

Forgiveness

Common Ground

What's a time you were upset when you were younger and it felt like a big deal, but you laugh about it now?

Known Truth

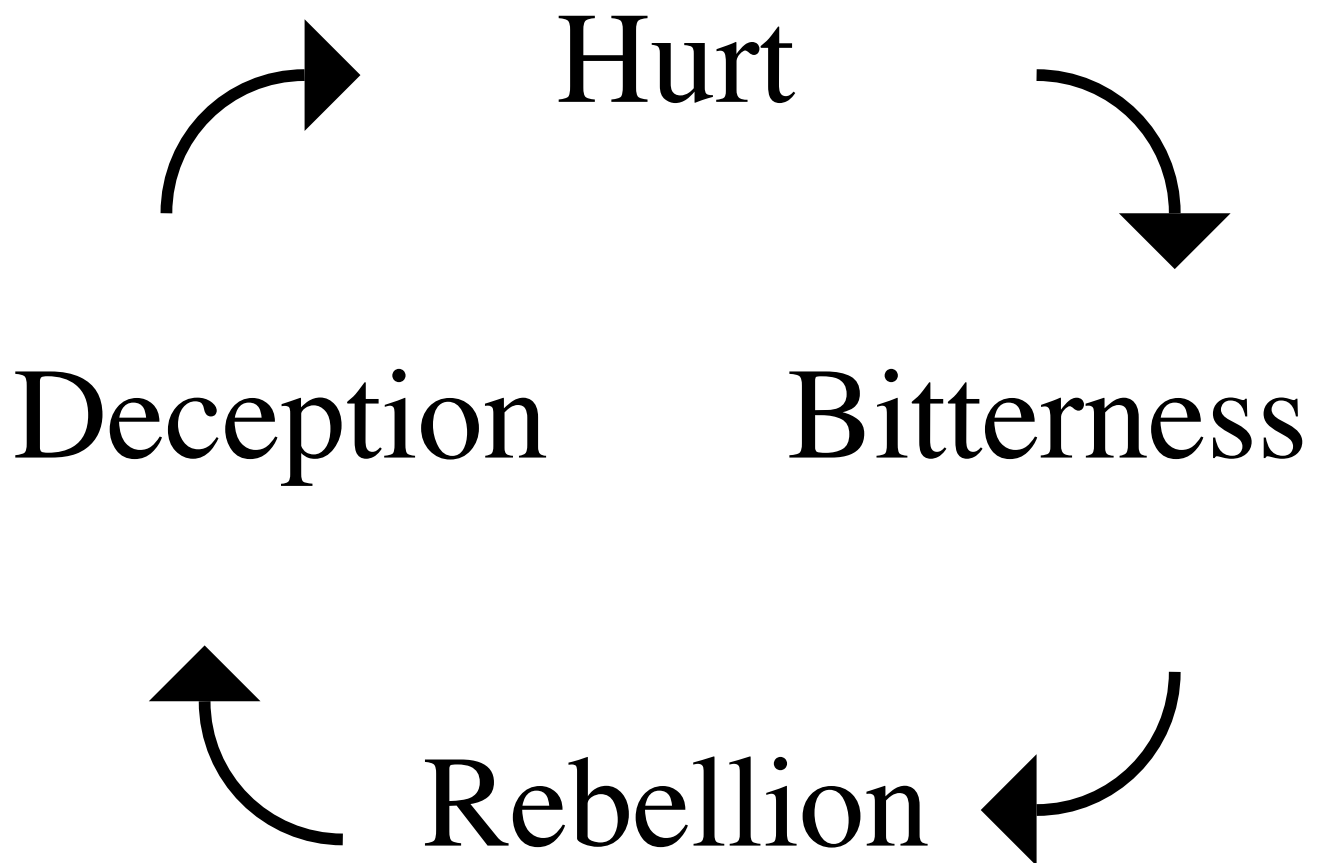
Everyone gets hurt – that's not wrong – but the way you deal with it makes all the difference

Story

*Give an example of the hurt and bitterness cycle, maybe from your own life or someone you've known. *

Hurt and Bitterness Cycle

If not dealt with correctly, hurt and bitterness can form a destructive cycle that multiplies hurt between people.



1. Hurt

- Everyone gets hurt at some point
- What are ways people respond when they feel hurt?
 - Being sensitive or irritable
 - Little or no gratitude
 - Holding grudges

- Etc.

- How do you respond when you are hurt?
- Hurts can be like scabs -- you can choose to leave it but if you keep picking at it, it will never heal

2. Bitterness

- Bitterness is like keeping a filing cabinet of past hurts and wrongs in your mind. Every time you experience a wrong, you make a note of it and file it away.
 - Even small things can make us explode if we're storing up and constantly reliving stores of past wrongs
- If we store up these past hurts, they'll distort the way we see people around us since the first thing we'll think of when we see a person is everything they've done to us.
- Bitterness not dealt with fester and becomes poisonous to our minds

15 See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no "root of bitterness" springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled

Hebrews 12:15

3. Open Rebellion

- Here, your pain moves from internal to external
- You begin reject authority and become your own boss – make a statement of your wrongs
 - For example, someone that's bitter towards their father might begin to yell back, stop listening to, and rebel against him.
- Instead of just seething inwardly, you'd begin to openly flaunt your sin
- Bitter people will find other bitter people to hang out with
 - They will find solidarity with each other but will brood in bitterness together

4. Deception

- Finally after poisoning ourselves with bitterness and rebellion, we start hurting others around us. Hurt people hurt others
 - For example, someone that's bitter towards a friend might lash back out at the person
 - A bitter person might be hateful to other people around them too besides just
- You become like what you fixate and focus on
 - If your life becomes defined by a hurt you've experienced and your bitterness towards a person, by fixating on that person you may end up more like them
 - For example, people with abusive parents will often become abusive parents.

- In hurting other people around you, you seed the hurt and bitterness cycle in their lives
- Is there a way to break this cycle?

Does God get hurt?

- God also experiences hurt
 - Jesus was slandered and wrongly accused, abandoned by his closest friends, mocked and humiliated, and finally murdered
 - By experiencing the same hurts that we face, Jesus relates, understands, and empathizes with us
- God experienced the worst hurts but still forgives
 - Forgiveness doesn't mean the wrongs are whitewashed or brushed aside

Bitterness Hurt Cycle

Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?”

Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.

“Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold was brought to him. Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.

“At this the servant fell on his knees before him. ‘Be patient with me,’ he begged, ‘and I will pay back everything.’ The servant’s master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.

“But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins. He grabbed him and began to choke him. ‘Pay back what you owe me!’ he demanded.

“His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.’

“But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened.

“Then the master called the servant in. ‘You wicked servant,’ he said, ‘I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn’t you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?’ In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.

“This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

Matthew 18:21-35

What to do

1. Make a list of people who've hurt you
2. Make another list of the things you have done to hurt others
3. Make a third list of how you have hurt the Lord
4. Pray and ask the forgiveness of God and other people
5. Forgive the people that have hurt you
6. Destroy your lists / files in filing cabinet