

HOW TO REPLACE BITTERNESS WITH FORGIVENESS

Ephesians 4:31 – 5:2

Basic rule of relationships: forgiveness and love must go together

I. Put OFF BITTERNESS

6 negatives: A & F are general

- A. Bitterness
- B. Rage: Blow up
- C. Anger: Clam up
- D. Brawling: rage in words at the person to hurt
- E. Slander: anger in words about the person to hurt
- F. Malice: general ill will

II. Put ON LOVE

A & B: what love looks like → C: how to get from bitterness to D: love

- A. Kindness
- B. Compassion
- C. Forgiveness
 - Defilement covered
 - Weight lifted
 - Record erased
 - Debt paid: release from its bondage
 - Decision to not hold this against you any more. Costly

D. Love

III. HOW DO YOU DO THAT?

- A. MOTIVE: 4:32: “as in Christ **God forgave you**”
5:2: “just as **Christ loved us**”
- B. MEASURE: 4:32: “**just AS**”
5:2: “**just AS**”

How much am I forgiven?
How much am I loved? 5:1 dearly loved child
- C. FOCUS: 4:32: **Christ God**
5:1-2: **God....Christ...God**
- D. MECHANISM: 4:31 Lit: “Let it be removed from you...”

That is a **passive imperative!** Unique

It means you cannot do it! You ask the Lord to take away the bitterness by showing you more of Christ and His sacrifice
So 4:30: The Holy Spirit’s power in you

Suggestion: go home and write down all the reasons you are bitter against the person who has hurt you. Take that paper outside, read Eph 4:30 to 5:2 and meditate on what that means for you. Then burn the paper as an offering to the Lord. A decision to no longer hold the sins against that person because of Christ. By grace, not because he/she deserves it.

That is not reconciliation. But it is the first step to your being willing to reconcile with them. Whatever their attitude, your heart is **free**.

Memorize these verses in my suggested translation:

Let it be removed from you: all bitterness, rage & anger, brawling & slander, along with every form of malice. Rather be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other as God in/by Christ forgave you. Imitate God, as His beloved children, and walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us...