The Bible warns us clearly in:

> *Hebrews 12:14–15 (ESV):*
> *“Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no ‘root of bitterness’ springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled.”*

This passage speaks directly to believers. It teaches that if we do not pursue peace with all people and maintain a life of holiness, we risk falling short of the grace of God. When that happens, a root of bitterness can begin to grow within us. Once it takes hold, it not only troubles our own hearts, but it can also corrupt and defile many others around us.

Let’s break this down.

If we fail to pursue peace with others and walk in holiness, we become vulnerable. Bitterness begins small like a seed but if left

unchecked, it grows deep roots and eventually becomes a stronghold in the heart. According to Scripture, this bitterness can contaminate many, like a spreading infection in the Body of Christ.

Ask yourself honestly: *As a believer, do I truly live in peace with everyone?*
This includes fellow Christians and even unbelievers. The call to peace is not optional; it is a command. The Apostle Paul reinforces this in:

> *Romans 12:18 (NIV):*
> *“If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.”*

It requires effort, humility, and sometimes forgiveness even when it’s hard. But it is necessary because without peace and holiness, we lose sight of God’s presence.

What Is Bitterness?

In biblical terms, bitterness is a mixture of anger, resentment,

jealousy, hatred, unresolved pain, and often a desire for revenge. It is not just an emotion; it becomes a spiritual condition.

The writer of Hebrews refers to it as a *root* because it starts hidden and small but can eventually grow deep and strong, making it very hard to remove. If not dealt with early, bitterness begins to control our thoughts, emotions, and relationships.

One of the most vivid biblical examples is King Saul.

Saul’s bitterness began when he disobeyed God and the Lord rejected him as king. When he saw God’s favor shifting toward David, jealousy and insecurity took root. Rather than repenting and seeking restoration, Saul allowed bitterness to fester. He began to hate David without cause and set out to destroy him.

Even after showing signs of remorse, Saul couldn’t overcome the bitterness because it had already taken deep root in his heart. His obsession with destroying David consumed his reign and ultimately led to his downfall (see 1 Samuel 18–24).

Bitterness blinded him, robbed him of peace, and made him a slave to his own hatred.

A Warning to All Believers

This is why Scripture warns us to be vigilant. Bitterness is not just a personal issue it affects the entire body of Christ. Whether you're a pastor, leader, church worker, or church member, this command is for all of us.

We must strive to live in peace not just with people we like, but even with those who challenge us. This includes resolving quiet grudges, unspoken resentments, and hidden hostility, even in the church.

> *Ephesians 4:26–27 (NIV):*
> *"In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold."*

Unresolved anger gives the enemy a doorway into our lives. Satan uses bitterness to divide churches, destroy relationships, and hinder our spiritual growth.

James echoes this with a sobering warning:

> *James 3:14–17 (NLT):*
> *“But if you are bitterly jealous and there is selfish ambition in your heart, don’t cover up the truth with boasting and lying.*
> *For jealousy and selfishness are not God’s kind of wisdom. Such things are earthly, unspiritual, and demonic.*
> *For wherever there is jealousy and selfish ambition, there you will find disorder and evil of every kind.*
> *But the wisdom from above is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and the fruit of good deeds. It shows no favoritism and is always sincere.”*

Final Encouragement

Let us make every effort to guard our hearts from the root of bitterness. Let’s forgive quickly, pursue peace, and stay rooted in God’s grace. If bitterness has already taken root, don’t ignore it—bring it before God in repentance and allow the Holy Spirit to uproot it.

Only in peace and holiness can we experience the fullness of God’s presence and be a blessing to others.

Shalom.

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