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[ABUSED WOMAN MINISTRIES' INC. SCHOOL OF HEALING]

“Healing through recovery with God’s truth”

“Biblical Foundations of Freedom Destroying Satan’s Lies With God’s Truth” was written by Dr. Art Mathias:

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About the Authors:

Dr. Mathias has lived in Alaska for more than twenty five years. He is a businessman, bush pilot, outdoorsman, and has authored several books and booklets. He and his wife Patti, of 38 years have two grown sons. Patti is an accomplished teacher and along with her husband are founders of Wellspring Ministries. Dr. Mathias has earned his master and doctorate degrees in counseling. Both Patti and Dr. Mathias travel extensively teaching about and demonstrating a powerful God that has answers.

I had the opportunity to attend one of Dr. Mathias’ “Biblical Foundations of Freedom” seminars a couple of months ago and it was a life changing event for me. I saw firsthand what God was doing at his seminars; I witnessed how powerful forgiveness is – people were getting set free because they decided to forgive – some had been holding onto unforgiveness for years - and that is why I decided to adapt his book into my Recovery program. Forgiveness is powerful because when we decide to forgive, we are obeying God’s Word and when we obey God, we will be blessed.

I am using these materials from Dr. Mathias’ book and other training aids by permission from him and his wife Patti.

Welcome to the journey that is going to change your life!

God bless,
Dr. Dorothy E. Hooks, PsyD

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Introduction

For years, I could not understand why Christians got sick. If the Bible says we are healed by Jesus' stripes, I wondered why the people were sick; including me. Finally in November last year, God gave me the answer: unforgiveness.

I was watching Sid Roth's television program, "It's Supernatural," and Dr. Art Mathias was on giving his testimony about how God healed him from an incurable disease after he forgave someone; that captured my attention. I went on his web site signed up to receive information about his ministry. I was notified that he was going to be in my area the end of January to first week of February.

I got the opportunity to attend his seminar "Biblical Foundations of Freedom" and it was a life changing event for me. I saw firsthand what God was doing at his seminars; I witnessed how powerful forgiveness is – people were getting set free because they decided to forgive – some had been holding onto unforgiveness for years - and that is why I decided to adapt his book into my Recovery program. Forgiveness is powerful because when we decide to forgive, we are obeying God's Word and when we obey God, we will be blessed.

At the seminar, God delivered me from self-bitterness; I had not forgiven myself for the way I had treated this person years and years ago. And before the seminar, God delivered me from a spirit of offense; I was still offended at this person for what they did to me years and years ago and I thought I had forgiven them. That is why it is so important to constantly check ourselves to make sure all those old offenses are gone and you have forgiven people from your heart and forgiven yourself.

This is the pre-introductory course to the "Biblical Foundations of Freedom" program 14 week online course; the course is free - you can start at any time, and take it at your own pace. The school's new web site is: www.recovery4abusedwoman.org.

I want to welcome you to this workshop today and I know God is going to do even greater things in your life today; you will be set free from whatever you need to be set free from – so let's get started.

Dr. Dorothy E. Hooks, PsyD



The Major Strongholds, or Principalities, of Satan

Ephesians 6:12 says: **“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places”** (www.biblegateway.com).

Satan’s major strongholds (weapons) are: bitterness, self-bitterness, jealousy and envy, rejection, fear, unbelief and the occult. And he takes these strongholds and builds principalities, using millions of demons (powers) to do his evil work for him. That’s why it may seem like he is everywhere at the same time but he is not – he is not omnipresence – only God is; Satan is not greater than his Creator, which is God. Each principality is made up of so many demons, as you will see, and all these spirits work together, they are more faithful to the devil than we are sometimes to God. We know who we are really fighting against, it’s not your brother or sister, who are flesh and blood, but against “principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.” So let’s make sure we have settled this in our minds. When a person says something to you that offends you, forgive them instantly because it is not them who are saying that to you.

Origin of Negative Thoughts: Accusing Spirits

Let’s see where some of these negative thoughts come from that comes to our mind. There are three sources for these thoughts and voices: Ours, God, or from Satan. But the nature of our thoughts will always reveal whom they line up with: God or Satan.

There are three heavens: the first heaven is over the earth where we live, the second is the realm where Satan, demons, and angels dwell, and the third is where God’s throne is.

Satan and his entities obtain access to our thought life from the second heaven. However, evil spirits cannot read our minds because only God is omniscient (all knowing). But evil spirits size us up, watch our every move; they study our pattern and behavior for every action we take. They constantly try to lead us astray by putting thoughts into our minds and make us think they are our thoughts. That is why it is so important to allow the Spirit of Discernment to operate in us. We need to think before we speak and before we act – making sure our thoughts are not infiltrated by evil spirits but that we are led by the Spirit of God. This is why we must apply 2 Corinthians 10:5 to our lives every day which say: **“casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ”** (www.biblegateway.com.)

Thoughts that enter our minds create energy resulting in saying, doing or thinking something about others, God or ourselves. Discernment puts a governor on our brain, slowing us down to stop and examine the thoughts and actions to determine what is appropriate. Discernment gives us an “on and off” switch. It allows us to be quiet when otherwise we might strike out at someone. It stops us from doing something that later we would regret. Sometimes discernment works to stifle a thought altogether, disregarding our feelings. Discernment will keep us from committing many destructive actions, as well as prod us toward healthy ones.

One of Satan’s tactics is to show us something that looks good, when in fact it is evil and counterfeit. To recognize the counterfeit object or thought, we must know what the real thing looks like. Accusing spirits can operate in our life when we don’t know what the real Spirit looks like. Accusing spirits build on our ignorance of who we are in Christ. They tempt to misunderstand who other people really are and confuse our thinking about God’s true nature.



The Major Strongholds, or Principalities, or Satan

Origin of Negative Thoughts: Accusing Spirits (continued)

As I said before, we are not fighting against flesh and blood, but against principalities, powers; accusing spirits are part of these principalities and powers – they work with other evil spirits to keep us in bondage. Accusing spirits are the ones who speak to you and have you thinking wrong about a person when they offend you.

Accusing spirits are the origin of our negative thoughts. Their goals are to bring us down, bring other people down, and to bring God down. They seek to separate us from God, others and ourselves. Satan uses the old military tactic of divide and conqueror to try to defeat us; he ever uses this in the church.

An accusing spirit will say, “Yea, I know I’m born again, I know the Word of God, I love Jesus and it’s a wonderful thing that I’m a Christian, and hasn’t God done wonderful things with me.” The accusing spirit will build you up like this and then instantly, in a flash of thought, “but I don’t measure up to others. I’m still inferior to my brothers and sisters. It’s wonderful where I’ve come from; it’s wonderful who I am in Jesus, *but . . .*” Accusing spirits love to plant doubt so your faith can be destroyed.

Characteristics of Accusing Spirits

These are the characteristics of an accusing spirit:

1. Suspicion
2. Bitterness
3. Mistrust
4. Always believing the worst about someone
5. Being easily offended
6. Easy to offend others
7. Exaggerating offenses and failures

If you have any of these characteristics in your life, there is an accusing spirit working through you and you must deal with it.

Accusing spirits will keep us from walking in the light with our brother even after repentance and forgiveness. We continue to be reminded of his sin against us and against others. Accusing spirits will seek to keep us from forgiving. Accusing spirits encourage us to keep a record of wrongs. They seek to nullify the work of the cross to keep us from fellowship with each other, and bind us with self-condemnation.

Have you ever heard someone say: “I will forgive you, but I can never forget what you did?” This is a very destructive thought that brings joy to Satan and sorrow to our Savior and is the work of an accusing spirit.



Principality of Bitterness

Definition

There are differing levels of authority and power in Satan's realm. Each specific evil spirit answers to another spirit higher up the line of authority. Just below Satan in this pecking order are his principalities. It is through this hierarchy of evil spirits and principalities that Satan continually seeks to draw us into captivity, taking control of our lives.

The evil spirit who presides at each step up in the hierarchy of a principality is more evil than the ones below him.

Let's go to Luke 11:24-26:

²⁴ "When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' ²⁵ And when he comes, he finds *it* swept and put in order. ²⁶ Then he goes and takes with *him* seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last *state* of that man is worse than the first."

The original house refers to mankind — us. Even if we are "empty and swept clean," the evil spirits try to come back, and bring along seven more who are even more evil than the one who left. To prevent these spirits from moving in, we must be continually filled up with God's Word, and the knowledge of God, "precept upon precept, line upon line" (Isaiah 28:10). **Being filled with God's Spirit is the antidote to Satan's ploys.**

When that evil spirit comes knocking on the door of our minds with a seductive temptation — a feeling, a thought, a mental picture - seeking to lead us back into captivity we need to say, "Get behind me, Satan. I know you." Tell him, "I've been there, and I'm through with that thought and action. I order you to leave me alone because I belong to Jesus Christ and speak in His authority.

Let's look at Luke 11:21-22:

²¹ "When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace. ²² But when a stronger than he comes upon him and overcomes him, he takes from him all his armor in which he trusted, and divides his spoils."

The strong man referred to here is one of Satan's principalities. He is armed. What does this mean? The Greek word means to fully equip with armor. The strong man is fully equipped, and this brings him peace.

The one stronger is Jesus. Since we have been granted Christ's power and authority, we also are the one stronger. As the one stronger, through Jesus, we will strip the strong man (the principality) of all his armor; once that happens, that principality must flee because he will be left standing naked and weak, unable to war against us.



Principality of Bitterness

Armor of Bitterness

Now, let's see what the armor of the strongman consists of. First, I will explain what a principality is - it is a ruling demon that has several lesser demons answering to it. Bitterness is a ruling demon. Answering to it, giving it protection and providing its armor are: 1) Unforgiveness, 2) Resentment, 3) Retaliation, 4) Anger, 5) Hatred, 6) Violence, 7) Murder – these are the powers which Ephesians 6:12 talk about.

In the hierarchy of the principality of bitterness, resentment is worse than unforgiveness; unforgiveness answers to resentment. Retaliation is worse than resentment; resentment answers to retaliation, and so on. Each lower demon protects the armor for the next higher demon.

We are to make sure that a root of bitterness does not spring up in us (Hebrews 12:5). This can be done by remembering the accusing spirit will plant all kinds of thoughts in our minds once we become offended. It is very important for us not to carry offenses; we must forgive the person who offended us immediately. Once the root of bitterness takes hold of us, it not only defiles us, but branches out to affect everyone around us; it is highly contagious.

Have you spent time with a bitter person? Have you ever been bitter? Are you able to discern bitterness in yourself, or in others? Usually, when we encounter a bitter person, we copy our own attitude. Bitterness begins to flow from our spirit toward them; it becomes our bitterness against their bitterness. We both become defiled.

We are going to look at each part of the armor of bitterness separately:

- 1. Unforgiveness - Bitterness gains entrance to us through unforgiveness, the first piece of the armor surrounding bitterness.** That evil strong man banks on unforgiveness to be an active part of our life. He counts on us never forgiving others or ourselves so that he can have his place, his habitation, within us. Once taking up a home in us, he can act out his evil nature through us and give his boss, the devil, a victory.

Unforgiveness whispers in our ear, "No, you're not going to forgive them, you don't need to forgive them, there's no way you need to forgive them." Unforgiveness keeps a record of wrongs against another person. Satan banks on the spirit of unforgiveness to remind us of the bitterness that somebody else has toward us. Unforgiveness reminds, rehashes, projects and torments us with past negative events. It reminds us of what others have done to us, and what we have done to others.

The strong man, the principality, uses the spirit of unforgiveness to constantly accuse us. But, unforgiveness is a smaller entity, a lower spirit. It's just the beginning.

- 2. Resentment** - After unforgiveness has done its work, the strong man sends out the spirit of resentment. Resentment builds on the foundation laid by unforgiveness. The record of wrong ferments and resentment begins to grow.



Principality of Bitterness

Armor of Bitterness (continued)

Resentment generates a feeling of ill will toward a person who has wronged us. Resentment says, "I don't like Mary," or "I will never forgive Alex," or "I don't trust my neighbors." Resentment constantly reminds us of past events, seeking to stir up negative sentiments that stew and ferment within us.

Unforgiveness formed the first piece of armor to provide protection for bitterness. Now Satan trusts that resentment will gain a foothold. Resentment feeds off of unforgiveness. Resentment is a stronger evil spirit, because unforgiveness supports it. And it is more dangerous than unforgiveness.

Unforgiveness is like instant replay, replaying the words, voices, sights and sounds of wrong events from our past. Unforgiveness flashes negative thoughts and images of everything someone ever said or did to us. Have you ever had that happen? The accusing spirit continuously replays a record of the evil music of our lives to reinforce itself, so this strong man of bitterness can find a home in us. Resentment adds fuel to the fire. Resentment and unforgiveness stem from thoughts. They find their homes in our memories.

- 3. Retaliation** - After unforgiveness and resentment have gained a foothold in our minds, the strong man (principality of bitterness) sends out the spirit of retaliation. Now it's time to get even.

Have you ever seen a bumper sticker that said, "I don't forgive, I just get even?" Retaliation projects these kinds of sentiments: "Bill should pay for what he did to me," or "I am going to make Jane pay for what she said." "I am going to make sure Bob gets what he deserves, if it is the last thing that I do!"

The spirit of retaliation is much more dangerous than the spirits of unforgiveness and resentment. Retaliation's presence shows progressive demonization. Each spirit is much more dangerous than the previous one.

If you hear someone say, "Well, they're gonna pay," that a spirit of retaliation is speaking. Also, know that spirits of unforgiveness and resentment are present, and know that the strong man of bitterness is behind it all.

- 4. Anger** - Unforgiveness first gains a foothold, and then resentment gains a foothold. Next, retaliation gains a foothold. Each of these manifests itself in ways that are progressively worse than the prior spirit. When retaliation wins its foothold, bitterness sends out anger and wrath. Anger and wrath are outward expressions that remind others that we are not going to forgive them, that we resent them, and that we plan to get even. With anger, we have crossed a line. Anger gives the evil spirit a voice. Unforgiveness, resentment, and retaliation can be kept unspoken, eating away at a person's own spirit through self-deception.

Once the line is crossed to anger and wrath, the demons start to show themselves physically. Have you ever seen anger in a person's eyes? It is very real and very observable. This is anger caused by the root of bitterness, because of unforgiveness, resentment and retaliation. Maybe you have experienced this yourself. We all have.



Principality of Bitterness

Armor of Bitterness (continued)

We need to understand, when our anger buttons are being pushed, it is the strong man of bitterness fighting to gain a foothold. Bitterness puts on the armor of anger and wrath to protect himself. You have sensed it yourself, when resentments fester over time, anger isn't far behind. Anger and wrath never occur without the first three spirits being in place.

We get angry when a trust has been breached, resulting in hurt. We feel victimized. Then unforgiveness, resentment and retaliation well up and overflow with the fourth spirit, anger and wrath.

- 5. Hatred** - After anger and wrath have gained their foothold, hatred moves in. Bitterness gains fuel from unforgiveness, resentment, retaliation, and anger and wrath. **Now hatred starts a process of elimination.** Hatred says, "I live on this planet and so do you. And one of us has to go and it ain't going to be me." Maybe hatred says, "This church ain't big enough for both of us. I think you'd better leave." Hatred seeks to eliminate the other person.

Retaliation ferments anger on behalf of bitterness. Anger vocalizes bitterness, and next comes hatred to act out of bitterness. Hatred reveals your feelings toward an offender, tells them that they don't belong in your world, and you absolutely hate their guts. Hatred says, "I will do what it takes to get even."

Hatred provides the fuel for our final victimization by Satan. When we observe hatred in someone, we know that anger, retaliation, resentment and unforgiveness are there as well. And we know that bitterness is in the driver's seat, trusting in the armor provided by these lesser evil spirits.

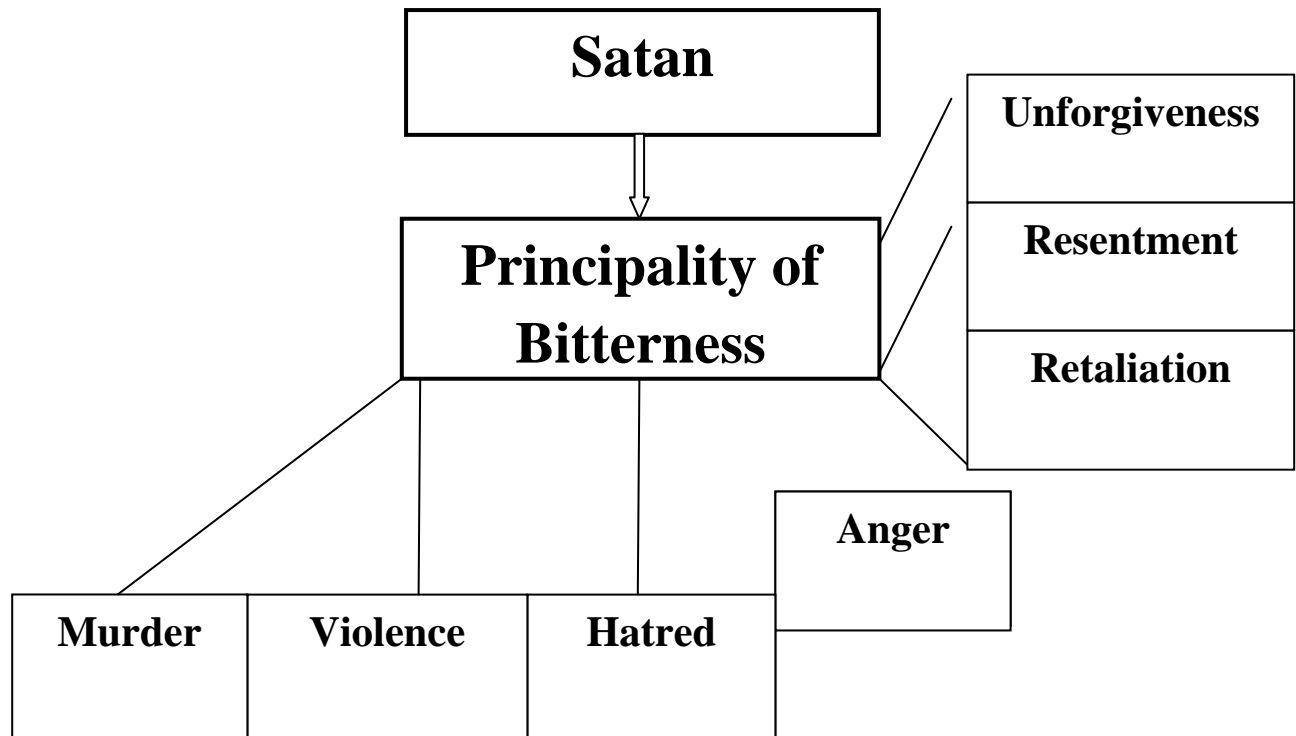
- 6. Violence** - **The sixth level of bitterness is violence. Violence is anger and hatred set into motion. Our emotions erupt into physical or sometimes hate-filled verbal attacks. At this point, we see pots and pans thrown across the room, wrenches fly and punches being thrown. Fights erupt. Physical, sexual and verbal abuse result.**
- 7. Murder** - **The seventh and worst spirit in the principality of bitterness is murder.** Just as Cain slew Abel because of his bitterness, so we see others murder their children, spouses or friends in fits of rage.

The spirit of murder includes more than taking someone's physical life. God's Word teaches how we can murder someone with our words. Murder starts in the heart, because the ultimate level of the spirit of bitterness is the elimination of someone's person-hood. 1 John 3:15 says, "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him."

Murderous hate-filled speech, driven by bitterness, kills a person's own spirit. Whether it is the person who is doing the screaming and his speech crucifies his own sense of decency, or a person who receives a verbal attack, whose spirit shrinks in fear, the end result is a death of a Godly, peaceful spirit.



Armor of Bitterness



1. Unforgiveness – the entry point of bitterness
2. Resentment
3. Retaliation
4. Anger
5. Hatred
6. Violence
7. Murder

Each of these spirits is more evil than the one before it; once they build a stronghold in you, unless you get delivered, you and others can be destroyed. An example would be a person who kills his family members and then himself.



Principality of Bitterness

The Antidote For Bitterness

First, we must recognize that we are bitter. This is harder than it sounds. A short time ago, I didn't see my own bitterness. If someone had told me I was bitter, I would have denied it. I was ignorant to the fact that resentment formed a part of bitterness. Maybe that is what God meant in Hosea 4:6 when He said, "My people are destroyed for a lack of knowledge."

If there is any evidence of unforgiveness, resentment, retaliation, anger, hatred, violence, or murder in our lives, we have bitterness. If there is any pain in any memory, there is bitterness. If we go to bed at night leaving issues unresolved we will wake the next day with the root of bitterness already having budded in our spirit. I learned to accept this as truth and admitted that I did have bitterness because of offenses. Admitting that we have bitterness is the first step to recovery.

Secondly, we must repent of the sin of bitterness. Repent means that we fall out of agreement and turn away from it. And we ask God to forgive us.

Thirdly, we must forgive others and ourselves. What does it mean to forgive? There are several aspects to consider.

The Bitterness Affidavit

Make the list of all the bitterness you have against others (as stated above). We need to confess and repent before Almighty God for holding onto this bitterness and believing it, instead of believing Him. The stronghold that bitterness has held in your life will be destroyed, and Satan's power over you will be legally cancelled. Be thorough, and pray through each bitterness individually. Do not give the devil any "legal" access to you. Here is an example of a prayer you can use to deal with bitterness, and eliminate it from your life (**Remember, bitterness gains entrance to us from unforgiveness – think about each person who have ever hurt you and write out their name and what their offenses were – pray the “Prayer of Release” for each item on this list – this is the process of forgiveness**):

Prayer of Release

In the name of Jesus, I purpose and choose to forgive (the person) from my heart for (what they did). In the name of The Lord Jesus, I cancel all their debts and obligations to me.

Dear Lord, I ask You to forgive me for my bitterness towards (the person) in this situation.

In the name of Jesus, and by the power of His blood, I cancel Satan's authority over me in this memory because I have forgiven.

In the name of Jesus, I command that all the tormentors that have been assigned to me because of my unforgiveness leave me, now.

Holy Spirit, I invite you into my heart, and to heal me of this pain. Please speak your words of truth to me about this situation.



Principality of Bitterness

The Bitterness Affidavit (continued)

As the Holy Spirit speaks to you, write down His message in the space provided below. This is God's testimony to you. When you have finished this prayer for each person or situation on your list, command the principality of self-bitterness to go in the name

As we work through bitterness toward others we often realize that we played a part in those situations. In the next chapter we will discuss self-bitterness. We will learn to identify and remove the ways that we have belittled and cursed ourselves. In doing this we will become free of all shame, guilt, self-condemnation, regret and sorrow.

BITTERNESS TOWARDS (PERSON): THE HOLY SPIRIT'S ANSWER (TRUTH):

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Self-Application (Your Homework)

Personal Responsibility:

Make your bitterness affidavit as I suggested at the end of the “The Importance of Forgiveness” Workshop. This is a list of every memory that has any unforgiveness, resentment, any desire to get even, anger toward others, hatred toward others, violence toward others, or any way that you put others down. If there is emotional pain in a memory there is bitterness.

Application:

Then pray through each item individually using the “Prayer of Release:”

Dear Heavenly Father, in the name of The Lord Jesus, I purpose and choose to forgive (name) for (what they did). I release (name). I cancel their debts and obligations to me in this issue.

Dear LORD I ask you to forgive me for my bitterness toward (above name) in this situation.

In the name of Jesus I cancel all Satan's power and authority over me in this issue because I have forgiven them. And God has forgiven me. It is done and over with.

Holy Spirit please come and heal my heart. And tell me your truth about this situation. (Listen for the Holy Spirit and write down what you hear or feel.)



Self-Bitterness

The definition of the word, “self,” includes many modifiers:

- ✚ Self-abandonment: disregarding; disregarding all self-interest.
- ✚ Self-abasement: humiliation of one-self.
- ✚ Self-absorbed: focusing on oneself to the exclusion or consideration of others.
- ✚ Self-abuse: comes in many forms, i.e. obesity or anorexia; sleep deprivation or too much sleep; lack of exercise or pushing oneself to the brink; denial of normal sexuality (with spouse) or preoccupation with sex; calling yourself “stupid,” “fat,” “ugly,” “dumb or other names that will demean and degrade yourself [you are “fearfully and wonderfully made” – Ps. 139:14].
- ✚ Self-accusation: constantly finding fault with oneself.

Prayer of Release From Self-Bitterness

To be set free from self-bitterness:

“Make a list of all the bitterness you have had or have against yourself. We need to confess and repent before Almighty God for holding onto this bitterness and believing it, instead of believing Him [God]. The stronghold that self-bitterness has held in your life will be destroyed, and Satan’s power over you will be legally cancelled.”

After you have written your list, pray the “Prayer of Release” (listed below) for each issue on your list; do not do a “blanket” prayer – praying each issue separate will cause you to face and deal with each issue one at a time – if it is too overwhelming for you to do at one time, you can ask someone you trust to help you by letting them pray the prayer and you repeat it.



Self-Bitterness

Prayer of Release (Self-Bitterness) – Say this prayer:

“Dear Heavenly Father, in the name of Jesus, and as an act of my free will, I confess, repent, and renounce my (specific sin of self-hatred). I ask You to forgive me for this sin. I purpose and choose to forgive myself for this (specific sin of self-hatred) from my heart. I release myself from any guilt or shame because of this self-bitterness. In the name of Jesus, and by the power of His blood, I cancel Satan’s authority over me because of the self-bitterness of (specific sin of self-hatred). In the name of Jesus, I command this spirit of self-bitterness to go.

Holy Spirit, I invite You into my heart to heal me of self-bitterness. Please speak Your words of truth to me about this situation.” (BFOF book, pg 100).

As Holy Spirit begins to speak to you, write down what He says; so you can have it later when the enemy tries to come back. After you have prayed through your list about each situation, command the PRINCIPALITY of self-bitterness to go in the name of Jesus (BFOF, pg 100).

In His Service,
Dr. Hooks