

Part 2 - How to Heal from Bitter Root Judgments

■ In Part One, I defined bitter root judgments as beliefs buried deeply within us and then forgotten.

"For the inward thought and the heart of a man are deep." Psalm 64:6 (NAS)

These beliefs were formed in response to pain when we were in the womb and as young children. They are the foundation upon which we build our lives.

"... for with the heart a person believes ..." Romans 10:10

What we believe in our heart is how we perceive reality.

Here are a few examples of what people commonly believe.

1. About God. "God has abandoned me. He lied to me. He sent me here to hurt me, kill me, get rid of me. He doesn't like me. God made a mistake. He betrayed me." Possible judgment = God is bad and untrustworthy.

2. About the self. "There's something wrong with me. I'm a mistake. I'm bad. I'm unacceptable." Possible judgment = No matter what I do, I'll never be good enough to be loved or accepted.

3. About others. "Mother is weak. Father is bad. Those in charge are incompetent." Possible judgment = Nobody is to be trusted. I have to do it myself. There's no help for me. I am smarter than them. I am better than them. They need me to take care of them.

4. About life. "Life is too hard." Possible judgment = There's no way I can succeed.

Not a very pretty picture, is it? Think about all of humanity trying to live life with their wounded hearts full of such pain-filled beliefs. No wonder we are hurt and angry.

If we stopped there with our bitter root judgments, we wouldn't be so badly off. We could pray to God and He would reveal to us what we believed as children. We could ask for truth and He would give us truth. We could change our minds and everything would be ok. Except it's not that easy. And here's why.

Inner Vows

Somehow we must protect ourselves from the agonizing pain of what we believe. So we make promises to ourselves. These promises are designed to distance us from the pain. John and Paula Sandford call these promises Inner Vows. Often the very first inner vow we make is to "Never Feel This Pain Again." So when we begin to ask God questions such as - Why can't I get along with others? Why do I hate myself? Why can't I hear Your voice? - we cannot connect with the reason. We are locked out by the promise we made to ourselves to "Never Feel This Pain Again." During prayer, if we come close to that wounded place, we are thrust away by the inner vow.

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Here's some examples of possible inner vows. They correspond to the list above.

1. I will never trust God (him) again. I will never talk to God (him) again. I will never listen to God (him) again. I will never be vulnerable again.
2. I will be invisible (go away). I will make them love me (by becoming the boy Daddy always wanted; by trying really hard; by being perfect; by never making a mistake, etc.) I will never let anyone close enough to hurt me like that ever again. I will be very good. I will make myself into an acceptable person. I give up.
3. I will never trust anybody again. I will take care of them. I will be better than them. I will show them. I will do it alone. I will do it myself.
4. I will hurry up and die. I will not be here. I will not be born. I give up. I'll try harder.

Jesus warns us to "Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one." *Matthew 5:37*

B. The Enemy's Involvement

So how does the enemy become involved with our inner vows? Making a condemning judgment activates the law of judgment against us. That's bad enough, but taking an inner vow invites the enemy to get directly involved in helping us keep that inner vow.

When we say in our hearts, something like "I will never make a mistake again," the enemy "helps" us keep that promise. Here's a typical scenario taken from my life.

My father was abusive. Somehow, at the age of three, I was unaware that my older brother was the target of much of my father's inexplicable rage. One evening, my brother and I were eating together, waiting for our baby sitter to arrive. The folks were going out. We were eating pot pies and my 5-year old brother pointed out that the pies looked like poop. This was exquisitely funny to me. So funny that I wanted my daddy to share the joke, so I called my daddy. I didn't understand why my brother turned white and begged me not to call him.

My father came down the stairs and hurt my poor brother. Horrified, I hid behind a chair. My world was destroyed. Nothing would ever be the same again.

Here's what I believed: It Was All My Fault.

This was a defining event in my life. I have returned to it again and again for healing. But for the purposes of understanding judgments and inner vows, I want to pick out one that guided my life for many years.

Judgment: What I love gets hurt if I make a mistake.

Inner Vow: I will not EVER make another mistake.

Since the Lord designed us so that we will make mistakes and hopefully learn from them and mature, He was not going to help me keep my promise. But the enemy was more than happy to "help" me.

Here's how he "helps." When we make an inner vow, we unknowingly give the enemy a legal right to "help" us keep our vow.

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"Above all, my brothers, do not swear - not by heaven or by earth or by anything else. Let your "Yes" be yes, and your "No," no, or you will be condemned." James 5:12

It is the enemy who condemns us. In my case, every time I made a mistake, an evil voice would punish me by speaking hateful words to me. I would listen and squirm in shame and self-hatred until I would resolve once again to "Never Make A Mistake." And on and on it went with me becoming more damaged as I strove to protect myself from the pain of believing that "It Was All My Fault."

Enemy spirits cannot give us life. When we make an inner vow, the only thing they can do is come alongside and punish us when we violate our vow. And they do.

In Part Three, I will explain how to remove the legal rights given to the enemy through inner vows and how to break inner vows. Once this work is done, you will be better positioned to receive healing for the wounds caused by believing lies about God, yourself, others and life. Bless you.

Let's pray.

Dearest Creator God, I bless You and worship You. You are so good. Please open our understanding so that we are able to know and accept what is hidden in our hearts. Our wounds are real and they hurt. Help us see what we have believed and why. Help us identify the promises we have made to ourselves in an effort to manage our pain. Set us free of bitter root judgments and inner vows. I ask in the name of our beautiful Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

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