

**A Root of Bitterness  
or  
the Fruit of the Spirit?**



**1) Offence**  
***skandalon*** – to trip or cause someone  
to stumble or fall

***'Then He said to the disciples, "It is impossible that no offenses should come, but woe to him through whom they do come! It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones'***  
**(Luke 17:1-2)**

**It is possible to offend through our  
words**

***'For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body'***

**(James 3:2)**

**or deeds**

***'It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak'***

**(Rom.14:21)**

**This doesn't mean we compromise  
truth in order not to offend**

*'Then His disciples came and said to Him, "Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?" But He answered and said, "Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch"'*

**(Matt. 15:12-14)**

### Paul's teaching:

*'...that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ'*

**(Phil.1:10)**

### Paul's example:

*'I myself always strive to have a conscience without offense toward God and men'*

**(Acts 24:16)**

### Paul's caution:

*'Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them'*

**(Rom. 16:17)**

## **2) Anger**

**Anger is a response to a hurt or an offence. Anger, as such, is not sinful. It becomes sinful when it is destructive.**

**Sinful anger can be expressed either externally or internally, i.e. by *ventilation* or by *internalization***

***'Be angry, and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil'***

**(Eph.4:26-27)**

**But how do we deal with situations  
which make us angry?**

**Through loving confrontation**

***'Let each one of you speak truth'*  
(Eph.4:25)**



***'You shall not go about as a talebearer among your people; nor shall you take a stand against the life of your neighbour: I am the LORD. You shall not hate your brother in your heart. You shall surely rebuke your neighbour and not bear sin because of him. You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbour as yourself: I am the LORD'***

**(Lev.19:16-18)**

### 3) Resentment

The NT Greek uses different words to distinguish different kinds of anger

The word *orgizo* means to provoke or arouse to anger, including justifiable anger. This is the word that is used of both God and Jesus being angry.

But it can easily degenerate into another form of anger, *parorgismos*, which is a settled, continuous state of anger.

This is resentment.

**Both these words are used in Eph.4:26:**

***'Be angry (orgizo), and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your wrath (parorgismos)'***

**The word 'resentment' is from a Latin word *satire*, meaning to feel**

***Resentment, then, means to feel again and again***

**To resent is to nurse a grudge**

***'Herodias held it against John'***  
**(Mk.6:19)**

**The word Mark uses to describe her  
resentment in this case is *enecho*; it  
means to be enraged with, to set  
oneself against, to have it in for  
someone**

## 4) Bitterness

**Whilst resentment is anger which is cherished or nursed, bitterness is anger which has reached a level that it overflows and infects others**

***'...whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness'***  
**(Rom.3:14)**

***'...look diligently lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled'***  
**(Heb.12:15)**

## People become bitter with:

**\*God**

**\*The Church**

**\*Fellow-Christians**

**\*Their partners** *'Husbands love your wives and do not be bitter towards them'* **(Col.3:19)**

## **Forgiveness is the antidote to bitterness**

***'Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you'***

**(Eph.4:31-32)**

**Forgiveness, mercy, kindness, love,  
patience, etc. are the fruit of the Spirit**

***It is what we experience by  
beholding Jesus***