughout an entire "lump" of dough & cause the whole thing to rise, people who are permeated with bitterness are a real burden & a real downer influence, & will drag everybody down that they can, pulling everybody's spirits down. They're always dwelling on the negative & always criticising & always murmuring.

Why Do People Become Bitter?

"BITTERNESS" —Part II

When the Lord doesn't do things just the way some people want Him to, they get bitter against Him. They get upset & angry at the Lord because He didn't do just exactly what they wanted Him to do. They're obviously lacking in faith & not trusting God, that He knows what's best.



God's Word tells us to "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; & lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, & He shall direct thy paths."—Pro.3:5,6. But if you're looking at conditions instead of God, you're going to have problems! You've got to keep your eyes on God. You've got to look to the Lord. You've got to see God & "walk by faith, not by sight!"—2Cor.5:7. When Moses was having a rough time, we're told that "he endured, as seeing Him Who is invisible."—Heb.11:27.

Sometimes the Lord does things—or allows things to happen—in our lives to test our faith & draw us closer to Him. He loves us & is concerned about us & frequently allows things to happen to loosen our grip on the things of Earth & tighten our hold on Him & the Eternal Heavenly values. But if we don't receive the Lord's dealings with us, if we reject & refuse to accept them, then we become hardened, & even the Word, God's Truth, will lose its effect on us.



When people refuse to change or adapt to changes or forsakings or breakings, they sometimes get mean & bitter about not having what they used to have. They're unwilling to "take joyfully the spoiling of their goods" (Heb.10:34), to take their losses & learn the lessons from it that God is trying to teach them.



I'M SORRY I WAS SO AWFUL TO YOU YESTERDAY! I WAS GOING THROUGH A TRIAL ABOUT FORSAKING SOMEONE, BUT I NEED TO JUST FORGET THE PAST!



Tough trials & tests can either melt you or harden you!—Which is why you've got to watch out & "look diligently" that they don't harden you & make you bitter & hateful! If you will let the trials humble you & melt you, you'll be a lot happier, & you'll find the Lord's Love in a new & closer way. But if you, in pride, harden your heart & say with "Invictus"—"I am the Captain of my fate, I am the Master of my soul! My head is bloody but unbowed," you will wind up sorely off the track & become a great disappointment to God!

Pride is what causes people to be bitter! It's because of pride that people become bitter instead of yielding & becoming broken & soft through their trials. Pride is why they refuse to "bow" to the Lord & surrender their all to Him!

So bitterness is a form of pride. People who are bitter usually feel that someone—either God or Man—has treated them unfairly. They're bitter because they feel like they deserve to be treated better. They feel they've been mistreated, abused, they don't deserve what they're getting. They feel they're better than that.



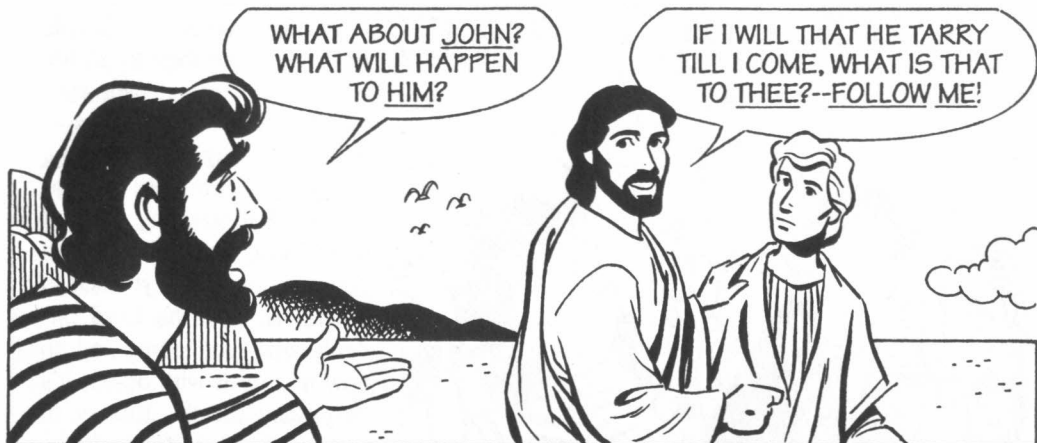


Another reason that people get bitter about their lot in life is because they get their eyes off of the Lord & on others.— And they begin “comparing themselves among themselves,” & in so doing, “are not wise!”—2Cor.10:12. When you start comparing yourself to others, & how the Lord has dealt with you compared to how he’s dealt with others, it’s very easy for the Enemy to tempt you with jealousy, bitterness, doubts etc.

For example, say the Lord’s required you to make a great sacrifice of loved ones or ministry, in order for you to continue growing & being fruitful in His Service. If you unwisely compare your situation to someone else who hasn’t been required to make the same sacrifice that you were, you could easily begin to feel discontented & resentful.—“How come I had to give up all of this & that, & they didn’t?”



The thing that people fail to realise when they fall into this pit of comparing themselves to others is that the Lord handles all of us differently.—And what’s good for you, may not be good for someone else! The Lord knows what’s best for us, so He gives us all what He knows will help us each to grow the most & learn the particular lessons He is trying to teach us.



When dear Apostle Peter was told by the Lord that he would suffer a martyr's death, he asked Jesus, "What about John, what will happen to him?" Jesus gently chided him not to worry about John & replied, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?—Follow thou Me!"—Jn.21:22. How the Lord deals with others isn't really your concern, "What is that to thee?" "Every man shall give account of himself to God!"—Rom.14:12.



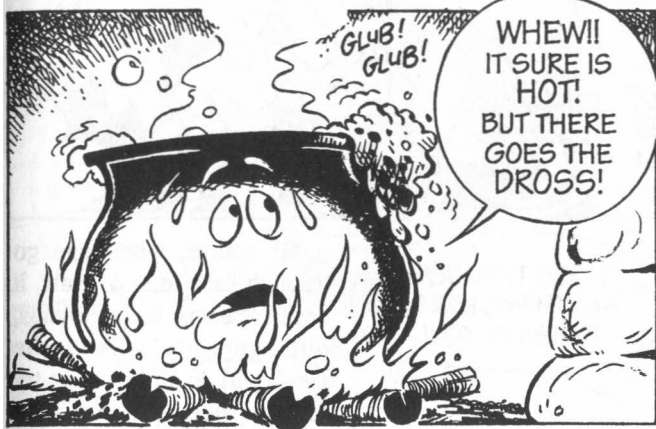
Some people's problems with bitterness go a long way back. Because they refused to humble themselves & yield & accept what God was trying to do in their lives, & they refused to forgive & forget whatever anyone did to them, that little root of resentment that began growing in their hearts long ago, continues to grow & grow. And after a while, it becomes a big tree!

To stubbornly refuse to accept God's dealings in your life is to "suffer so many things in vain."—Gal.3:4. How sad to go through big trials & testings & not learn the lessons God is trying to teach you from them. His Word says, "No chastening for the present seems to be joyous, but grievous, nevertheless afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."—Heb. 12:11. But sad to say, everybody's trials don't always yield the "peaceable fruit of righteousness." Sometimes they end up being bitter because they refused to be "exercised" thereby, & they won't learn their lesson!



FIERY TRIALS: WILL THEY MAKE YOU BITTER OR BETTER?

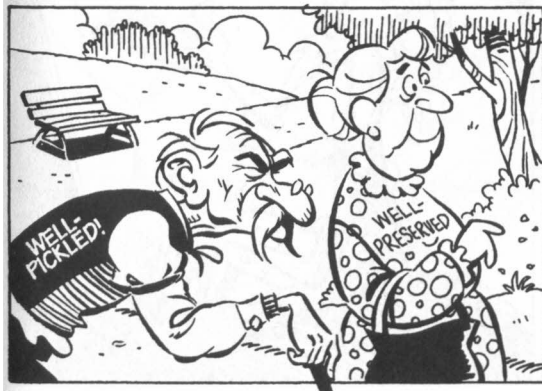
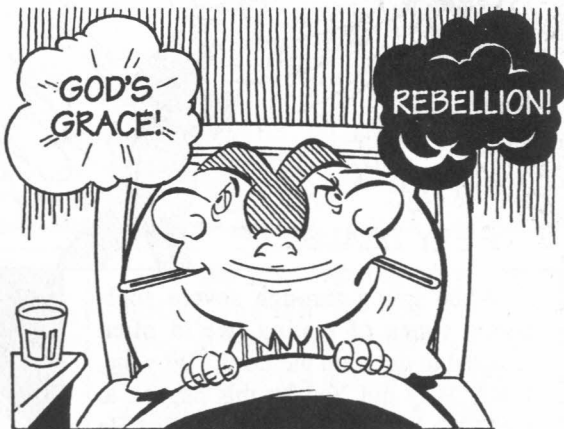
"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you. That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise & honour & glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."—1Pet.4:12; 1:7.



The Lord sometimes lets things happen that we don't understand to test us & try us. He places us in the refining fires of His trials & testings to bring us to a boil, so all the scum & dross come to the surface & can be purged out. That's what the fire's for—to bring out the meanness in us & to get rid of it.

Suffering is God's catalyst, God's test tube. It either reveals that we have already got the grace to take it by faith, or it helps to turn us to grace & cause us to call upon God & to seek His mercy & His Love & His deliverance. Of course, in some cases, suffering can cause people who are rebellious & unyielded to the Lord to rebel all the more!

Suffering makes you either sweet or bitter, one or the other, one extreme or the other.—It's up to you. It will either humble you or harden you.



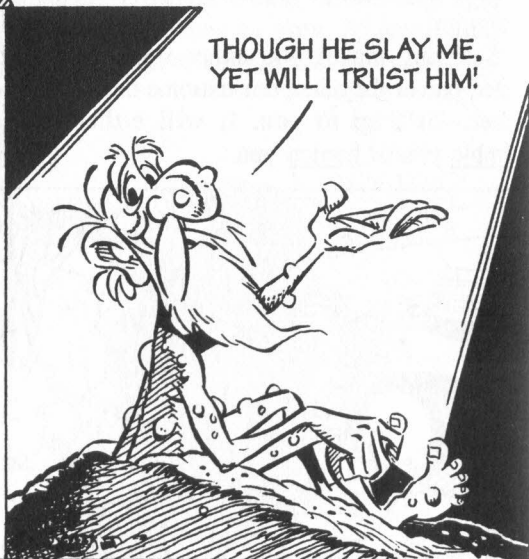
You can often see this in older people. As the years pass by, people go one way or the other, there's no standing still. They get more mellow & mild, soft & more tender, or they get harder, one or the other. My mother used to say that some old people are well-preserved, & others are just well-pickled!—They've gotten so sour & dour* & miserable & unhappy. (*dour = a silent, gloomy, stern look)

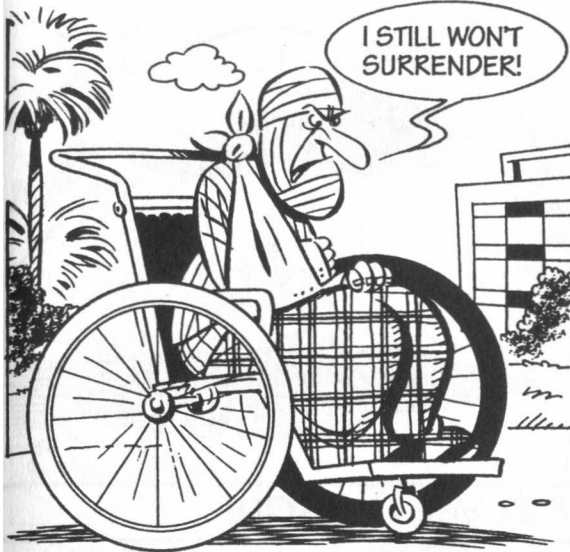
The sorrow, the suffering, the sacrifice & sadness you go through will bring out the best in you—sweetness, compassion, tenderness, brokenness, love & concern for others—if you love the Lord & turn to Him when you go through such trials. He says, “Let them that suffer according to the Will of God commit the keeping of their souls to Him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.”—1Pet.4:19.



Of course, when you go through such tests & trials, it never “seems to be joyous, but grievous.”—And the Devil will do all he can to try to convince you that God doesn't love you & that He doesn't answer prayer!—But what's really happening is that the Lord is letting your faith be tested, to see how much you really love the Lord & what price you're willing to pay to serve Him!

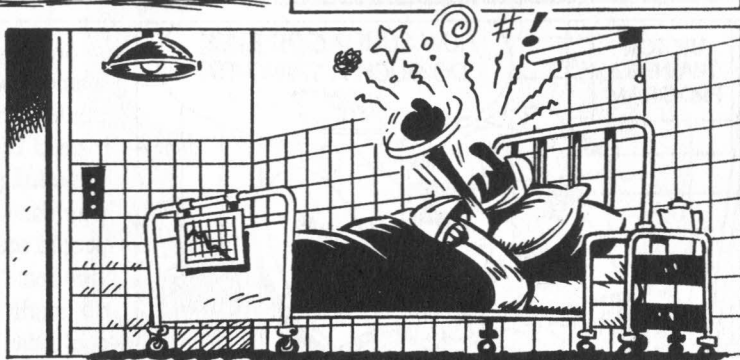
When going through severe soul-trying times of testing, we're often tempted to question the Lord, “Why me, Lord? Why did You let this happen to me?” We know from His Word that He allows such trials to test our faith & to test our love, just like He did with Job. Such tests actually strengthen your faith & cause you to love & believe in God no matter what, to not doubt no matter what happens.—As Job finally said, “Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him!”—Job 13:15. And when he finally took a stand like that, he got the victory. The Devil gave up & saw he couldn't make Job quit, even if he killed him.





But some people really have to go through a lot before they humble themselves & receive God's dealings with them. In fact, some people never seem to get the point & they never allow themselves to get humbled & they never surrender their own stubborn will & proud independent spirit to God! They never cry out to the Lord for deliverance. They never admit that they can't make it on their own. They just never give up trying to do things their own way, they never ever say "Uncle!" or "Lord, You win, I surrender!"

Some people even get mad at God for dealing with them! They get mad & mean & they curse God & wind up in an even worse state than they were before He tested them or tried to straighten them out!



But the Lord won't force you to humble yourself & yield & draw closer to Him! The breaking process depends upon you & your yieldedness & willingness to be made willing! So try to take your testings & your temptations without sin & without rebellion, murmuring or bitterness! The Lord promises that He will never give you more than you're able to bear, & that He will always make a way of escape. (1Cor.10:13.) He'll somehow make it easier for you or at least help you to bear it. So "harden not your heart" but "cast thy burden upon the Lord, & He shall sustain thee!"—Heb.3:8; Ps.55:22.

Things will be a lot easier for you if you will just accept what the Lord is trying to do in your life, if you will receive the breakings & the chastisements & the lessons, if you don't fight against them, if you'll just seek the Lord & yield to Him. Remember, He loves you, & whatever He does to you, His Own child, He does it in love.—For your good. So for God's sake, & your own sake, "Humble yourself therefore under the mighty hand of God" (1Pet.5:6), & don't get hardened & bitter! Get better & not bitter!—Amen?



PUTTING THE BLAME ON GOD!



Self-righteous people always blame God for their problems & troubles instead of themselves, or instead of accepting the trials as something that God has sent their way for whatever reason. Some people are so self-righteous they wonder, "How could God ever do such a thing to me? How could the Lord treat me this way when I'm so good to Him?" They resent God's dealings with them.

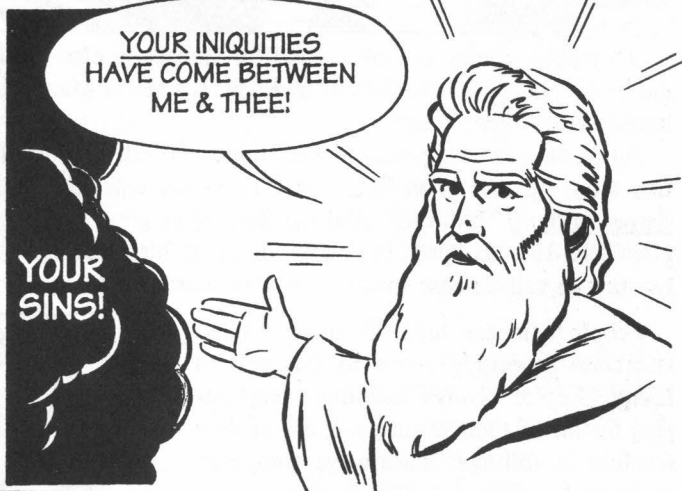
That is actually one of the worst sins of all, to even have the slightest idea that you're a little bit more righteous than God, that God shouldn't have done this or that to you! That kind of attitude is the very seed & the very root of murmuring! When you question the Lord & murmur like that, what you're really saying is that you're more righteous than God!—Or others!—That if you were boss, you wouldn't have let such a thing happen, & you would have done better & you wouldn't have done this or you wouldn't have done that!





When facing any kind of a crisis or dilemma, test, trial, tribulation, privation, persecution, the first thing a lot of people do is pray & say, "What's the matter, Lord?"—And when some people say that, what they really mean is, "What's the matter with You, God? How come You failed me?" Whereas what we should really pray is, "What's the matter with me, Lord? Is there something wrong with what I'm doing? Am I displeasing You in any way?—Am I failing or disobeying You in any way? Am I out of Your Will in any way? First of all, what's the matter with me, Lord, or my situation? What's wrong?—Or are You just testing me?"

Contrary to what a lot of people seem to think when they start having problems & trials, there's nothing wrong with God! There's nothing the matter with Him, nor His Love, nor His dealings with His children! The problem is usually with us.—As He says in His Word, "Your iniquities have separated & come between you & your God, & your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear."—Isa.59:2.



He says, "I'm not deaf that I can't hear your prayers, I'm listening!—And My arm isn't short or weak that it can't save & help you. The trouble is not Up Here, it's down there with you!"—With us, not God! So don't blame God & get upset at Him because of your troubles & your problems & your crises & your difficulties! It's not God's fault! There's nothing wrong with God! "Let every man be found a liar, but God be found true!"—Rom.3:4.

PUTTING THE BLAME ON OTHERS!

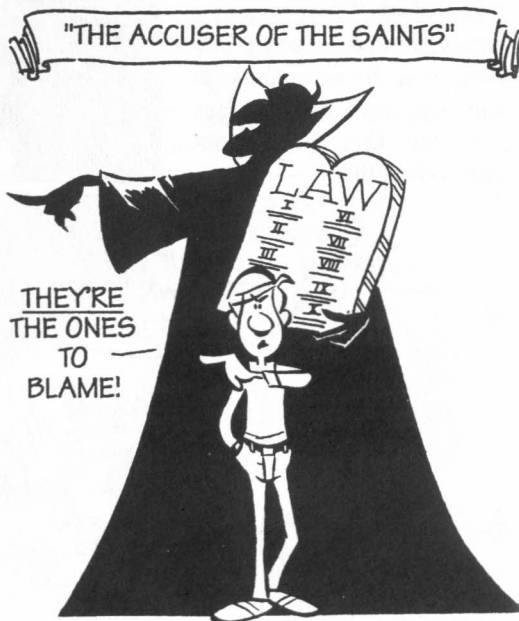


It's human nature to look around for somebody else to blame our problems on. "Passing the buck" started in the Garden of Eden. It's sinful Man's first line of defense when he's in trouble.—To blame others.

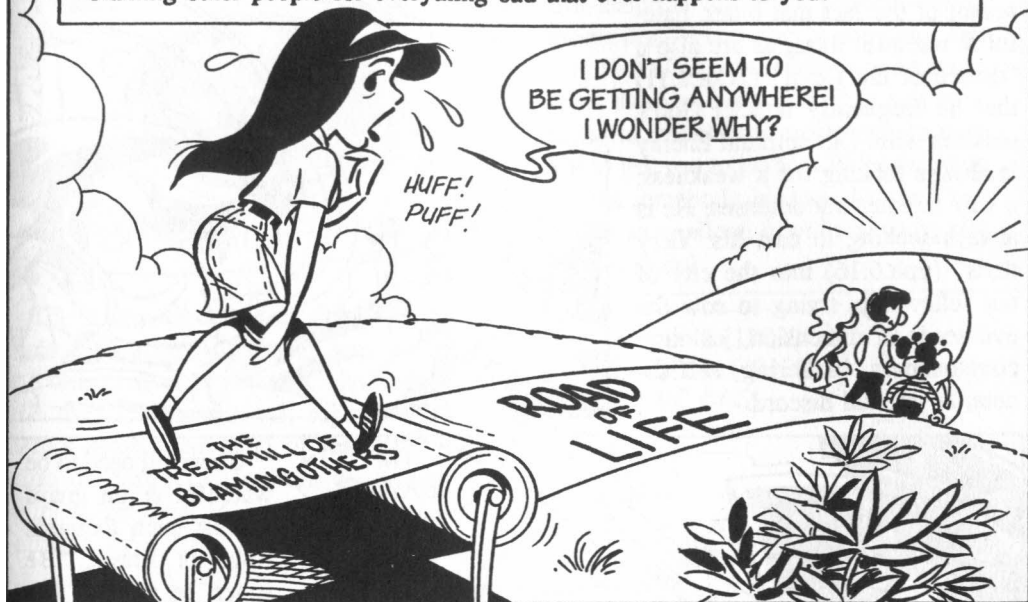
Just look what happened in the Garden of Eden: When they got caught in their sin, the first thing Adam said to God was, "It was my wife, she did it!" Then Eve said, "It was the Serpent's fault, he did it!" And the Serpent as good as said, "It was God, it's all His fault!" (Gen.3:12-13.) To "pass the buck" & try to blame things on others is an almost automatic reaction & self-defense mechanism with most people.

People who are bitter & have a bitter spirit are especially prone to this sort of thing. They're always blaming everybody else for all of their mistakes & all of their troubles & failings. It's always somebody else's fault.

If you have a problem or weakness along these lines, you'd be wise to remember that the Devil is the "Accuser of the Saints" (Rev. 12:10), & that's his own tactic to always try to get you to blame your problems on everybody else! "Why me, Lord? I didn't do it, they did it to me! It wasn't my fault, it's his fault, her fault! They're the ones to blame! They're the ones who made me do it!" Some people find it so easy & convenient to blame all their troubles on somebody else!—"It's that awful Hell of a person I have to live with or that horrible leader I have to work under"—or this one or that one!



But if you won't accept the responsibility for your own problems & you continually blame them on others, you're just going to go through your entire life never getting the victory or making any progress! How can you ever grow spiritually or learn any lessons from the Lord when you're self-righteously blaming other people for everything bad that ever happens to you?



Even if you feel that you have been genuinely mistreated or misjudged or whatever by others, instead of sulking & pouting & licking your wounds, you might find it's very profitable to look a little deeper & see if the Lord is trying to get through to you on some other point or issue that's even more serious than whatever it is you feel so mistreated or misunderstood about! Don't be too quick to judge & blame others when you might need to work on the beam in your own eye, & not be so concerned about the mote in your brother's eye. Amen?

BITTER & HATEFUL THOUGHTS: THE DEVIL'S EVIL SEEDS!

Although "evil thoughts proceed out of the heart of men" (Mk.7:21), we should not be ignorant of the fact that bitter, hateful & resentful thoughts are also a "device of the Devil" (2Cor.2:11) that he frequently attacks God's children with. Our spiritual Enemy is always looking for a weakness, a way to enter our defenses. He is always seeking to cast his "fiery darts" (Eph.6:16) into the city of our fellowship, trying to sow the evil seeds of dissension, jealousy, covetousness, bickering, selfishness, & internal discord.

BITTER, HATEFUL
& RESENTFUL
THOUGHTS!

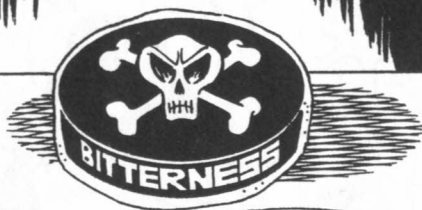


So we all need to be watchful & on guard against such thoughts towards others. "Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the Devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."—1Pe1.5:8.

When the Enemy is out to poison & "defile" you with bitter & hateful thoughts, he's usually very subtle about it. He tries to make his poison look very attractive, offering it to you as something that you want to take. The Devil almost always sugar-coats his pills with enough truth to trick people who don't know better than believing & swallowing them.



THE DEVIL'S BITTER PILL!

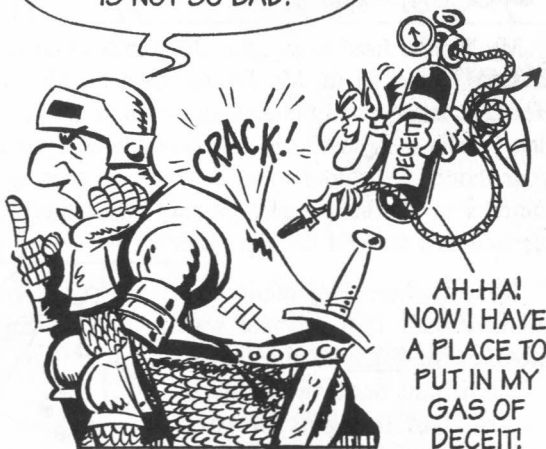


WITH
A SUGAR-COATING OF TRUTH!

When I was a little boy, when they gave you pills & capsules, they started to put a coat of candy on the outside so the children would be willing to swallow them, because they thought it was candy. But inside it was bitter, horrible-tasting medicine.—And that's the way the Devil's lies are; no matter how he sugar coats them to tempt you or to suit your taste, no matter how much truth he may use to get you to harbour bitter thoughts against somebody, his thoughts are a bitter pill to swallow, & will make you bitter if you do!

That's why it's extremely dangerous to allow even a little bitterness, resentment or a critical spirit to creep in. The Enemy will use it as a channel, especially if there's some motivation of jealousy or pride or desire to vindicate or avenge yourself, or even to just feel sorry for yourself, or excuse yourself. You may think, "Oh, just this one little tiny seed, just this little bit of a grudge or gripe against them, it's not so bad.—Besides, they deserve it!" But that little crack in your spiritual armour is where the Devil will begin to seep in, & his gas of deceit then begins to poison your mind because you've opened the door to him, & pretty soon you're totally off the track!

JUST THIS ONE LITTLE
GRUDGE AGAINST THEM
IS NOT SO BAD!



As long as you leave a window open, you're not going to get rid of a roomful of flies. Likewise, you're not going to get rid of the Devil & his annoyances until you force them out & close the door or the windows so they can't come back in! But as long as you're harbouring bitterness or hatred in your life, that just lets the Enemy in, it's leaving the door wide open.



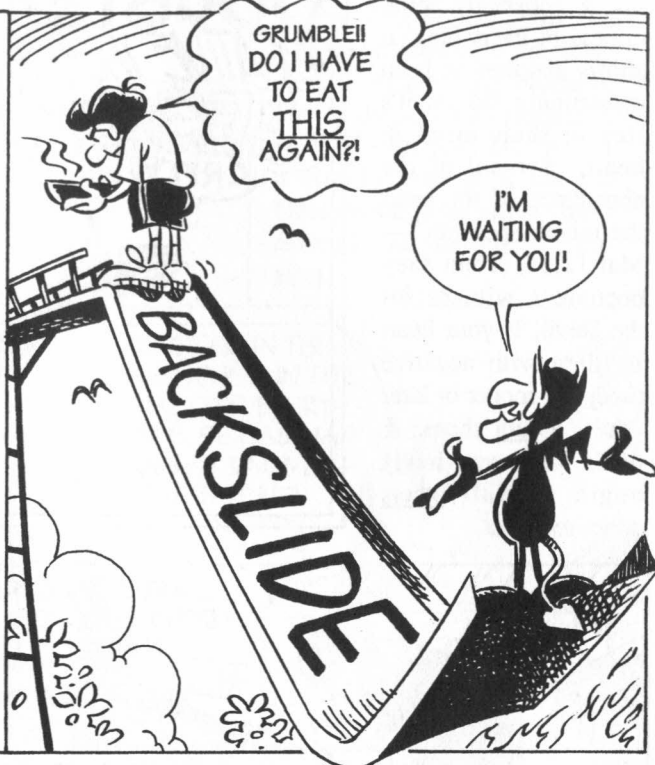
My Mother used to say, the Devil knocks on some people's door & they just throw it open & say, "Come on in, Mr. Devil, come in, Mrs. Devil & all your little doubts & doubtlets! Here are some comfy chairs, sit down & talk to me & let's have a nice visit, let's hear all that you have to say!" Instead of that, when you first hear the Enemy's knock at the door in your thoughts, in your mind & heart, as soon as you recognise who it is, you should slam the door in his face so quick it cuts his nose off! You shouldn't even listen to his first doubt, his first evil thought or "fiery dart"!

That's where Eve made her mistake. Her first mistake was stopping to listen to the Devil. When he puts negative or critical or doubtful thoughts in your mind, don't even listen. Resist him! Rebuke him in Jesus' name & start praising God & thanking the Lord for all your blessings! Get off the Devil's negative channel & think of the positive! When you stop to listen, pretty soon you'll be believing him. So don't listen to him at all!—"Neither give place to the Devil!"—Eph.4:27. Listen to Jesus, read His Word, study & memorise it & praise the Lord, & the Enemy will flee!



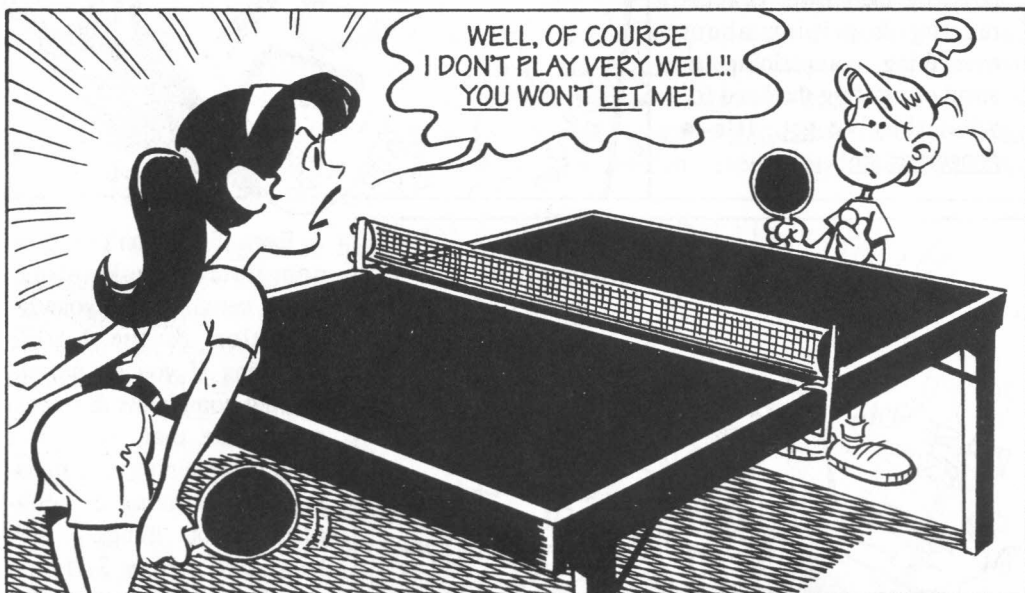
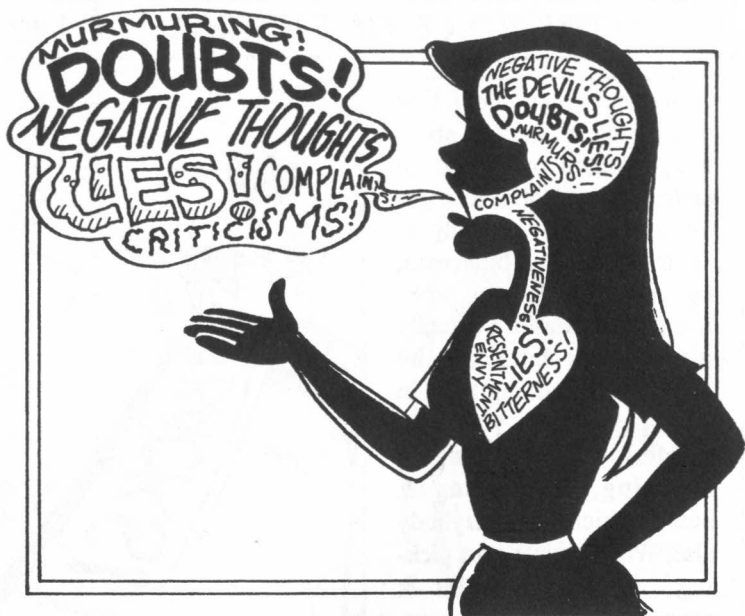
THE VOICE OF BITTERNESS: MURMURING!

Whenever you feel like murmuring & griping about things, watch out! Such an unthankful, doubtful & negative attitude may not only be an indication of bitterness, but of backsliding as well! Even if you haven't actually turned your back on the Lord, you're turning back in your heart when you start yielding to that feeling of doubting, murmuring & being critical of everybody else. When people start picking out others' faults & covering their own, & murmuring & griping about everything, complaining instead of praising the Lord for what they've got, it's a dangerous sin!



Even if you don't wind up completely backsliding, you'll certainly lose your inspiration & the Lord's anointing if you go around voicing complaints & resentments like that. You can't keep complaining & criticising & murmuring & belly-aching about things & still keep God's Holy Spirit on you for your job, you just can't do it. You'll wind up like Saul, the Spirit left him, & he became so damned hardened of heart & cold, he didn't even know it was gone! He didn't even know he had lost it.

When someone's going around murmuring & constantly being critical of everything, it shows that they've been entertaining the Devil's lies in their mind & heart, "for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."—Mat.12:34. Then they become a witness for the Devil. If your heart is filled with negative thoughts, sooner or later you'll mouth them, & that's when you really begin to pull others down too.

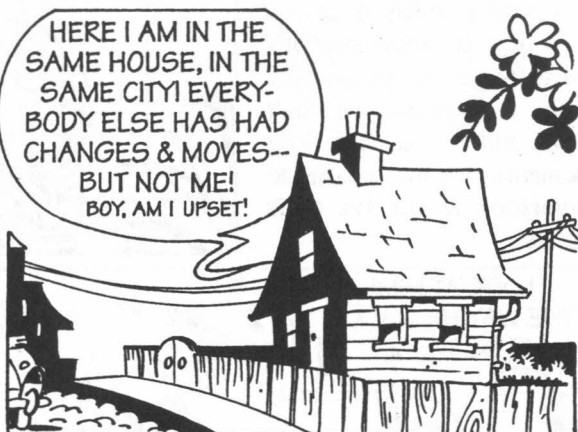


One reason that people complain & bellyache & criticise is because they know that they're not making it themselves & that they haven't got the victory.—They know that they're failing because of their own unyieldedness or rebelliousness. So rather than really trying to make it & stop failing & do better, they start looking around for something to justify themselves, to excuse themselves & vindicate themselves. So they frequently accuse & blame everybody else for their own faults & failures, & will freely criticise everybody else but themselves.



Such murmuring is virtually the voice of the Enemy & his doubts, & a critical spirit like that sows dissension, disunity & discord amongst brethren, one of the seven abominations to God!—Pro.6:16-19. So God certainly won't—& can't—bless people who allow themselves to fall into such a sorry state.

In fact, if you sin by murmuring against God, & complaining about your lot, complaining about the circumstances & conditions under which you're living, & griping & murmuring against God or your Shepherds or your brethren, God may just let you stay there much longer than He'd originally planned!—Like He did to the Children of Israel when they murmured against Him!—Until you learn to be thankful & patient! "Tribulation worketh patience!"—Rom.5:3.



No matter how great your trial may be, no matter how difficult your difficulty may be, no matter how bad it may be, if you just have faith to trust God to bring you out of that difficulty you won't murmur & complain! You'll rejoice & praise God & thank Him, even for the trial because you know He is able to save & deliver you!—And He will! PTL!

How To Avoid Bitterness!

"BITTERNESS" —Part III

LOVE IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING!

The Bible tells us, "Above all things, have fervent love among yourselves; for love shall cover the multitude of sins."—1Pet.4:8. Love even loves the unlovely, & casts a veil over countless sins! It's hard for you to see anything good in someone you don't love. But if you really love someone, it's much easier to overlook & forgive their faults.



If you have the Lord's Love & are loving towards others, you'll try to look on the bright side, & try to be optimistic & bring out the good things about people & see their good points. If you're trying to be loving & kind to people, you won't be harsh or critical or resentful towards them. But if you don't love them, they won't even be able to walk across the floor without your finding fault with the way they do it!

When you have real love for others, it's a lot easier for you to let things pass. In school they call it passing when you graduate from one grade to the next. When you're travelling along in a car, you know you're moving because you're passing things! That's how you know you're making progress, because you're letting things pass.

I CAN TELL
WE'RE GETTING
SOMEWHERE
BECAUSE WE'RE
PASSING THINGS!



SO YOU'RE
THE ONE WHO
STOLE
MY BROOM!

I DIDN'T STEAL
IT! LORD, HELP
ME NOT TO GET
UPSET!

Well, the same thing is true in your spiritual life. When you start letting things pass, when you don't worry so much about things, that shows that you're making progress. When you don't hold it against somebody for some idle remark or something foolish that they did, something they said, when you don't get hypersensitive & all upset about it & hold it against them, then you're passing things. "Love covereth a multitude of sins" (1Pet.4:8), & will give you the grace & power to just let things pass, to forgive others as you know that you yourself need to be forgiven.

This verse from my Mother's poem,
"Let It Pass," brings this out very clearly:

Truly great folks never stoop
To answer petty things;
The unkind word, the bitter cut
That rankles* deep & stings.
They are too big to notice them,
They simply pass them by,
And even with a smile sometimes
Or twinkle in the eye.
For they have found that after all
'Twas better in the end
To meet it with a smile, & then,
Just let it pass, my friend.

(*rankles: gives pain)

JUST
LET IT PASS,
MY FRIEND!

UNKIND
WORDS

PETTY
THINGS

The Lord & His Love are the antidote for the poison of bitterness & hate. The Lord & His Holy Spirit always rebuke the Devil, the Accuser of the Saints, & resist him. And instead of emphasising the negative & accusing others, the Lord's Spirit will point out the good things about others. When we're staying close to the Lord, He is faithful to show us that nobody's perfect, including ourselves; we're all human, & that always helps us to have love & mercy & to forgive others all the more because we know we're not perfect either.



We all must ask the Lord in all humility to help us have mercy on others, knowing that we ourselves must also be forgiven for many sins. Remembering continually what sinners we are & how many mistakes we've made helps greatly to keep us humble & to avoid that spirit of self-righteous pride which causes us to criticise & condemn others. We need to "forgive one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven us."—Eph.4:32. Pray for love!

If you'll just forget yourself & think more about others, & really try to help & pray for & love them, you'll find that will solve almost all of your problems! If you get your mind off yourself & on others you'll find that this is what will bring you true joy & happiness. That's the formula for finding joy: Put Jesus first, then Others, & then You!—J.O.Y.!

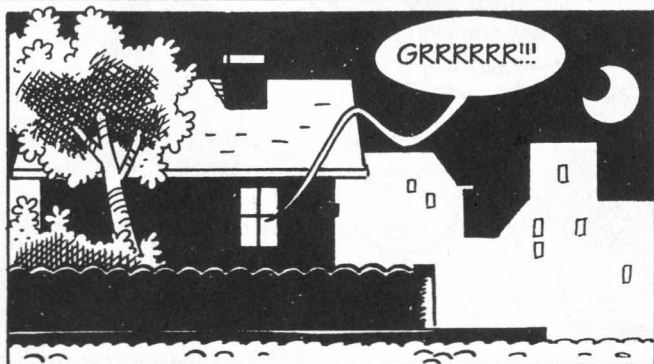


"CONFESS YOUR FAULTS ONE TO ANOTHER!"—JAMES 5:16



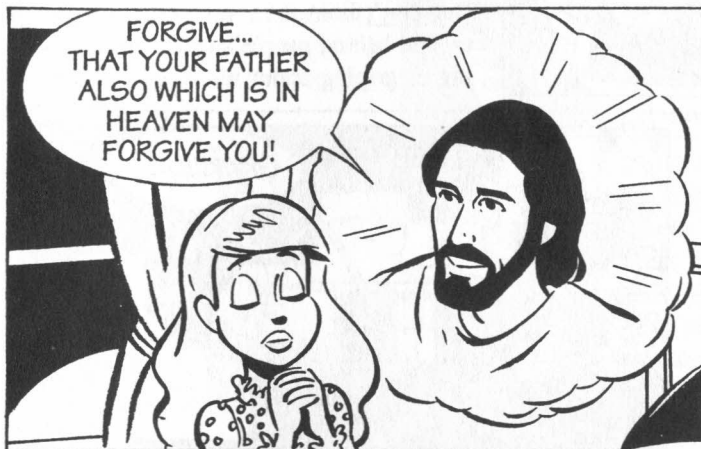
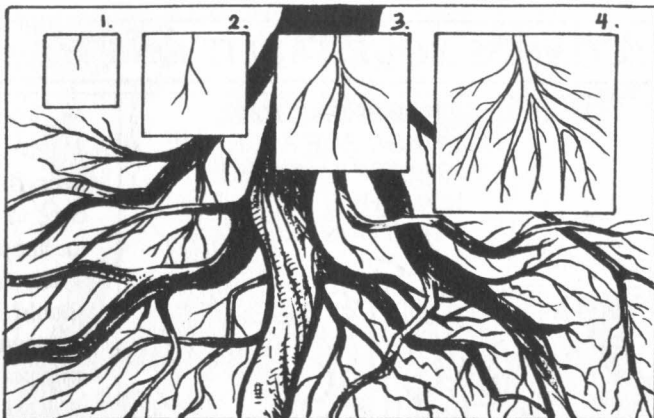
Even when you're serving the Lord & doing your best for Him, everything's not always perfect, & once in awhile a few things are bound to happen that you don't like. But when things like that happen, you should try to get it straightened out between you & the person it happened with, or between you & the Lord. Or at least tell your Shepherds about it. But don't hold it in your heart or go around behind people's backs murmuring & griping about it!

The Lord knows that it will only hurt you & drag you down if you hold on to such "offences."—That's why He says, "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath."—Eph.4:26. If you go to bed mad & take your anger & frustration with you when you go to sleep, it just makes it last longer.



Jesus made it very clear what you're supposed to do when you're hurt or offended or upset with someone. He said, "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go & tell him his fault between thee & him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother."—Mat.18:15. And if you're the offending party, you're still supposed to go to your brother: "Confess your faults one to another, & pray one for another, that ye may be healed."—Jam.5:16. Of course, when going to someone about any such "oughts," be sure to ask the Lord to help you go in true love & humility, & be willing & open to hear any grievances or "oughts" that may be on their hearts.

But if you're too proud to admit it when you're upset at someone, if you're too proud to confess it & are unwilling to humbly ask for forgiveness & seek the Lord's solution, it can easily become a little root of bitterness in your heart. It usually starts just like a little tiny fiber, a tiny root, but it can grow & eat & eat away at you until finally it will devour you!— Like a cancer!



The Lord knows what trouble such “oughts” & offences can cause us if we harbour them in our hearts. This is why He said, “And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought (a grudge) against any: that your Father also which is in Heaven may forgive you your trespasses.”— Mk.11:25.

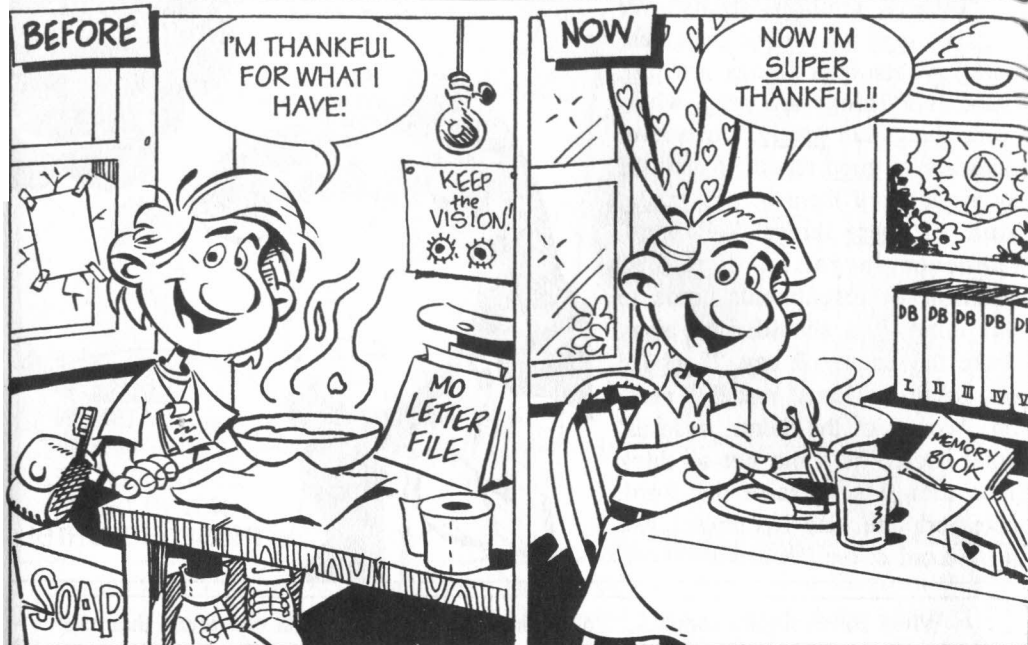
The Lord not only tells us to make sure that we're not “holding a grudge” against anyone, but He also tells us that if we feel that someone is holding a grudge against us, we should do all we can to straighten that out as well. “Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, & there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, & go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, & then come & offer thy gift.”— Mat. 5:23,24.

I'M SORRY I SAID THOSE THINGS-- PLEASE FORGIVE ME!



So it's very important for you to get rid of those pent-up negative emotions. You need to get rid of them & to be humble & to confess when you need help or prayer.

KEEP A POSITIVE & THANKFUL OUTLOOK!



One of the greatest things in the World that anyone can learn is to be content in whatsoever state they're in, whether it's to be abounding or to be in want.—Phil.4:11,12. That's certainly something that we've learned throughout our many years of serving the Lord. We've lived as poor as can be sometimes, but it seems like in recent years we've really abounded compared to how little we had before. We just learn to take the bitter with the sweet, whatever the Lord gives. We don't let circumstances cause us to become bitter!



If you'd get into the habit of thanking God more for your blessings, your many many blessings, instead of complaining about the few tiny little infinitesimal problems or trials you may have, maybe the Lord would deliver you from those too! But when we don't look at anything but the button off of Mutt's vest instead of all the nice fine clothes & the bright red necktie, no wonder the Lord must get angry! (See ML#1492; Num.11:1; 1Cor.10:10!)

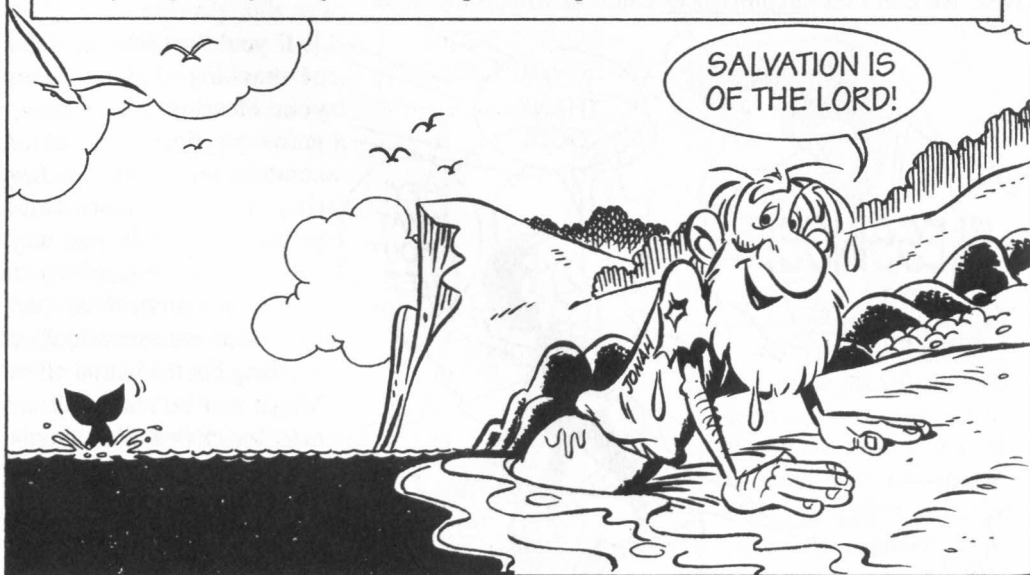
The Lord tells us that we shouldn't think about those negative things at all! "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, & if there be any praise, think on these things!"—Phil.4:8. Whenever negative thoughts, criticisms or resentments come to your mind, you should right away rebuke the Enemy & say, "I rebuke you, Satan, in Jesus' name! I resist you, Accuser of the Saints, in Jesus' name! Jesus, help me not to think those thoughts!" Praise the Lord; quote Scripture, sing His praises, call on the Lord & the Devil will flee! !



NEGATIVE THOUGHTS!

I REBUKE
YOU, SATAN, IN
JESUS' NAME!
LORD, HELP ME
NOT TO THINK
THOSE THOUGHTS!

When Jonah finally shouted, "Salvation is of the Lord!", that old whale that had swallowed him just couldn't take it, & he spit him up! (Jon.2:9,10.) So even if God lets the Devil send along a whale-of-a-lot of trouble to swallow you up, you've just got to keep shouting & praising the Lord! The Devil can't stand praise, & the trouble can't stand it, & God will deliver you! But if you get all down in the dumps & go around griping & bellyaching & murmuring & complaining & doubting & everything else, you'll just sink deeper & deeper to the bottom of the sea.



SALVATION IS
OF THE LORD!



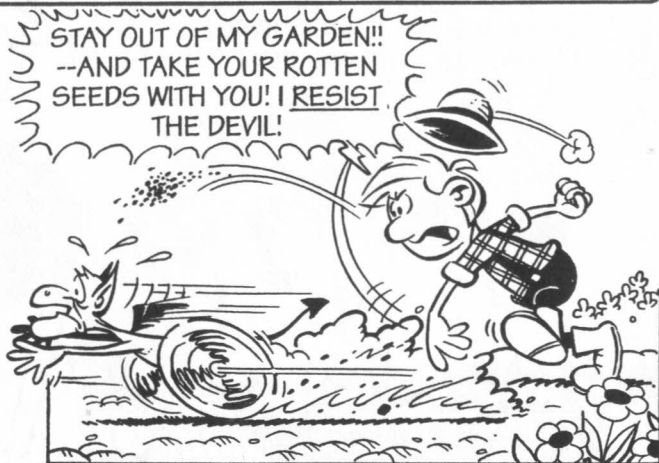
Ask the Lord to help you be content & thankful for your place in His Kingdom & in His Family. Thank God & praise Him for your job & your place in His Family, whatever it is! If you're mopping floors or cleaning toilets or cooking food or running errands or doing maintenance work, whatever it is, thank God that you're in the house of the Lord & you're doing it for Jesus! "I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of the Lord than to dwell in the tents of wickedness!"—Psa.84:10.



So whether abounding or abasing, we should be thankful for whatever we've got, & praise & thank God for it, because there's nothing any better! The very "worst" things in our life for the Lord are far better than the very best things the ungodly System has to offer! We're blessed with the best life in the World, the best work in the World, the best Love in the World, & the best Lord in the World—Out-of-this-World! Nothing could be better than God's Love & God's Word & God's Work & God's workers & their fellowship, & to be able to live & work together in God's Kingdom for Him & for souls!—There's nothing better in this whole World, PTL! And if we're not happy enough now, when we see the eternal results of our labours Over There, we'll certainly be happy enough then!

GUARD YOUR THOUGHTS!

The easiest way to prevent something from growing in your garden is to not let it get sown or planted there in the first place! And the best way to prevent any roots of bitterness from springing up in your life is to not let any bitter, critical or negative seeds find their way into the garden of your mind & heart.—Which means you've got to guard your thoughts & resist the Devil when he tries to sow his evil seeds & thoughts in your mind!



...AND LET ME GIVE YOU SOME MORE DEPRESSING THOUGHTS!



We all go through experiences sometimes where we listen to the Enemy instead of the Lord. In fact, the Lord lets us hear the Devil's voice & thoughts sometimes—even if it's only a test to see if we will receive or reject it.

Not all voices are of God, & you must learn to "try the spirits" (1Jn.4:1) to make sure that what you're hearing is of the Lord. If it's not according to His Word, or causes you to be discontent or bitter, dissatisfied or unhappy or critical of yourself or others—these things are not of the Lord, & you must rebuke the Enemy in Jesus' name when he tempts you with these kinds of negative thoughts.

I REBUKE YOU & YOUR NEGATIVE THOUGHTS, IN JESUS' NAME!!





A lot of people feel bad & think that they must be terribly wicked because they think an unloving or sinful thought. But as my Mother used to say, "Even though you can't keep the birds from flying over your head, you can keep them from making a nest in your hair!" You can't keep the Devil from tempting you & casting his "fiery darts" at you & talking to you, but you don't have to talk back to him or open the door & invite him & all his little devils & doubts in!

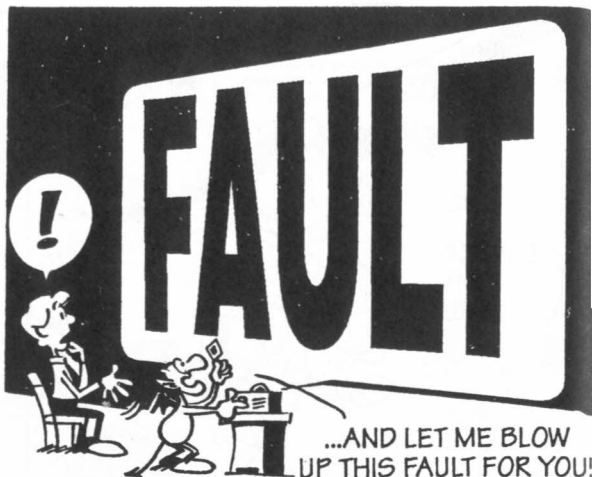
You can militantly fight against even thinking about the critical, hateful, unkind, doubtful or fearful thoughts that the Enemy may attack or tempt you with! Resist all such thoughts & think positively! Think out loud by either quoting Scriptures or singing hymns or good Gospel songs. You can't very well quote Scripture & talk positively or sing out loud & have those other negative thoughts going through your head at the same time!



When a room is dark, you don't go around trying to chase the darkness out of the room.—You just let the light in & the light chases out the dark! So the way to get rid of temptations & negative thoughts is to think of good things, Godly things. Read your Bible, pray, think about Jesus, & then you don't even have time to think the other thoughts.—Which is why Isaiah says, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee."—Isa.26:3. If you keep your mind on Jesus, you don't have time to think about these other things!—Sing!

Fill your mind with the wonderful, powerful Word of God & you won't have room for that darkness! Fill your mind with the Light of God's Word & the darkness will flee!

When you're tempted to think negative or resentful or critical or hateful thoughts against your brothers or sisters, remember that the Devil is the "Accuser of the Saints," & he will always try to accuse others & exaggerate their faults to you. He will even take innocent, unintentional remarks or acts & twist them & make them sound a lot worse than they really are.



So just say "I resist you, Satan, in Jesus' name! I resist you!" Because God's Word says if we resist the Enemy, he'll flee from us!—Jam.4:7. Once you recognise such thoughts as the voice of Satan, you can just brush them aside. "I refuse to listen to you any more! I'm not going to listen to a liar, a deceiver & a cheat!"

If you watch your thoughts & watch your words & fill your heart & mind with the Lord & His Word, you will be well-protected & fortified & surrounded by God's Angels of protection, His Guardian Angels, & you will be free from the Enemy's critical & confusing static & negative accusations & doubts. In all the things you do all day long, in whatever you may do, in every activity of life & everything you do or say or even think, ask the Lord to help you to be constantly on guard. You can monitor your thoughts, monitor your words & monitor your actions just like we monitor videos!—Then you can always choose the good & eschew the evil. (Rom.12:9.)



TAKE THINGS AS FROM THE LORD!—ROM.8:28



When you begin to acknowledge the Lord in all your ways & take Him into account on everything, then no matter how bad or rough or trying a situation may seem, you know that He is in control. You know that He loves you & that He will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able! (1Cor.10:13.) And if you know that you're His child & His hand is on your life, then how can you get bitter & offended at Him? You know "He doeth all things well" (Mk.7:37), & will never make a mistake in His dealings with you, His child whom He loves. Everything He does, He does in love.

If your eyes are on Jesus & you're "walking by faith & not by sight" (2Cor.5:7), then you're constantly aware that He—your great Shepherd—is with you & has everything under His control.—And this, of course, makes it much easier to "take" whatever He happens to send your way.



I KNOW THAT THE LORD IS ONLY TRYING TO MAKE ME BETTER THROUGH THESE TESTS!



He promises us, "All things work together for good to them that love God!"—Rom.8:28. When you really believe this verse, then you know that the Lord never lets seemingly bad things happen to you without any rhyme or reason whatsoever. He only allows such things to happen for a good reason.—Sometimes we've been bad & we need correction, or we've been good & He just wants to make us better through these tests. As I've often said, sometimes God lets things happen just to humble us, & later on He may let things happen to us again to see if we're still humble.

Nothing happens to you without the permission of God.—Or, I might add, your permission! In other words, sometimes you can get yourself into trouble by your own disobedience or unyieldedness to the Lord, by somehow stepping out of His Will. When this happens, God lets troubles befall us to teach us a lesson! So sometimes we get ourselves into fixes, & it's our own fault that we suffer the consequences.



The Lord often allows & uses people as His instruments to test us & do things that cause us problems because He is testing us to see what we're made of & how close we're going to stay to Him, how tightly we're going to cling to Him. He wants to see if any of these things will move us, & if our house is built on the Rock, Jesus Christ, & not on other people or leaders or circumstances. At the same time, He's trying to strengthen us.

When someone has mistreated us, if we really believe that the Lord loves us & is in control of our lives, can we say that God made a mistake, or even that He allowed a mistake to be made? In the final analysis, if you're going to blame someone for making a big mistake in your life, you've got to blame it on the Lord, right? If you really believe that the Lord is in control, then you've got to blame Him, right? If we don't believe that the Lord is in control & that the Lord is leading this outfit, then why are we even in the Family or serving the Lord at all?





There are lots of reasons why the Lord allows things that look like they're bad to happen in our lives, but He always does it for our good! If we don't believe that, then we're in the wrong outfit! We might as well give up & not even love the Lord or trust the Lord or serve the Lord at all if He is always making mistakes & He doesn't even know what's best! Who wants to serve a God like that? You've got to see the Lord's hand in your life, & you need to learn your lessons even from what may look like the "mistakes" or injustices of others, or whatever you're having a hard time accepting!—Then determine to serve the Lord in a much better, more dedicated & sacrificial way than ever before!

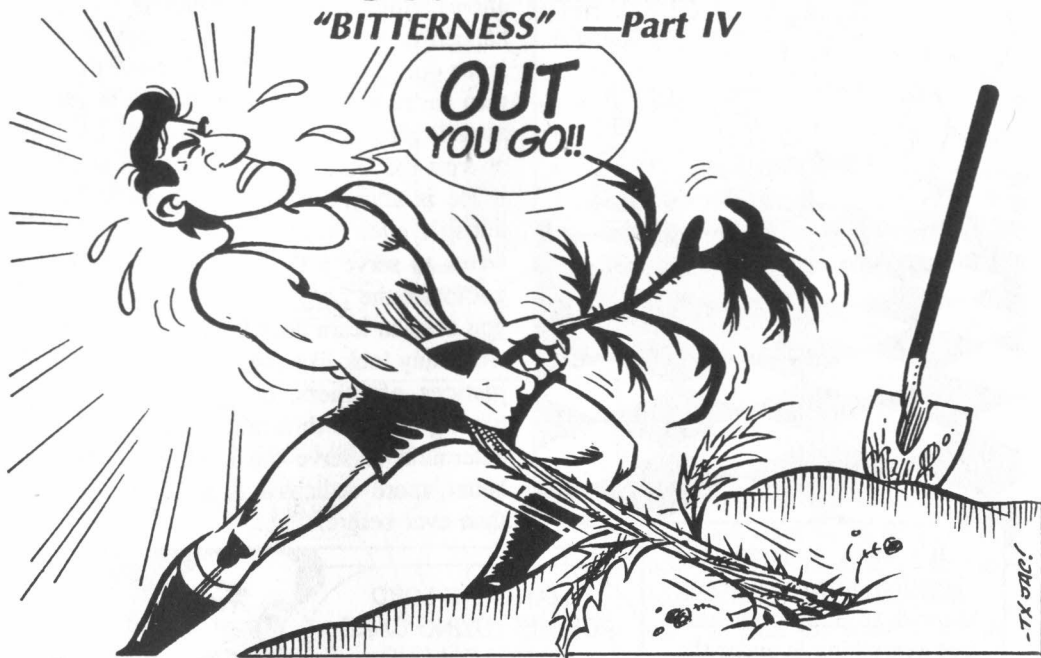
It's such a wonderful liberation when you really know & are fully persuaded that everything is under the Lord's control, His marvellous control! Nothing happens—not the things your leaders do, not even the things the Devil & his demons do—without the permission & the Will of God. The Enemy can't touch a hair of your head, he can't do a thing unless God allows it. This is why King David could say, "All things come of Thee," both the good & the bad!—1Chr.29:14.



So, thank the Lord for His loving care & marvellous control! Because we have the Lord & we have His Love & we have life & we have faith, therefore we have hope for better things, for the best, & we know that things are always going to turn out all right in the end. PTL!

How To Get Rid of Bitterness!

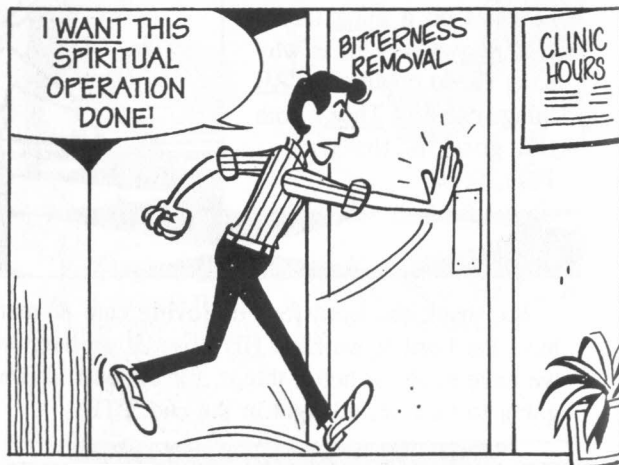
"BITTERNESS" —Part IV



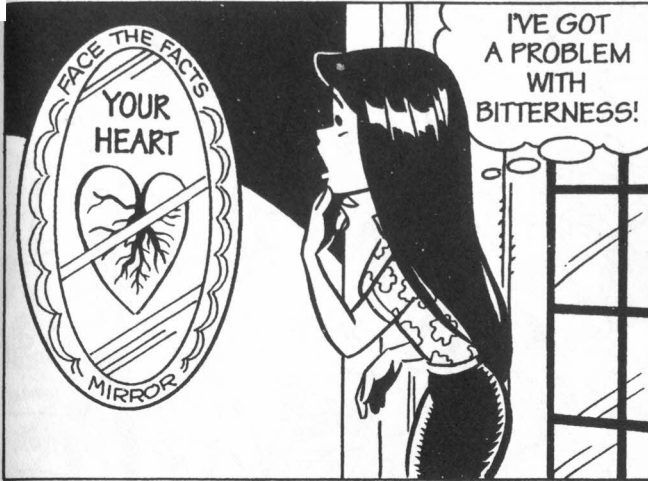
All right," you may say, "this counsel on how to avoid becoming bitter is fine & good, but what do I do if I'm already bitter, if I've already allowed a 'root of bitterness' to grow in my heart?—How do I get rid of it?"

Once God has pinned down a spiritual problem & given the answer & prescribed the cure, you then need to put it into effect.—And that's usually the hardest part, the spiritual operation. But in the case of a problem like bitterness, if you don't cut out the malignant root, it will kill you! Of course, rooting out can be painful, it's not a very easy job. If you've ever uprooted a plant you know what I mean. Sometimes it tears out some of the earth with it, like tearing out part of your heart.

It's up to you to decide to be or not to be a certain way. In getting victories over deep-rooted problems, a lot has to do with your own will, your own desire. You have to decide that you really want to change, because if you don't, you won't! Of course, only God can fully deliver you from bitterness & its ill effects, but you must be willing & yielded to Him, & make the decision that you want to be delivered without reservations!—The choice is yours!



CONFESS YOU'VE GOT IT!

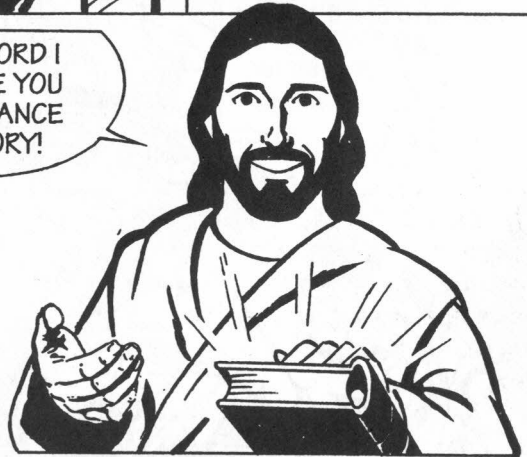


I'VE GOT
A PROBLEM
WITH
BITTERNESS!

Whenever any of us are diagnosed as having a serious spiritual disease such as bitterness, we have to face the facts & admit that we've got a problem. If we won't even face & admit our problems, we're never going to get the victory over them. If you don't recognise & expose the Enemy's work, how are you going to defeat him & get the victory over it?

The Lord promises deliverance & victory, & God says everything He can in His Word to encourage you to have faith to be delivered from your problems! But you can't be delivered & you can't even have faith for it unless you are obedient & honest & willing to confess your unrighteousness & your sins & your faults!

IN MY WORD I
PROMISE YOU
DELIVERANCE
& VICTORY!



I
CONFESS!

MERCY

I'LL TRY
TO COVER
UP!

BOOM!!



"He that confesseth his sins," God's Word says, "shall have mercy. But he that covereth his sin shall not prosper!"—Pro.28:13. So confess it & ask the Lord to forgive you for any bitterness you may be harbouring towards Him or others! If you're willing to recognise & face your problem, then you can at-
tack it & overcome it!

If you realise how utterly deadly a “root of bitterness” is, you’ll certainly want to confess, forsake & get rid of it!—Regardless of what it may cost you to do so! If you love the Lord & you want Him to “build & to plant” His wonderful life-giving fruits of love & mercy in your life & heart, you will do all you can to cooperate with Him to “root out, pull down, throw down & destroy” (Jer.1:10) any & all of the Enemy’s death-dealing evil weeds, seeds & bitter roots that may have found a place in your heart!



“Ye that love the Lord, hate evil!”—Psa.97:10. It’s been said that a good gardener has got to not only love flowers, but he needs to hate weeds as well. This principle aptly applies to you & the “garden” of your heart. Regardless of how justified you may feel about holding on to any hurts or resentments or wounds from your past, if you are a wise gardener at all, you’ll believe the Master Gardener’s Manual & its stern warnings about bitterness, & you’ll realise that you must do all that you possibly can to rid your plot of this deadly root!—Lest your garden be absolutely overrun, destroyed & defiled by this horrible, nagging, choking “weed!”

ATTACK, ATTACK, ATTACK!



Once you've recognised that you have a problem with bitterness & you've admitted & confessed it, then you've got to take a positive & militant stand against it. God's Word tells us that we're "not to be ignorant of the Devil's devices," & once you recognise the poisonous root of bitterness for the deadly & soul-hindering device of the Devil that it really is, you've then got to launch an all-out spiritual attack against the Enemy himself!

You can't do business with the Devil by giving the least place to his evil thoughts against others or God! You've got to let go of all of the damn doubts & fears & gripes & grudges & murmurs & resentments & devilish burdens put there by the Enemy, & hang on to the Lord with all your might! Hitch your wagon to His star & there'll be no stopping you! But if you weigh down your wagon with all the rocks the Devil would like to pile on, "the weights & sins which do so easily beset you," you'll sink for sure! You've got to "lay aside every weight" & just forsake them & roll'm overboard & let'm fall behind as you go on with the Lord!



Of course, there's great power in united prayer together! So "call for the elders of the church," & have others pray with you & for you, joining together to "agree on Earth" to bind the Enemy & his evil roots of bitterness, & to "loose" & free you from its terrible negative effects! "One can chase a thousand, but two can put ten thousand to flight!"—Deut.32:30.

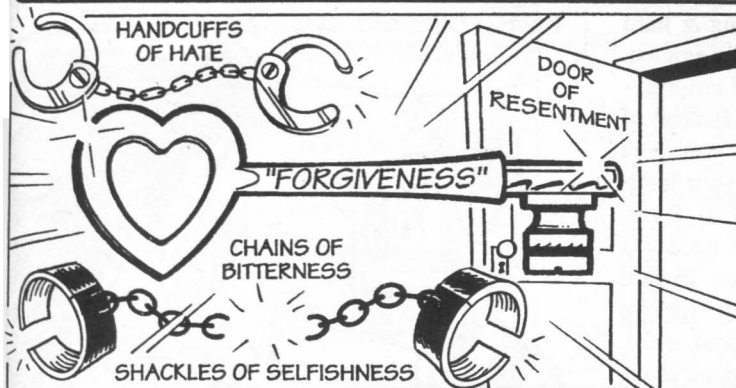


Then once you've confessed your problem & had united prayer against it, resisting the Enemy & forsaking your sins, you've got to be prepared to keep fighting! Once a root of bitterness has been allowed to grow & spread for any length of time, it usually takes a while to completely break all the negative thought patterns & bad habits caused by it.—Even though the main "root" is gone.

You don't always get the victory over such problems handed to you on a silver platter. By faith you do get it, but you usually have to fight for it & do more than just claim it, you have to really practice it & appropriate it until the Enemy knows you're not going to give up.—Until he knows you're going to keep that victory & you really want it that much & you're not going to just throw it away.



"FORGIVE US OUR SINS AS WE FORGIVE OTHERS"



It's been wisely said that, "Forgiveness is the key that unlocks the door of resentment & the handcuffs of hate. It is the power that breaks the chains of bitterness & the shackles of selfishness."

The Lord & His Love, mercy & forgiveness are the antidote for the deadly poison of bitterness! A little love can go such a long way, & no matter what problems a root of bitterness may stem from, love can still cover a multitude of sins on the part of whoever is to blame. Even if you don't understand exactly what the problem is between you & someone, the Lord understands!—And the answer is Love, whatever the problem!



Love casts a veil over countless sins!—Love can cover all of the past sins & mistakes that you—or whoever you're having problems with—have made. The divine, supernatural, miraculous, infinite, marvellous Love of God is love enough to forgive! In fact, if you don't have love enough to forgive, you don't have love—because forgiveness is love! So if you can't for-give, you cannot possibly have real love or real humility!—And you haven't got mercy, because love is forgiveness & mercy!

Once bitterness has had the opportunity to grow in your heart, it's very easy to become very unloving & hard towards those you feel bitter against. Your spirit can then be very unforgiving, intolerant & impatient. Instead of making it easier for others, you even make it harder for them by your judging & critical spirit, hard heart & unforgiving attitude. If you've been this way, you'd better ask those toward whom you've been bitter to forgive you for your unloving critical spirit, & receive them with wide open arms, & ask them to forgive you for being so self-righteous, critical, hard of heart & unloving!

PLEASE FORGIVE ME FOR BEING SO SELF-RIGHTEOUS, CRITICAL & UNLOVING!

I FORGIVE YOU!



FORGIVE, LET GO, & FORGET!

If you want to forsake & get rid of your bitterness, you have to forgive.—And if you truly forgive someone, that means you let go of whatever it is you're harbouring in your heart against them. You can't say you forgive, but can never forget. That means you're still holding it against them.

Those who say they will forgive but not forget are all too often simply burying the hatchet but leaving the handle out for future use. When you've had a problem with bitterness, you've got to be willing to absolutely release & forsake all of your past bitterness & grievances towards others. You've got to "forget those things which are behind, & reach forth unto those things which are before."—Phil.3:13.

NOW THAT WE'VE BURIED THE HATCHET-- LET'S BE FRIENDS!



ONCE AGAIN OUR
PROGRAM TONIGHT--
"RENDEZVOUS WITH
PAIN!"



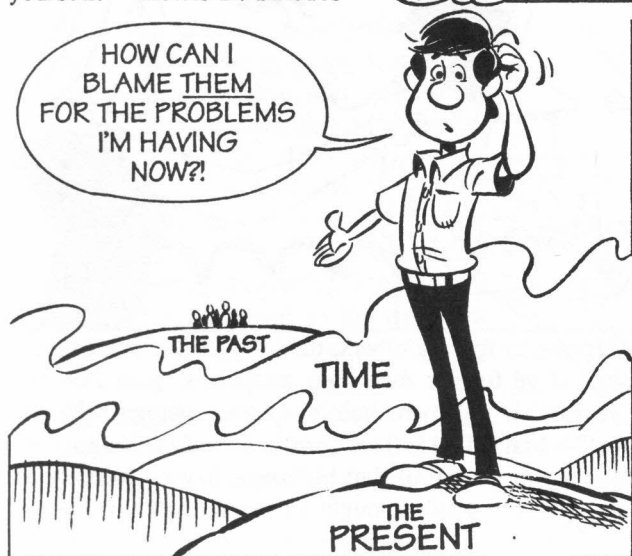
Here's how one author accurately described bitterness & forgiveness: "Carrying a grudge is a loser's game. It is the ultimate frustration because it leaves you with more pain than you had in the first place. Recall the pain of being wronged, the hurt of being stung, cheated, demeaned. Doesn't the memory of it fuel the fire of fury again? Do you feel that hurt each time your memory lights on the people who did you wrong? Your own memory becomes a videotape within your soul that plays unending reruns of your old rendezvous with pain. Is this fair to yourself—this wretched resentment of not forgiving?

"The only way to heal the pain that will not heal itself is to forgive the person who hurt you. Forgiving heals your memory as you change your memory's vision. When you release the wrong-doer from the wrong, you cut a malignant tumour out of your inner life. You set a prisoner free—yourself."—Lewis B. Smedes

AND NOW "FORGIVENESS"
BRINGS YOU THE NEW PROGRAM--
"INNER PEACE!"

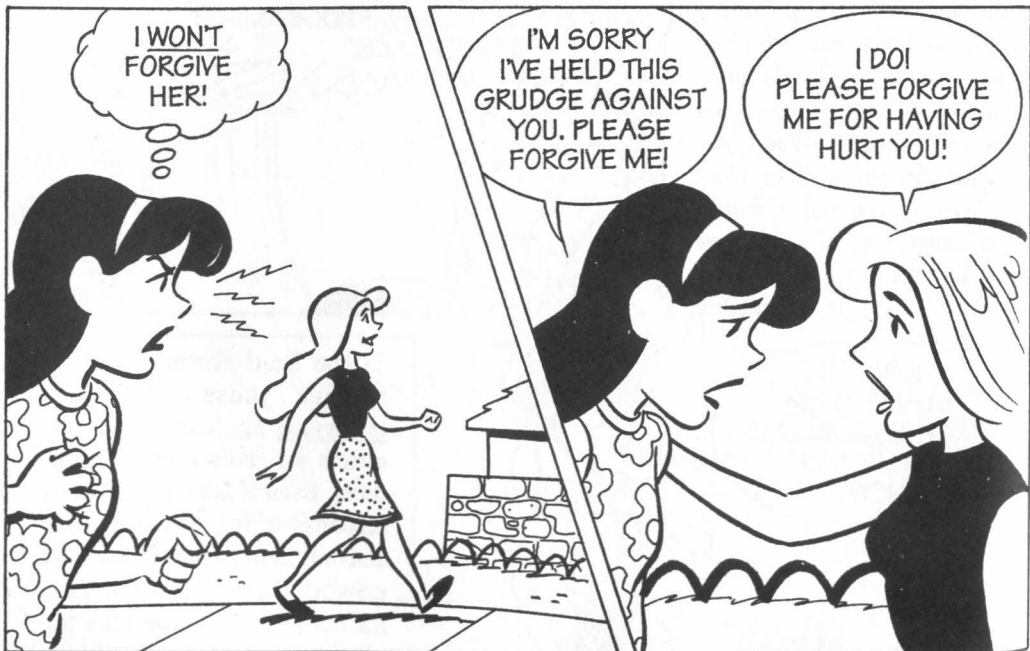


HOW CAN I
BLAME THEM
FOR THE PROBLEMS
I'M HAVING
NOW?!



The Lord commands us to forgive those who have trespassed against us, & that means we can no longer blame them. Even if they were initially responsible for troubling us or causing us to have problems, we cannot continue to blame them for our problems if we truly for-give them. If we have problems that resulted from others mistreating us, & those problems continue, it's our fault, because the Lord has given us the power to overcome these things.

The Lord wants us to forgive those people & ask Him for His deliverance from those problems, so we can overcome them & be free from their hindrance. The Lord wants us to take the responsibility on ourselves, because He wants to show His power & His deliverance, that no matter what has happened to us in the past, it doesn't have to affect our whole lives! We don't have to carry that load with us for the rest of our lives.



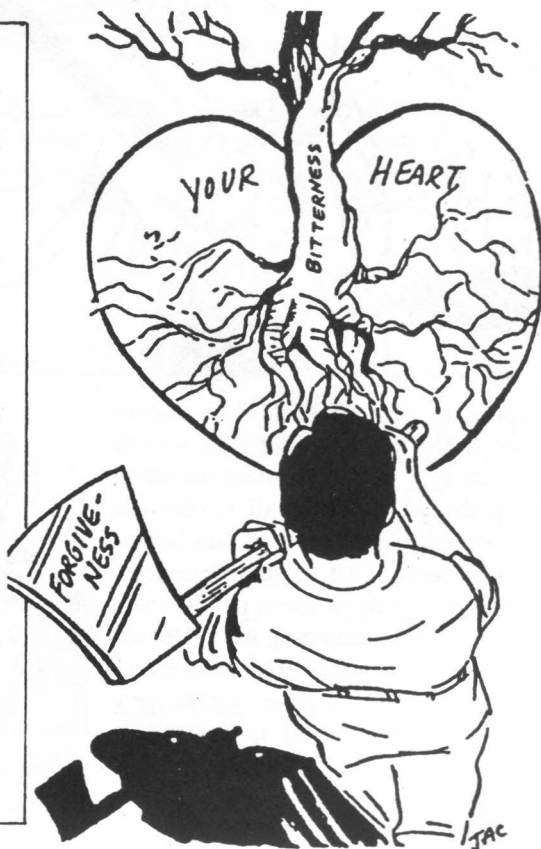
If you hang on to your bitterness & refuse to forgive others, then the Lord cannot forgive you or help you very much! Jesus said, "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Heavenly Father forgive your trespasses!"—Mat.6:14,15. The Lord is able & willing to help you to truly forgive others, & He will help you get rid of that bitterness if you sincerely ask Him & are willing to genuinely let go of every grudge, ought or resentment you may be clinging to.



If you've had a part in any past wrongdoings you may have suffered, you've got to be honest & confess that so that the Lord can heal you & deliver you & forgive you. His Word says, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful & just to for-give us our sins."—1Jn.1:9. But if we don't even confess our sins, if we don't even think something's our fault, then how can the Lord forgive us?

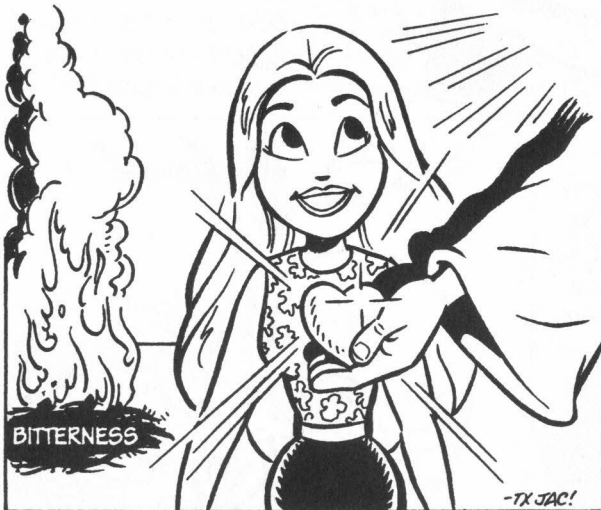
Even if we were entirely guiltless in the wrongs done to us in the past, we are guilty in that we got bitter about it. And if we blame someone else for our present problems because of some wrong they did to us in the past, we are wrong. Our present problems are our fault.

Are you blaming your problems on others? Have you forgiven from your heart those who have hurt you in the past? Or are you using that as an excuse for your present problems? Remember, "Every one of us shall give an account of himself to God!"—Rom.14:12. You are responsible for your own actions! So for God's sake, forgive those who have trespassed against you so the Lord can forgive you for your trespasses! "Forget those things which are behind & reach forth unto the things which are before, & press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus!"—Phil.3:13,14.



SPIRITUAL RENEWAL!

When you're determined to utterly forsake a spiritual problem like bitterness & you call out to the Lord with a whole heart, asking Him to deliver you, it only takes one blast of the mighty searing power of the Holy Ghost to burn out all the Devil's old circuits in a mighty infilling of God's Spirit.—God's great electrical power!



When you sincerely call out to to the Lord to deliver you, He does His part, & will fulfil His promise: “A new heart will I give you, & a new spirit will I put within you.”—Eze.36:26. But even though you are a new creature, that old self will still try to pop up again! You have to fight the Devil & your old self & your old bad habits every day! So be prepared for a battle every day—especially with your besetting sins—“the weights & sins that do so easily beset you.”—Heb.12:1.

The Lord will be faithful to answer prayer & do His part. But then you've got to do your part by exerting the effort to forsake & “put off” all of the old negative thought patterns & bad habits. His Word says: “That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness & true holiness.”—Eph.4:22-24.



LORD JESUS,
DELIVER ME FROM
THESE WEAKNESSES
OF THE PAST!



THE MIND!

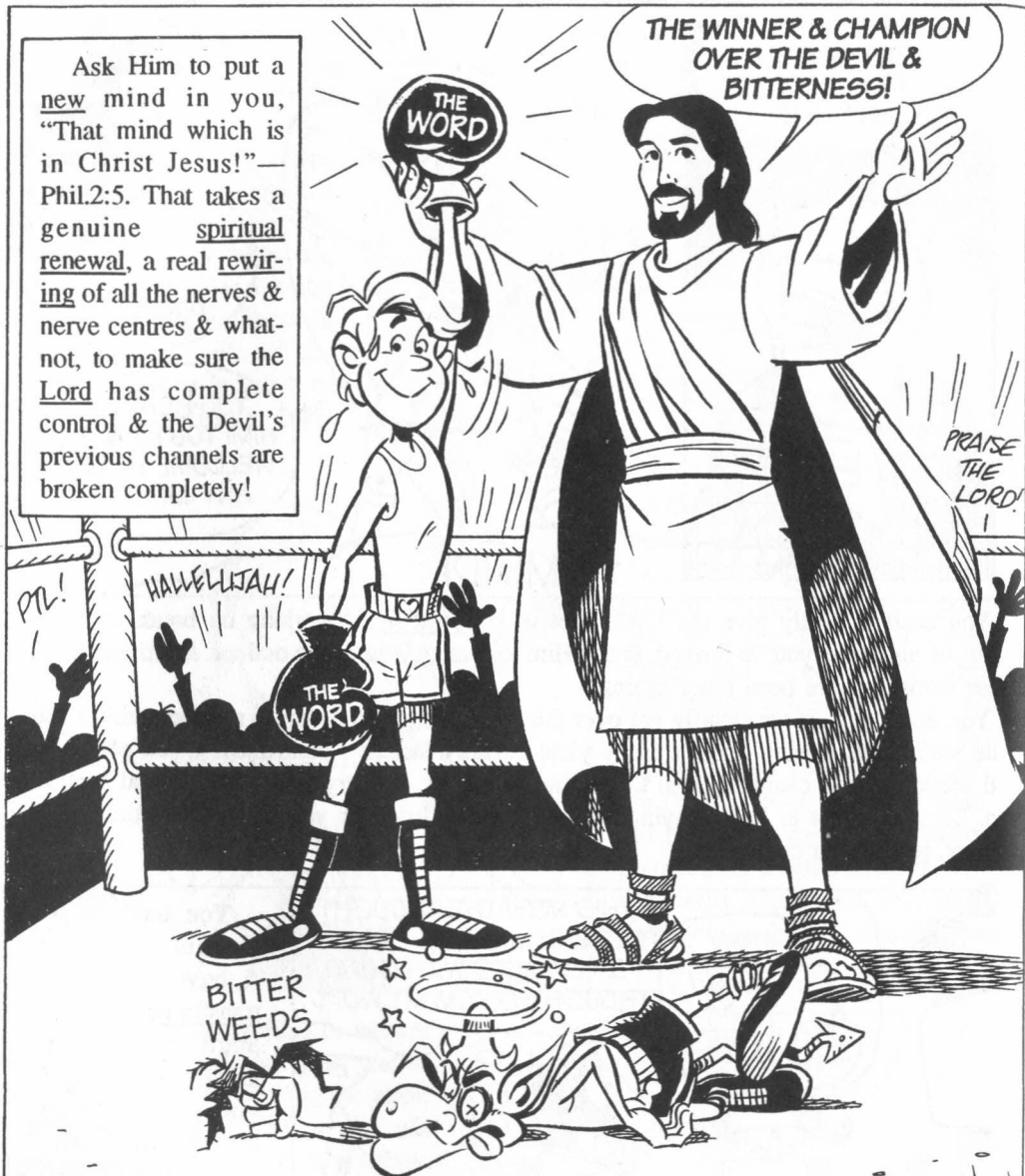
You need to really give the Lord a lot of cooperation in working on breaking any bad habits of bitterness you've formed, & ask Him to change your entire outlook & attitude towards those whom you've been bitter against.

You don't always necessarily get over this sort of thing in a day, it may sometimes take a little while. The Enemy doesn't easily yield territory that he's controlled. When people have had weaknesses & channels open to the Enemy before, he'll try to get that ground back if he can. So you've got to keep praying that the Lord will deliver you & give you the complete victory, rewire you completely!



You have to be absolutely rewired & have your mind transformed by the Spirit of God, & it usually takes time to rewire or reprogram a computer! Any psychologist will tell you that a new thought pattern cannot be established until the old one has had time to be completely erased.—In some cases, only by a miracle of God!

Ask Him to put a new mind in you, "That mind which is in Christ Jesus!"—Phil.2:5. That takes a genuine spiritual renewal, a real rewiring of all the nerves & nerve centres & what-not, to make sure the Lord has complete control & the Devil's previous channels are broken completely!



And if you have to fight a real big battle to get the victory, the Lord will give you a lot more credit, a lot more reward. If you have a real tough battle & struggle to get the victory, it's probably because the Lord's testing you to find out how much you want it, & how much you're willing to fight for it before He's going to reward you with it. But if you do your part, the Lord will certainly do His, & you will win!—So don't give up! PTL!