

Small Group Study Questions: Digging Up Roots of Bitterness

Opening Question:

If you could use any tool or method to remove weeds from your garden, what would you choose and why? (This relates to the pastor's amusing story about using a flamethrower on weeds)

General Observation:

1. In the sermon, the pastor talks about bitterness being like a weed with deep roots. What are some ways you've seen bitterness impact people's lives?

Understanding the Message:

2. The pastor mentions three things that typically plant a "seed of bitterness" in our lives. What are these three things, and why do you think they have such a powerful effect on us?

3. In Ephesians 4:31-32, the passage describes a progression from bitterness to other negative behaviors. Can you list these behaviors and explain how you think they might be connected?

4. The pastor uses the analogy of "archaeologists" to describe bitter people. What does he mean by this, and how does it relate to harboring hurts?

Personal Application:

5. The sermon suggests that bitterness can affect us physically, mentally, and spiritually. Have you ever experienced or witnessed the effects of long-term bitterness in someone's life? How did it manifest?

6. The pastor emphasizes the importance of forgiveness in overcoming bitterness. He says, "You can be bitter or better, but you cannot be both." How do you interpret this statement, and what challenges do you face in choosing forgiveness over bitterness?

7. In the sermon, the pastor shares a personal story about forgetting past offenses. How easy or difficult do you find it to "forget" past hurts, and what strategies have you found helpful in this process?

Action Steps:

8. The sermon outlines four practical steps to deal with bitterness: forgive, forget, be thankful, and grow up. Which of these do you find most challenging, and what is one specific action you can take this week to work on that area?

9. The pastor encourages listeners to be "Teflon people" rather than "Velcro people" when it comes to hurts and offenses. What is one situation in your life where you can practice being more "Teflon" this week?

Sample Prayer:

Dear Heavenly Father, we come to you acknowledging that we all struggle with bitterness at times. We ask for Your grace to help us dig up the roots of bitterness in our lives. Give us the strength to forgive as You have forgiven us, the wisdom to be thankful even in difficult circumstances, and the maturity to grow in Your likeness. Help us to be "Teflon people," not allowing hurts and offenses to stick to us, but instead reflecting Your love and grace to others. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.