

4. *The Principle of Suffering*

Suffering can be God's loving reminder that we have violated His ways: *"It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes"* (Psalm 119:71). Suffering can be motivation for spiritual growth: *"But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you"* (I Peter 5:10). Suffering is preparation for future leadership: *"If we suffer, we shall also reign with him . . ."* (II Timothy 2:12).

Suffering forces us to stop sinning: *"Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin"* (I Peter 4:1). Suffering is also God's way of drawing others to Himself: *"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God . . ."* (I Peter 3:18). This is our calling when another person offends us.

HOW TO TURN BITTERNESS INTO FORGIVENESS

1. List their offenses.
2. List your offenses.
3. Purpose to ask for forgiveness.
4. Fully forgive them.

A. UNDERSTAND FORGIVENESS

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B. CAUSES OF PERSISTENT BITTERNESS

1. _____
 2. _____ *Romans 2:1-3*
 3. _____ *Proverbs 26:2*
 4. _____ *Romans 12:19*
 5. _____ *Luke 12:15*
- Psalm 15:3*

STEPS OF DISLOYALTY

<i>Inward Attitudes</i>	<i>Outward Evidences</i>	<i>Insights</i>
1. _____ _____	_____ _____	<i>" . . . I have no man like-minded, who will naturally care for your state. For all seek their own . . ." (Philippians 2:20-21).</i>
2. _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	<i>" . . . Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men . . ." (Colossians 3:23-24; see also Luke 17:7-10).</i>
3. _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	<i>" . . . [A] house divided against itself shall not stand" (Matthew 12:25; see also Psalm 15:3).</i>
4. _____ _____	_____ _____	<i>" . . . Ye which are spiritual, restore such an one . . ." (Galatians 6:1).</i>

GOSSIP: _____

SLANDER: _____

The sequence of this chart is clearly illustrated in Absalom's independent spirit toward his father and his subsequent murdering of his brother, stealing the hearts of the men of Israel, and usurping his father's throne. (See II Samuel 13-18.)

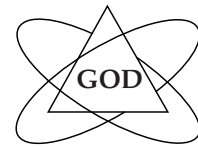
C. CONSEQUENCES OF BITTERNESS

1. _____

Numbers 5:27

2. _____

3. _____



D. STEPS TO TURN BITTERNESS TO FORGIVENESS

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Luke 23:34

Job 1:21

_____ *Genesis 50:20*

_____ *II Samuel 16:10–12*

4. _____ *I Thessalonians 5:18*

_____ *Matthew 10:29*

_____ *I Timothy 6:6*

5. _____

_____ *Matthew 18:35*

6. _____

7. _____ *Book of Psalms*

_____ *Matthew 6:21*

_____ *Matthew 5:41*

_____ *Luke 17:7–10*

_____ *Matthew 5:40*

E. LEARN GOD'S PURPOSES FOR SUFFERING

1. _____ *I Peter 4:1*

2. _____ *Colossians 3:2*

3. _____ *Colossians 1:24*

4. _____ *Matthew 5:13*

5. _____ *I Peter 4:13–14*

6. _____ *II Corinthians 1:5–6*

7. _____ *Philippians 1:29*

Basic Commitment:

“My Father in Heaven, because You have been so merciful to me and have forgiven my great debt to You through Christ’s atonement, I now fully forgive from my heart those who have offended me, and I ask You for wisdom and grace in knowing how to invest practical ‘treasures’ in their lives. Amen.”