Dear Open Door Family,

Have you ever been bitter? Have you ever held on to your anger or the bad feelings you had towards someone, refusing to let go? Bitterness is one of those emotions which can do real damage. It flows out of our envy and anger, and if we do not deal with it seriously bitterness can cripple us and keep us from enjoying our walk with the Lord Jesus. Asaph, the writer of Psalm 73 is very honest about his own problems with bitterness. He says that when he looked at those who were arrogant and wealthy that he started to envy them. (73:3-7) His envy and jealousy turned into bitterness as he wondered if it "pays" to live a godly life. He found the answer while spending time with God. (73:16-17) He began to realize that the wicked will answer to God in the end. And as Asaph wrestles with this understanding, he makes the following confession:

Psalm 73:21-22 *(HCS) When I became EMBITTERED and my* ***innermost being was wounded****, I was STUPID and DIDN'T UNDERSTAND; I was an UNTHINKING animal toward You.*

Psalm 73:21-25 *(NLT) Then I realized that my heart was BITTER, and I was* ***all torn up inside****. [22] I was so FOOLISH and IGNORANT - I must have seemed like a senseless animal to you. [23] Yet I still belong to you; you hold my right hand. [24] You guide me with your counsel, leading me to a glorious destiny. [25] Whom have I in heaven but you? I DESIRE YOU* ***more than anything*** *on earth.*

That is quite the statement. He describes the affects of bitterness as being wounded and torn up inside. That is a good description of bitterness. But the end result of bitterness on his relationship with God was even more astonishing. Asaph says that his bitterness made him ignorant and kept him from understanding God. So one truth that comes clearly through is that my attitude of anger or bitterness can keep me from knowing God in the way I long to. The good news is that Asaph dealt with his bitterness and sought out God and realized that God was with him at ALL times leading and guiding him personally. He now reminds himself that knowing God and being close to Him is BETTER than anything else. Riches and wealth and ease of life cannot compare to having an intimate relationship with God. So we must be aware of the danger: anger, envy, jealousy and bitterness keep us from drawing close to God.

PRAYER: Lord Jesus, please help me to put aside all envy or jealously, to deal with any anger or bitterness in my life. Help me to draw closer to You. Help me to grow and to be able to say there is NOTHING on earth I want more than YOU.

Pastor Mark Kieft
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