

large root. The poisonous fruit of bitterness is regret, self-righteousness, grudges and hatred. Have you witnessed this poisonous fruit in others? In yourself? Can you identify the seed of offense that grew into bitterness that bore the fruit of regret and hatred? Contemplate these concepts and questions and write your thoughts here.

Thursday, December 17

Read Ephesians 4:31-32. In dealing with bitterness we must realize that bitterness can be eliminated with kindness and compassion. We often hear of dealing with difficult people by “killing them with kindness.” The problem with this concept is that it is simply a topical cure for a deeply rooted issue. Like a cancer within our bodies, we must be gentle (kind?) in removing the bitterness, giving the root of bitterness time to wither and decrease. Rather than killing “them” with kindness, make sure you are focused on the root of bitterness and the seed of offense that led to that root. We kill the bitterness within a person, not the person! Then, as the bitterness is reduced, we can begin to explore what it means to pursue peace with others. Pray for God’s guidance as you write your ideas on how to kill bitterness with kindness and compassion here.

Friday, December 18

Read Ephesians 4:31-32. The second way you kill bitterness is by forgiveness. How do you define forgiveness? During the message it was mentioned that “True forgiveness means no longer holding another person responsible for your pain.” This is about you as the one offering forgiveness. Remember, you cannot control what people do, but you can control how you respond. In the example of Christ himself, how are you seeking to forgive others so that your soul is healed and you can pursue peace unencumbered? Write your thoughts here as you pray for that peace.

Message Notes – December 13, 2020

Travel Light – Letting Go of Bitterness*

- I. We’ve been talking about traveling light during this Advent Season and letting go of that which _____ holds us back from growing in our relationship with one another and with our loving Creator.
 - A. As we travel through this life, we _____ hurts and disappointments, distractions and failures; we accumulate bitterness.
 - B. The author of Hebrews tells us, “Pursue _____ with everyone, that no root of bitterness springs up and causes trouble, and through it many become defiled.” (Hebrews 12:14-15)
 - C. With some people, it’s a little _____ to pursue peace?
 1. Still, we are called by God to _____ others.
 2. We are called by God to grow in _____ in our relationships and to build _____ in our relationships
 - D. Here’s the big idea for today – the Central idea for our Central Church community: You cannot _____ what people do, but you can _____ how you respond.
- II. There are two _____ with bitterness.
 - A. First, bitterness has a _____ root.

 - B. Second, bitterness produces _____ fruit.

*Hebrews 12:11-15 and Matthew 1:18-25

- III. So what can we do to _____ a root of bitterness? Paul wrote, “Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you.” (Ephesians 4:31-32)
- A. First, you kill bitterness with kindness and _____.
- B. You also kill bitterness with _____.
- IV. We _____ that bitterness has a dangerous root and produces poisonous fruit; and we know that we can kill bitterness with kindness, compassion and forgiveness.
- A. This is not just about us as individuals; this is about _____.
- B. It’s about more than just _____; it’s about the _____.
- C. “Pursue peace with everyone, and see to it that no root of bitterness springs up and causes trouble, and through it _____ become defiled.” (Hebrews 12:14-15)

Daily Devotional Guide

The following is a daily devotional and study guide meant to enhance your understanding of the message and grow as a Christian.

It is offered for your personal reflection or to share with others.

Monday, December 14

Read Hebrews 12:11-15. The writer of Hebrews advises us to pursue peace with everyone and to make sure that not root of bitterness “springs up” to cause trouble and through it many become defiled. In the message it was mentioned that it’s a

challenge to pursue peace. Read over this scripture once more and think about people in your life with which you find it difficult to pursue peace. Why is it difficult to have a peaceful relationship with them? Can you detect a root of bitterness “springing up” that escalates the difficulty between you? Contemplate these questions and write your thoughts here.

Tuesday, December 15

Read Matthew 1:18-25. Yesterday you considered a passage from Hebrews which warned about a root of bitterness springing up and defiling many. Roots of bitterness grow out of seeds of offense. Little offenses that are left unattended can grow to roots of bitterness that can destroy relationships and the lives of those who allow bitterness to grow within them.

Think about Joseph and Mary as they must have encountered the scorn of many in their small village as Mary was found to be with child before their marriage was finalized. The gossip and speculation about them must have planted seed of offense that could have grown into bitterness between Joseph and Mary. Their faith and relationship with God surely sustained them as they dealt with those seeds of offense. How have you dealt with seeds of offense? Have you witnessed the potential for those seeds of offense to grow into a bitter root? The Central idea of the message was you cannot control what people do but you can control how you respond. Contemplate these questions and write your response here.

Wednesday, December 16

Read Hebrews 12:11-15. Pastor Chris Beall from Life Church made the observations that “bitterness has a dangerous root and a bears poisonous fruit.” The danger of a root of bitterness is that it will grow completely out of control if left unattended. People who are described as bitter mostly likely did not become bitter overnight. Rather a small offense was allowed to grow into a