

Unfollow the hurt
Wk1. Bitterness.
Eph 4:25-27,29-32, Romans 12:14, 21

Pastor Dan Steffen
Pure Heart
May 3/4, 2025

Bitterness Message Notes

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Heart Crew Participant Guide

For the week of May 3rd & 4th, 2025

MY STORY

- 1 Have you ever had something not turn out the way you hoped or prayed for? How did it affect you? Were you discouraged, bitter, or confused? If you're open to it, would you share with the crew?"

2. Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything that caught your attention, challenged, or confused you?

DIGGING DEEPER

1. This weekend, Pastor Dan walked us through the stages of bitterness. Bitterness can bring out actions that we know isn't our intention. How do you respond in those moments? Let's open up Acts 9:10-19 together.
 - a. Have you ever been upset with God choosing someone else? (v.13-14) Maybe for a promotion, a job, a higher bonus, or an achievement you thought you deserved recognition for?

 - b. Has God asked you to do something that doesn't immediately sit right?

2. Paul had just come from mocking, imprisoning, and even killing Christians. But before he could see again — physically and spiritually — he needed something. What did God ask Ananias to do for Paul? (v.15–16)

- a. Now imagine being Ananias — asked to pray for the very man who had hurt your people. What do you think was going through his mind? What would have gone through yours?
 - b. This weekend Dan brought up Ephesians 4:23, talking about renewal of the mind. When someone wrongs you, how quickly do you move from hurt to prayer? Are you willing to lay down bitterness, like Ananias did, to see the kingdom move forward?
3. Furthermore, Paul was always kingdom-minded no matter the occasion. Paul encountered many situations that had the potential to cause disunity and bitterness. Let's open up one of those stories briefly. Read Acts 15:36-41 for context.
- a. Disagreements and passionate conversations happen — sometimes even with people we care about. In those moments, how can you pause to see the best in them? Do you take time to consider what they might be going through, or why they respond the way they do?
 - b. After parting ways over a disagreement, Paul and Barnabas continued encouraging the churches (v.41). They didn't let personal conflict stop the mission. Ultimately, they were steadfast in voicing Jesus over gossip. Do you let non-essential disagreements keep you from the essentials of faith? (I.e. encouraging, supporting, or loving others?)
4. Pastor Dan, quoting Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., said:
"Nonviolence is aggressive toward problems, not people."
Let's reread Romans 12:21 — *"Don't let evil conquer you, but*

conquer evil by doing good." Take a moment to reflect: What does that look like in your life right now?

- a. How can we shift our hearts to grieve sin more than resent the person? Is there a moment where you've attacked the person rather than the problem?

- b. Forgiveness doesn't always begin with a feeling — it often begins with bold obedience. Is there someone you need to forgive or ask forgiveness from? Could your next step be to pray for them — even ask God to bless them?

5. Let's wrap up with 1 Peter 3:8–17 and hear how Peter encourages us to live. Read it slowly.

a. What key words or phrases stand out to you?

b. How does a Christlike response shine light on the hope within you?

TAKING IT HOME

1 Peter 2:21–25 reminds us: Christ didn't just die for us — He showed us how to live. He didn't retaliate, insult, or defend Himself on the way to the cross. Though innocent, He chose surrender and sacrifice. We sin daily yet receive life.

When you choose grace, humility, and forgiveness, you're drawing closer to Jesus. He became a blessing we didn't deserve — and now we get to reflect that undeserved grace to others.

That's not weakness. That's the gospel.