

# “Quiet Talks On Marriage”

## Session III

### *“God’s Provision For ‘Victory’ Over Bitterness”*

In our last discussion, we looked at the destructive plan of our spiritual enemy, Satan, to destroy God’s plan for meaningful marriage. His plan is to carry a couple through the progression of . . .

“A Root  
“Unfulfilled Expectations” → “Hurt” → “Anger” → “A Wounded Spirit” → of  
Bitterness”!

**Q:** Have you taken time to think through this “progression”; better still, have you talked

through this “progression” together as a couple?

Review the “fingers” of the **Bad Hand** with me:

- 1) “Unfulfilled Expectations” → Those things we never expected to happen!  
→ Those repeated things that become a “pattern”,  
even after we have asked that they change!
- 2) “Hurt” → Our emotional response to these “disappointments”!  
→ The place where we ask, “Does he really love me?”  
--“How could she love me and do what she does?”
- 3) “Anger” → The unavoidable result of “Holding on to my hurt!”  
→ The sinful things I do because I have not surrendered my “hurt” to

God!

--Especially “Physical” and “Verbal” Abuse!

- 4) “A Wounded Spirit” → The progressive “death” of the relationship!  
→ The place where “I feel nothing”, but continue to go

through

the motions of being married!

- 5) “A Root of Bitterness” → The final stage where the “build-up of Bitterness”  
gains

control of my decisions!

→ The place where I feel that I must end the  
relationship

even if it means going against God!

--where I say, “I know what Gods says, but . . .”

Without God’s help, **we have no hope!**

But, God's Word is filled with His promises which **give hope** where there is none  
→ promises **which enable us** to "win" the battle for our marriage!

Two of my favorite "promises" are found in I John 4 and II Corinthians 10 →

1) **I John 4:4** gives this promise →

*" . . . greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world."*

I John 4:4

a. Look at the first part of this verse: It says, "*. . . **greater** is He who is in you . . .*"

--Jesus Christ is always "**greater**" than Satan, the "God of this world"!

b. Look at the second part of this verse: It states that the One who is "**greater**"

than Satan, "***lives within us!***" – "*He who is in you!*"

--Jesus Christ lives **in** every Christian!

--If we ever learn this Biblical "**fact**", we will **never** be the same!

--It means that every moment of every day, in every and all of life's situations,

Jesus Christ lives **in** me . . . and **nothing** can defeat who He is!

c. Understanding this spiritual truth "strips" Satan of his manipulation and control!

2) **II Cor. 10:3-5** gives additional insight to God's power within us →

*"For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but **divinely powerful** for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty*

*thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought*

*captive to the obedience of Christ."*

II Corinthians

10:3-5

a. These verses acknowledge that as Christians, we are in a very real "**warfare**"!

--A war is going on between God's "**truth**" and Satan's "**lies**"! Over time, Satan's

lies and deceptions "build up" like a "**wall**" – a "**fortress**" is built up against God

so that His "truth" cannot get through!

b. But, God has given the Christian spiritual “weapons” – “**divinely powerful**” weapons! God’s weapons “**destroy**” the “fortresses” Satan has built up in our lives!

c. Note carefully: Our human “weapons” are not effective against Satan, even when we think they are! Only those weapons which come from God are able to “destroy” what Satan has done! The “war” must be fought on the “spiritual” level, not the human!

--Let me pause to ask: Has Satan been effective in building up “fortresses” in your life – like “walls” in your mind which stand against God? These “fortresses” are thought patterns or “wrong thinking” that shut God’s thinking out! Even your best efforts will not tear them down – only God can do that by His Word and His Spirit!

d. The key is our thinking – our “thought processes”: These verses say that we must

*“take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.”*

--This is where the battle rages → in our minds! “**Who**” and “**What**” controls our

mind . . . our thinking? Is God in control, through His Word? Or, is Satan,

through this “world” he controls – the Bible says he is “the god of this world”?

I’m sure that you are familiar with Romans 12:1-2. It is a summary of the “battle”

for the mind that we are discussing . . . it says,

*“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing*

*of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good*

*and*

*acceptable, and perfect.”*

Romans

12:1-2

--Are we willing to make our “thoughts” **agree** with God?  
When we do, His power is released into our situation! Are you willing to .

. .

*“take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ?”*

But, let me warn you, even as we talk about this, a **battle** will rage within  
you . . .  
a very real “spiritual” battle! Satan will use any means to gain control of  
your  
mind and thoughts!

Okay, let’s list God’s weapons which are always “**greater**” than Satan’s  
weapons! As we do, let’s *“take every thought captive to the obedience of  
Christ!”* Let’s agree with God!

## What are God’s “Weapons”?

### I. The first of God’s “Weapons” is given in Ephesians 4:32.

“ \_\_\_\_\_ ”!

→ God’s undeserved “grace” flowing through me!

*“And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, **forgiving** each other,  
just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.”* Ephesians 4:32

#### A. What are the “Commands” of this verse?

1. Here, a Christian is commanded to “**be kind**” – at those times when we  
would

want to be “unkind”! The buildup of “Bitterness” in a relationship makes  
you

“**Unkind**” – in “thoughts”, “words”, and “actions”!

2. Here, a Christian is commanded to “**be tender-hearted**” – at those times  
when

we would want to be “hard-hearted”! “Bitterness” blocks the “love” of  
Christ  
from flowing through us – it “hardens” our heart! We are “hard-hearted”!

3. And, finally a Christian is commanded to “**be forgiving**” – at those times  
when

we would want to be "unforgiving"! At that time when to "forgive" would seem to be the wrong thing to do . . . because of what was done to me!

### **B. How were we "Forgiven" by God?**

--What does it mean to "**forgive**" – the way we were forgiven?

--We must ask the question: "**How**" did God forgive us?

The Apostle Paul gives the answer in Romans 5:8 →

*"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."*

a. First, Jesus Christ died for us when we **did not deserve it!**

He "demonstrated" His love when we were "sinners"!

→ We were in personal rebellion against God!

Our attitude toward God was "**NO**"!

→ So, Jesus Christ died for me **when I did not deserve it!**

b. Second, Jesus Christ died for us **before we asked for it** – long before we were

even born → He "anticipated" our need!

→ He knew we would not be able to "save"

ourselves!

→ So, He acted toward us, before we acted toward

Him!

### **C. What does this mean for a Christian?**

--A Christian is to "forgive" others in the same way Jesus Christ "forgave" us →

"freely, by grace!"

a. I am to "forgive" when it is **not deserved!**

--When the person who hurt me does not deserve "forgiveness"!

b. I am to "forgive" when it has **not been asked** for!

--When the person who hurt me has not asked for my "forgiveness"!

--And even worse, they are in total denial of any responsibility for what has

happened! When they are attempting to place the "blame" in me!

An Illustration:

Many times through the years, I have talked with people who are very "**Bitter**", and after listening to their story, I can agree that by all human reason, they seem

to be justified in feeling the way they do! But, their “Bitterness” is destroying them!

When I put this Biblical principle of “**Forgiveness**” before them, so often they

have answered in agonizing pain,

*“Pastor Jerry, I know that God tells me to forgive, **but, I CAN’T forgive them!**”*

(They can hardly force the words out of their lips!) ***“I CAN’T forgive them!”***

At this point, I often agree with them by saying, *“I know that this is something you*

*cannot do in your strength! It doesn’t make sense to us, but, since this is some-*

*thing that Jesus Christ, your Savior, is instructing you to do, will you trust that He*

*knows what is best . . . **will you obey Him?***

--At that moment, it is extremely important to understand that Biblical “Forgiveness” is not a “feeling”! It is not attempting to bring ourselves to the

place where we “feel” we can forgive – it is not a first an “emotion” – it is a

“choice”! It is an act of our **WILL**! It is a matter of “trust”!

**I can, I must, choose to “obey” God rather than to do what is seems right**

**to me!** Rather than “hold on” to the things that have “Hurt” me . . . in obedience

to the Lord Jesus Christ, “**I Forgive**”!

Another step that can be quite helpful is to speak out of your personal relationship

with Christ, and say, *“Lord Jesus, since this is a choice that I am making because*

*of my relationship with You, I do it in Your Name!”*

So, the prayer would be expressed, *“Heavenly Father, in the Name of Your Son,*

*Jesus Christ, I **forgive** ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) . . .”* and, you “name” that

person!

**“Forgiveness”** is an act of personal obedience to Jesus Christ! Obeying “Him” is thing that matters most to me!

Now, God knows our difficulty in taking this step of “obedience” – He knows how hard it is for us to “Forgive” when we have been deeply “Hurt”, so He makes a second provision – He gives a Second Weapon!

## II. The second of God’s “Weapons” is given Galatians 5:16.

“ \_\_\_\_\_ by the \_\_\_\_\_ ”!  
→ Obedience to the indwelling Holy Spirit!

*"But I say, walk by the Spirit,  
and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh."*

The focus here is on the Holy Spirit:

- Every Christian “has” Him!
- Every Christian is intended to “walk” by Him!
- He “enables” us to do what we cannot do on our own – to be “Christ-like”!

**A. Note:** A Christian must **know** that the Holy Spirit “lives” within them!  
--Many Christians do not know this fact!

*"Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?*

*For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body."*

I Corinthians 6:19-

20

--Every Christian is “indwelled” by the Holy Spirit from the moment of salvation!

*“ . . . your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you,*

*whom you have from God . . .”*

Since He is a “gift” from God . . . the Spirit’s “indwelling” cannot be lost;

He is a “permanent” resident! He is God’s “guarantee” of our salvation!

So, every Christian is “indwelled” by the Holy Spirit!

--The Spirit’s permanent “indwelling” **then** allows for His “filling” – we are “filled”

by the Spirit whenever we are walking in “fellowship” with Christ. It is a matter

of “control” – who is in control of the life – “self” or “Christ”? There is no such

thing as being “filled” with the Spirit, when I am controlling my own life.

The

“mark” of His filling is His control!

--Note this important distinction:

A Christian can lose the “filling” of the Holy Spirit – by loss of “fellowship” with

Christ, but the Spirit’s “indwelling” can never be lost! His “indwelling” is a gift

that Jesus Christ never “takes back” from His child!

Even when I sin, God’s Spirit still “indwells” me. He is “grieved” about my sin

and desires for me return to “fellowship” with Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit

brings “conviction” of my sin which leads to “confession” of my sin!

This “restores” me to “fellowship” with Christ!

This ministry of the Holy Spirit is also demonstrated in our earthly families →

When parents have a broken relationship with one of their children, do they

“disown” the child and remove the child from the family – “NO”! Instead, they

do everything possible to “restore” the relationship – they “wait” for, and “encourage”, that child to come home -- to rejoin the “fellowship” of the family!



- So, every Christian “has” the Holy Spirit!
  - And, every Christian is instructed to “walk” by Him!
  - We don’t need to pray to get Him; we need to pray to obey Him!
- He will maintain our “fellowship” with God and within our homes!

## B. Helpful insight into “Walking” by Holy Spirit!

- The verse says, “Walk by the Spirit . . .”
- The word that is used here, “walk”, is very descriptive – very helpful!
- It normal use, it means “to walk about”:
  - it refers to where you place your feet!
  - it refers to the obvious fact that to “walk about” requires that you, “put one foot in front of the other.”
- In its figurative meaning, this word refers to the “living of life”, or how you “conduct your life” → your “lifestyle”!
- So, the command of this verse is: “Conduct your life” → by the Holy Spirit!

Here’s what “Walking by the Spirit” looks like!

### 1. It is as simple as “walking”!

If you want to walk across a room, you stand to your feet and your mind subconsciously “tells” you to put one foot in front of the other, in the direction you want to go! It’s that simple – you’re not even aware that you are doing it!

### 2. In a very similar way, if as a Child of God, you want to “walk” through the day in

obedience to God → the Holy Spirit “lives” in you to make that possible. You

simply take one step at a time through the day → you “put your foot”

where He

“tells” you . . . not where you might choose to “put your foot”! You

“walk” by

His guidance and enablement!

--The result: You are “Walking by the Spirit!”

--Your “words”, “choices”, and “attitudes” come from God – not from you!

## C. The promise of this verse is the “hope” we have been looking for!

→ a Christian can avoid the control the “the (sinful) flesh”!

“ . . . you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.”

--The “flesh” is our “sin nature” – our “old man” which has no desire to

be under

God's control! It is that part of us that demands that we be in control of our

"words", "choices", and "attitudes"!

--However, when I consciously, "Walk *by* the Spirit", Jesus Christ is seen in

me! His "life" controls me!

--So, as you deal with the difficulties of your marriage, you can avoid the hurtful "words", "choices", and "attitudes" that would be expressed out of

your "Bitterness", and in their place, the "love" of Christ can flow through

you!

--You are "enabled" to do what you never could on your own: **You can forgive!**

**But**, I can hear someone say, "*Pastor Jerry, I know that promise – the promise that*

*the Holy Spirit lives in me to "guide" my words, my attitudes, and my actions – I've know that for years, but, I still can't do it! . . . I'm not able to do the things I*

*know I should do! What is wrong?"*

### III. The third of God's "Weapons" is given Galatians 2:20.

**"\_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_"!**

→ Jesus Christ is the "source" of life!

*"I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and delivered Himself up for me."*  
Galatians 2:20

**A. This verse helps us understand the "heart" of the problem** in our lives as

Christians, as well as the specific problems in our marriage!

→ **"I"** have been the "source" of my living – **"I"** have been doing the living!

→ “I” have been in control of the relationship in my marriage! The “words” have been mine; the “choices” have been mine; and, the “attitude” has been mine!

As long as that is true, there is no hope of any real change in me! I do not have the power to change myself!  
--Just as we could not “save” ourselves, but had to receive salvation as a “free gift” from God, so it is in our lives after we are saved – we do not have the power to live as we should! We must receive that “ability” from Him!

**“Bitterness” is the manifestation of the “Self-Life”!** It is who “I” am!  
-- “I” am the heart of my problems!  
-- This explains why “I” cannot fix my problems!

**B. This verse helps us God’s solution to our basic problem!**  
When Jesus Christ died and rose again, He accomplished something “life-changing” for every Christian. Not only did He free us from the “**penalty**” of sin (called “justification”), He also freed us from the “**power**” of sin (called “sanctification”) – He broke the power of our “sin” nature -- the “sin” nature which has made us a slave to sin!

How did God do this? The verse says,

*“I have been **crucified with Christ**; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me!”*

This sounds strange to us the first time we hear it, but the verse says clearly that God “put my sin nature, my natural man, to death”! I have been “crucified” with Christ! When Jesus Christ “died”, I shared in His “death”! He took me “out”

of where I was, in “sin” and “death”, and He “put” me **into Christ!**

-- “Sin” no longer is my master → I am free of sin’s slavery!

-- “Death” no longer holds me → I have been made “**alive**” in Christ!

This is the most important lesson we learn as a Christian. Living the Christian

life is not something we do **for** God; it is something He does **in** us! At the moment we were saved, we were placed “**into**” **Christ!**

--Jesus Christ is now “My” life!

--It is “**the Christ-life**” instead of “**the self-life**”!

*“ . . .it is no longer ‘I’ who live, but ‘**Christ**’ lives in me!”*

### **C. This verse helps us know “\_\_\_\_\_” we live each day!**

*“ . . .Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by **faith** in the Son of God, who loved me and delivered Himself up for me.”*

After pointing out that Jesus Christ “lives” in every Christian, the Apostle Paul

talks about **how** we live from that point onward. He states that his “life” **after**

being saved was a “**faith**” life. Day-by-day he “believed” what God said He had

done to free or liberate him from slavery to “sin” in daily experience.

a. So, here are the facts: “Christ lives in me!”

--As a Christian I do not “live” out of who I am -- I live out of “Who” Christ is in

me! He is now my “life”!

b. But, I must learn a “faith” walk -- one of taking God at His Word.

--He says He has delivered me from the “power” of sin, as well as the “penalty” of sin!

c. This means that I am no longer a “slave” to sin! This is a Biblical “fact”! “Sin” has no right to “control” me.

--I must “know” this to be true . . . then I must begin to “apply” it by **faith** in my

life – and, very specifically, to my marriage and family!

**Now you know where we have been going with this Biblical**

## **background!**

When I experience difficulty in my marriage . . . I can **agree** with what God says

in His Word! **Jesus Christ lives in me!**

When I feel as though I am "powerless" to resist the "hurt" and keep it from

moving to "anger", to a "wounded spirit", to a "root of bitterness" . . . I can **agree** God!

**\*\*I am not powerless! Christ "lives" in me! I CAN "cast" my hurt upon**

**Him → He can stop the hurt from becoming sinful "anger"!**

**\*\*I CAN "forgive"! He will enable me to "forgive" . . . where it is "not deserved"! . . . where it has not been "asked for"!**

***"I can do all things through Him who strengthens me." Phil. 4:13***

**As we come to the end of our discussion, let me speak to you from my heart:**

**1. Where are you as a couple?** "Who" owns your marriage? Have you ever acknow-

ledged that it belongs to God for His glory? Would you say these words to God in

prayer: *"Heavenly Father, You are the owner of our marriage! Forgive me for treating it as if it belonged to me for my purposes! I place my marriage and family*

*into Your hands for Your glory!*

**2. Where are you as an individual?** The "Christ-life" for the "Self-life" begins with you

individually – not with the marriage! You cannot make this decision for your partner!

It is extremely personal; only you can make this choice!

→ Would you pray this prayer: *"Heavenly Father, I know that the real problem in my*

*life is not my marriage – it is with me! I have not been walking in "fellowship" with*

*Jesus Christ. I have not been “walking by the Holy Spirit! I have been running my own life!*

*-- Lord Jesus, I confess that You live in me, and that You have given me Your*

*Spirit to maintain my ‘Walk’ . . . my fellowship with You. I want to be restored*

*to a walk of “fellowship” with You!*

*-- I acknowledge that, because You “live” in me, I can ‘Forgive’ those who have*

*“Hurt” me! **Father, in the name of Jesus, I forgive . . .!**”*

Several years ago, I taught these principles of gaining God’s “Victory” over “Bitterness” in a Bible School in Germany.

--An older lady, a grandmother, attended the classes as a guest of one of the students.

--At the end of this “Session” on “God’s Weapons” for conquering “Bitterness”, I asked

the students to bow in silent prayer and to allow God to examine their heart and life.

After a few minutes of silence, I led in a closing prayer where I asked the students to

accept what God promises in His Word about conquering “Bitterness” . . . and then

I dismissed the group.

--All of a sudden, this Filipino grandmother came charging from the back of the class-

room, shouting to the top of her voice, ***“I’m free . . . I’m free . . . I’m free!”***

--She then explained to me that she had “obeyed” God during our time of prayer by

choosing to “forgive” a member of her family who had “hurt” her when she was a

young woman! She had lived her adult lifetime in the bondage of “Bitterness”!

She had not been able to “Forgive”, but learning in a new way that Jesus Christ

“lives” in her, she was enabled to do what she could not do!

--She could not contain her “Joy” in gaining “Freedom” through Jesus Christ!

***“I’m free . . . I’m free . . . I’m free!”***

Conclusion:

- May I ask again, "Where are you? Are you "free"?"
  - Did you bring the "Bondage" of Bitterness into your marriage?
  - Or, has "Bitterness" taken control since you have been married?
- Would you take the time, right now, as much time as you need, to ask God to "examine" your heart and life?
- Will you "obey" Him? He wants you to be "free"!
- Oh, by the way, when you are "free" from "Bitterness", you become a different person!
  - What would happen at your house today, if you became a different person?

**Admonishment: May I admonish you, don't be bitter, be free!**  
**When Christ "frees" you from Bitterness, you are a new person!**