

## ***Bitterness***

Elimelech and Naomi and their two sons went to the land of Moab (Ruth 1:1). Elimelech died leaving Naomi and her two sons, Mahlon and Chilion, to take care of her. The two boys in turn married Orpah and Ruth. Mahlon and Chilion then died leaving Naomi and her two daughters-in-law to get along for themselves. Naomi set her face to return home to Judah. She told her daughters-in-law to return to their home for she could not help them any more. Orpah tearfully left Naomi but Ruth stayed with her. When Naomi arrived at her homeland there were those that called her by her name. However, she asked that she be called Mara or bitter because the Lord had dealt bitterly with her (Ruth 1:20).

How often have you felt the pains of bitterness? Many are bitter but never realize they are making people around them miserable. Bitterness in an individual usually arises when life has not been what they may determine as “fair” to them. They may feel as if they have been cheated by something that someone else has done. They may even feel that their rights have been violated. Or still they may develop a bitter feeling toward another when they feel like they have been “dumped on” by others. What can one do that feels bitter towards life or others?

First, understand why you feel bitter. Are your feelings correct? Are you justified in feeling that way? Has life and others treated you any more unfairly than they have any other? The answer you will often find is that you are no different than anyone else.

Second, put away any bitter feelings that you may have. Don't let it eat at you and destroy your life. Put it away (Eph. 4:31).

Third, stop comparing your life to what you think is the perfect life. Realize you are no different than any other person (2 Cor. 10:12).

Fourth, get up and do something for someone else. Your eyes will be opened, your senses will be made more aware, and your mind will begin to become a little less sensitive to self and a little more aware of the plight of others. Don't set your mind solely on self.

Yes, we do grow bitter from time to time. Just put your faith in God and be assured that all things will work together for good (Rom. 8:28).

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