

**Hebrews 12:15-17**  
***“Any root of bitterness springing up”***

**Esau: The Prime Example of Bitterness**

- Unbelief in the Father’s will in suffering & despising His chastening (12:5) are the roots of bitterness that drive individuals to directly oppose His will unto their own disaster.

- The Hebrew’s unbelief and bitterness = despised God because they had to make a choice between Judaism and Jesus Christ; hence, the chastening of the *“Word of Exhortation”* (Acts 13:15; Heb.13:22).

**Comparison:**

- The Hebrews unbelief & bitterness was crucifying Jesus *“afresh”* (6:4-6)  
- Esau’s unbelief & bitterness attempted to murder the seed line of Christ (Gen.27:41)

**Esau’s Bitterness”**

- **Emotion:** apathetic, profane, sensuous, vengeful  
- **Action:** sell birthright, marry out of spite, murderous intent, opposed Seed promise  
- **Object:** God, Isaac, and Jacob  
- **Duration:** From realization that he would serve Jacob until the Edomites were extinguished in AD 70 (Oba.1:18)

**Esau’s Response (or the continual springing up of the root of bitterness):**

- Profanely sold his birthright in suffering *“at the point to die”* (Gen.25:32)  
- Exchanged the spiritual for the physical – should have submitted to God’s plan in faith  
- Fornicator – married Canaanites in spite of the birthright & seed promise through Jacob  
- Judith and Bashemath (Hittites) – *“grief of mind unto Isaac”* (Gen.26:35)  
- Adah (Hittite -36:2 ) Mahalath (Ishmaelite – 28:9 ) Aholibamah (Hivite – 36:2)  
- Hoped in his father’s favor to give him blessing on death bed, but tricked out of it (27:38)  
- Committed himself to hating and killing Jacob (Anti-Seed promise – Gen.27:41)

**Esau’s Root of Bitterness:**

- Esau hated God’s sovereign plan for his life  
- The Seed promise of the Messiah included the older serving the younger (Gen.25:22-24)  
- Cain → Abel, Ishmael → Isaac, Leah → Rachel, brothers → Joseph  
- Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob, and Esau knew the plan...they all operated carnally.  
- Favored by his father, Isaac.  
- Jacob, the heel grabber, took advantage of his position and tricked Esau

**Lasting Effects of Esau’s Bitterness:**

- David slew and enslaved the Edomites (I Chron.18:12-13)  
- The Edomites cooperated with the Philistine/Arabian invasion in Judah during the reign of Jehoram 848-841 BC (II Kgs.8:20-22; II Chron.21:16-17).  
- Edomites rejoiced in the plunder of Judah (Oba.1:12-14)  
  
- The Edomites *“again...had come and smitten Judah”* during reign of Ahaz (II Chron.28:17)  
- Herod claimed to be an Edomite; nevertheless, their identity was erased in AD 70 (Oba.1:18)

# A life spent opposing the will of God

Murderous Intent to the God-ordained Seed line of Jacob  
(Attempt to control life with hate)

His root of bitterness led to bitter tears of perpetual hatred toward Jacob

Hebrews – crucify Jesus “afresh”



Hardened determination to reverse God’s will  
(Attempt to control life with anger)

Spent his entire life thinking he could still obtain blessing on Isaac’s deathbed

Hebrews – forsake the assembling for Judaism



Fornicator  
(comfort seeking, spiteful, anti-Seed)

Spitefully married Hittites & Ishmaelites to oppose the Seed Promise

Hebrews – pursue sinful comfort amid test of faith



Profane – cross threshold from faith to unbelief  
(fearful, self-reliant unbelief, guilt, shame)

Exchanged the spiritual opportunity of faith for the physicality of instant gratification

Hebrews – exchange life of faith for “immediate relief”



Root of Bitterness = Unbelief

Despised God’s Plan to serve younger brother Jacob

Hebrews – angry they have to choose between:  
- Judaism or Christ  
- Family or Christ

## Uprooting Bitterness

### **Bitterness:**

- pikria (πικρία) – sharp, pungent, acrid (Heb.12:15; Acts 8:23, Rom.3:14, Eph.4:31)
- marar (מָרַר) - bitter gall and emotion (Gen.27:34, Ex.15:23, I Sam.1:10)
- “I’ll never get over it” - (you wont w/out the grace & mercy of Christ)
- Advanced anger that produces a range of emotion, resentment of God’s sovereign preparations, and unwillingness to reconcile because one did not get life on their own terms.

### **Choices:**

- Faith or Unbelief (God works all things for good v. self-reliant sabotage)
- Grace/Mercy or Bitterness
- Meditation on God’s Word or ***Fruitless remembering*** of the pain

### **Questions for Self-Evaluation:**

- #1 – When did you get angry? What was the situation?
- #2 – How did you react? Externally? Internally?
  - How often do you react to the thought of the situation?
- #3 – Why did you get angry? (Heart motives?)
  - E.g. “I want what I want, when I want it” “I need the love of *that* person” “I need to be in control for appearances”
- #4 – What are the consequences for your anger? Seen? Unseen?
- #5 – What is True? (How does God’s Word apply to my situation?)
- #6 – At what point do you turn to God for help?
  - Angry people often tell their problem to the wrong people...looking for affirmation instead of transformation
- #7 – How could you respond constructively & biblically?
- #8 – What are the consequences of faith & obedience?

### **How did Jesus Christ respond to the Father’s will?**

Bitterness or submission & obedience?

Hebrews 12:1-3

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.