

## **Bitterness (Assembly) – myfishbites.com**

Proverbs 18.20-21 says: *From the fruit of his mouth a man's stomach is filled; with the harvest from his lips he is satisfied. The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit.*

These are powerful statements from The Bible. If we take these together with James 3.8 which tells us that the tongue is a powerful weapon, we need to think very carefully about what we say. Matthew 12.34-37 says: *For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him.. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.*

So we learn that our tongue is powerful because of the words that can come out of it, negatively or positively. Proverbs tells us that a person's stomach will be filled with the fruit of his mouth. So, whatever comes out of your mouth, is what you will get back, what you will receive, take in. So if you speak bitterly, you will see bitterness everywhere and feel bitter. However, if you speak words of kindness and goodness, you will reap a harvest of goodness that will satisfy. We also know from Proverbs that the tongue has the power of life and death. You can crush people or build them up with what you say. You can bring a spiritual sense of death or life, bad or good by what you choose to say. So choose life, choose goodness. Don't be a critical and negative person. Be honest, speak the truth. But do it in the right way to encourage, build up and lift up. We can allow things that happen to change us for the better (and not make us bitter).

### **Activity**

Bring along some bitter foods and just check first that people aren't allergic to things.

Ask for 3 volunteers to come up to the front. Blindfold them if you want and tell them they are going to do a taste test.

Person 1 - gets raw coffee. Person 2 - gets raw lemon. Person 3 - Grapefruit. (You can also use artichoke / asparagus / uncured olives etc. Basically use foods that aren't likely to cause anyone to throw up, but are bitter).

Then each volunteer gets something nice - a small present or bar of chocolate etc.

## **Video Clip - Spiderman 2**

Peter's best mate, Harry Osborn, is being torn apart by bitterness and hate about his father's death. He is prepared to hand over power to a madman in order to find out if Spiderman (as Spidey killed his father). When he finds Spiderman is Peter Parker, he initially helps. But at the end of the movie, we see the struggle within Harry and he smashes a window hiding a room built by his father as the goblin. Cue Spiderman 3, but it's a lesson at the destructive power of bitterness, hate and lack of forgiveness.

## **Video Clip - Batman Begins**

**SAY** - As a motive, revenge is a bad one, and the bitterness that causes this. The Bible makes it clear that we are to forgive those who hurt us, do evil and who are our enemies. How do you respond to that? It's hard, but there's no doubt that only by forgiving can we be released from our past. Revenge only creates more bitterness, resentment and hurt.

Bruce has grown older and has returned home to be at the hearing for the man who shot his father, when Bruce was just a boy. The man is up for release and Bruce goes with his old child (girl) friend, Rachel. Unknown to her, he takes a gun to the hearing and waits outside to shoot the man who killed his father. However, as the man leaves court, he is shot dead by someone else.

His bitterness infects him like a disease. But forgiveness heals any broken heart, though it may take time.

Matthew 18 talks about forgiveness. Jesus told Peter that he should forgive people even if they did wrong to him 77 times! Jesus also told Peter and us today, that we should forgive people otherwise God can't forgive us. This is hard and sometimes we have to keep on saying 'I forgive .....

' time after time. But we must do it. Forgiveness heals. You and them.

## **TOXIC - Science Daily Article..**

Toxins in food often have a bad, bitter taste that makes people want to spit them out. Research from the University of California, Irvine found that bitterness also slows the digestive process, keeping bad food in the stomach longer and increasing the chances that it will be expelled. This second line of defense in the gut against dietary toxins also triggers the production of a hormone that makes people feel full, presumably to keep them from eating more of the toxic food.

**Say** – we'll look at the power of forgiveness in time, but it brings such healing. Bitterness leads to stress and stress causes 75-90% of our physical, mental and emotional illnesses.

Stay well – forgive someone. You say you can't forgive but what is the choice. You either forgive or you get eaten up inside from bitterness. The only person it destroys is you.

## **STORIES - (Use personal stories here as appropriate)**

These two stories below illustrate the power of forgiveness and how two Christian families have come to terms with great loss.

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/london/content/articles/2008/09/15/croydon\\_stabbing\\_oliver\\_feature.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/london/content/articles/2008/09/15/croydon_stabbing_oliver_feature.shtml)

Promising footballer Oliver Kingonzila was stabbed outside the E Bar, South End at the weekend. Now his parents Caroline and Kimbena say, as Christians, they have to forgive. "I don't have room for bitterness .... I have hope. Oliver is in heaven. I won't see him in the flesh again but, I will see him. By my own strength I can't [forgive] because it's my baby but, the word, the spirit of God says I have to forgive. God is the judge of those boys".

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/merseyside/4471440.stm>

"Why live a life sentence? Hate killed my son, so why should I be a victim too?" said Mrs Walker. "Unforgiveness makes you a victim and why should I be a victim? Anthony spent his life forgiving. His life stood for peace, love and forgiveness and I brought them up that way. "I have to practice what I preach. I don't feel any bitterness towards them really, truly, all I feel is... I feel sad for the family." Her feelings are echoed by daughter Dominique, whose appeal in the aftermath of Anthony's death was seen as a key turning point in the police investigation. The 20-year-old told BBC One's Real Story that she stood by her decision then to forgive whoever killed her brother. "I did say I forgive and I do still stand by that because you have to. That's one of the things I was raised on and what my mum taught me. "I feel sorry for them because they didn't know what they were doing, they don't understand the magnitude of what they've done."

## **Conclusion**

We have two choices: We can allow bitterness to destroy us, or we can allow God to develop us into the people He wants us to be. We must choose to view our circumstances as tools to develop our lives.