

BITTER WORDS

"Hide me from the secret counsel of evil doers. From the tumult of the workers of iniquities; who have whet their tongue like a sword and have aimed their arrows, even bitter words" (Psalms 64:2f).

The word "bitter" is defined as "sharp" and that is the Psalmist's thought when he states that workers of iniquities have aimed their arrows, even bitter words. Arrows are designed to pierce and bitter words are also designed to pierce the heart. Bitter words can be "sharp words," words that take no thought for the feelings of another. Paul urged, "Husbands love your wives, and be not bitter against them" (Col. 3:19). When a husband (or wife) speaks roughly and critical to his mate, that mate may say nothing but always carry that injury in her heart. The same can be true with our children. "Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4). We may provoke our children to wrath by expecting of them more than they can ever manage. We can also provoke them to wrath by our sharp and critical words.

Bitter words may also be the result of long harbored dwelling on either real or imagined injuries one has experienced, for "bitter words" arise from "bitter hearts." Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks! It is a sort of "verbal revenge;" a desire to hurt with words as one feels he has himself been injured. Paul quotes Psalms 10:7 in Romans 3:14 which reads: "whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness." Paul's use of this passage from the Psalms was to show that such a man was a sinner. The man who "curses" is a sinner. The man whose mouth is filled with bitterness is a sinner as well!

Bitter words are destructive both to the person who speaks them and to those he aims those bitter words toward. "But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed lest ye be consumed one of another" (Gal. 5:15). One only has to observe two snarling dogs as they bite and claw each other to appreciate the apostle's statement. It is nearly always true that in a dog fight both dogs suffer injury although one may suffer more severely than the other. Bitterness is a cancer that eats away at him who harbors it. It is imperative that God's children remember "as ye would that men should do unto you, do ye also unto them" (Matt. 7:12). Let us heed the apostolic admonition: "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and railings, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in

Christ forgave you" (Eph. 4:31f).

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