

BATTLE READY

STANDING FIRM IN JESUS' STRENGTH

HomeGroup **LEADER** Discussion Questions

Week 2: Mar 14th [Thornton Campus]

Week 3: Mar 21st [Boulder Campus]

Week 4: Mar 27th-Apr 2nd [Online & Erie Campus]

PLEASE VISIT <https://calvarybible.com/battleready/> IF YOUR HOMEGROUP HAS BOTH IN-PERSON SERVICE ATTENDERS AND OTHERS WHO MEET ONLINE. THIS SITE WILL SHOW YOU THE SERIES SCHEDULE FOR EACH CAMPUS THESE NEXT 3 WEEKS. YOU MAY NEED TO REVIEW TWO DIFFERENT SETS OF SERMON QUESTIONS AND PICK THE BEST FROM EACH.

Bitterness...It starts small but turns into a big problem and, left unchecked, can lead to catastrophic failure. It infects our soul like a virus. It seeps into every aspect of life and sours our relationships. It pushes people away and isolates us. Satan wants to see us alone. He uses bitterness to separate the church. So what are we to do? God's Word gives us the remedy as we see what Jesus did for us. The forgiveness we've received is something we are called to give. As we learn to forgive, bitterness loses hold of our lives.

Main Text: 2 Corinthians 2:5-11

CONNECT

1. When was a recent time you needed to forgive someone? What happened and how did you respond?

We spend a lot of time talking through forgiveness this week as the antidote for bitterness. This could be a helpful question to frame your discussion.

2. What did you find most significant in this week's sermon? What questions did it leave in your mind?

LEARN

3. What is Paul asking of the church in Corinth in 2 Corinthians 2:5-11?

Paul is asking the church to forgive and love in the face of someone who had caused an offense in the church. Such a scenario could result in division and permanent harm to the body of believers—exactly what Satan relishes! Paul states that it is through forgiveness that we resist Satan.

4. In 2 Corinthians 2:6-7 Paul says that the punishment inflicted is sufficient and now the church should move to forgiveness and love. In light of that, what does forgiveness mean?

Forgiveness is a multifaceted word and is difficult to define using other words. Even so, it entails pardoning or letting go of a grudge against another. People often point out the importance of what

forgiveness *is not!* To forgive does not mean we literally forget what happened, even if it might be helpful to not recall it. To forgive does not mean reestablishing trust. Forgiveness is also not something that is contingent on another person's apology. We can forgive even if another will not admit to wrongdoing.

The offender in Corinth faced a consequence from the church; however, forgiveness was required to bring healing to the relationship that had been harmed.

5. Read the parable of the unmerciful servant in Matthew 18:21-35. What is Jesus about with this parable?

Zach does not specifically cite this in the sermon, but it is a highly relevant passage to consider. The person who does not forgive others' offenses does not appreciate or grasp how much they themselves need forgiveness. Forgiven people overflow with forgiveness as they realize the incomparably greater debt God has forgiven them than what they need to forgive another.

6. We are looking at different schemes of Satan in this series, with this week focusing on bitterness. What is Satan trying to accomplish with bitterness, and how are we to defend against it?

Bitterness makes love impossible. It drives us into isolation. Satan looks to divide us from the church and from God with bitterness. Bitterness is also like a poison pill to our soul as it calcifies our hearts.

Love, though, makes bitterness impossible. It drives us into community. Colossians 3:12-14 highlights that love is the basis for forgiveness. It is what "binds them all together in perfect unity." It may be fruitful to bring Colossians into the discussion, while also encouraging others to bring in other passages that talk about the unity in love and forgiveness. (See Eph. 4:26-32, Romans 12:9-21, 1 Peter 4:8, Hebrews 12:14-15, etc.)

APPLY

7. Zack addressed the question, *What is bitterness?* After listening, how would you describe it?

This question leads well into the "Going Deeper" section and may be a good question to launch into that exercise with.

8. Bitterness festers in the soul, souring all aspects of our lives. Is there someone you need to forgive? What steps can you take to pursue it?

This is a vulnerable thing to admit. Encourage those in your group that do share to take those steps. We want to create a space for people to move towards forgiveness.

9. Sometimes our actions (or inaction) inspires bitterness in others. Is there someone in your life who you need to seek forgiveness from for a past issue?

This question is the other side of question 8. While we should be actively looking for the bitterness in our own lives, we cannot forget that we have hurt others as well. The aim with this question is the same as well. We want to create space for people to recognize where they need to seek forgiveness.

SEE NEXT PAGE

GOING DEEPER (a.k.a., Extra Credit!)

Read Ann Peterson's quote, "“Bitterness starts out small. An offense burrows its way into our hearts. We replay it in our minds, creating deep ruts that will be hard to build back up. We retell our hurts to any available listener, including each sordid detail. We enlist support, pushing us further into our resentment. We hear the offending person's name and cringe. We decipher the offense as intentional and our offender as full of spite. We look for other reasons, both real or imagined, to dislike our villain. With each new piece of information, we form another layer of bitterness. We fool ourselves into thinking no one will know, but anger and resentment have a way of seeping into everything. Resentment is like a beach ball we try to submerge in the water. No matter how valiant our efforts, it pops up with all its vitality, splashing everyone around.”"

Take time to examine how bitterness has impacted your own life. Think of the impact that it has had on those around you, on your job, activities, home life, family, and your faith. Write it down, and spend some time praying over the bitterness in your life.