

FALL 2019

MASTERWORK[®]

ESSENTIAL MESSAGES FROM GOD'S SERVANTS



Lessons from

CHOOSING FORGIVENESS **by Nancy Leigh DeMoss**
WORRY LESS LIVE MORE **by Robert J. Morgan**

LifeWay | Adults

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A STEP OF FAITH

In your opinion, what does it take for a person to get to heaven and have eternal life? The Bible answers this question in one word—**FAITH**.

F Is for Forgiveness

- Everyone has sinned and needs God's forgiveness: *"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"* (Romans 3:23).
- God's forgiveness is in Jesus only: *"In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace"* (Ephesians 1:7).

A Is for Available

- God's forgiveness is available for all: *"God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life"* (John 3:16).
- God's forgiveness is available but not automatic: *"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord!' will enter the kingdom of heaven"* (Matthew 7:21).

I Is for Impossible

- It is impossible to get to heaven on our own: *"You are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift—not from works, so that no one can boast"* (Ephesians 2:8-9).

T Is for Turn

- Turn means repent. Turn away from sin and self and turn to Jesus alone as your Savior and Lord: *"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me"* (John 14:6); *"If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. One believes with the heart, resulting in righteousness, and one confesses with the mouth, resulting in salvation"* (Romans 10:9-10).

H Is for Heaven

- Here ... Eternal life begins now with Jesus: *"I have come so that they may have life and have it in abundance"* (John 10:10).
- Hereafter ... Heaven is a place where we will live with God forever: *"If I go away and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to myself, so that where I am you may be also"* (John 14:3).
- How ... How can a person have God's forgiveness, eternal life, and heaven? By trusting Jesus as your Savior and Lord. You can do this right now by praying and asking Jesus to forgive you of your sins and inviting Jesus into your heart.

Accepting Christ is just the beginning of a wonderful adventure with God! Follow Christ's command in baptism. Join a church where you can worship God and grow in your faith. Get involved in Sunday School and Bible study. Begin a daily personal worship time in which you study the Bible and pray.

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F A L L 2 0 1 9



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We believe that the Bible has God for its author; salvation for its end; and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter and that all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. To review LifeWay's doctrinal guidelines, please visit www.lifeway.com/doctrinalguideline.



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GETTING THE MOST OUT OF MASTERWORK

Here are a few suggestions to help you get the most out of this resource:

Group Members

1. Read the daily assignments prior to attending the group time. Complete the personal learning activities in bold type. Record your notes and questions.
2. Review your notes and questions a few moments prior to the group time as a means of preparing to be an active part of the group.
3. In the margins of this book, record insights gained during the group time.

Group Leader

1. Complete step 1 above.
2. Identify the one main idea and goal for the lesson. The main point of the lesson and the goal are printed on the teaching plan pages at the end of each lesson. (See p. 16.) Focus on the session goal as you lead the session.
3. Read and study the key Bible passages listed in the margin of the teaching plan. Supplemental Bible commentary and Bible background articles are available in the MasterWork Leader Supplement. (See below.)
4. Develop a group time plan. Two options are offered in this book. One option is to follow the teaching plan at the end of each lesson. A second option is to use the discussion questions in the margins of the lessons. Some group leaders use a combination of both group time plans.
5. Customize the electronic versions of the suggested teaching plans, available on the Internet at <https://masterworkbylifeway.wordpress.com>, to fit your group.
6. Review and refine your teaching notes as you move toward the group time.
7. Arrive early, praying for the group time.

MASTERWORK LEADER SUPPLEMENT

Bible commentary on key passages used in *MasterWork* lessons and related *Biblical Illustrator* articles are available for download at lifeway.com/masterwork. Look for “MasterWork Leader Supplement - Fall 2019.”



Choosing Forgiveness

Your Journey to Freedom

For many years, after defining and describing forgiveness from a biblical perspective, I have asked the audience this question: “How many of you would be honest enough to admit that there is a root of bitterness in your heart—that there are one or more people in your life—past or present—that you’ve never forgiven?”

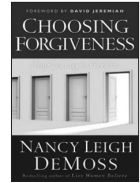
I have asked for a response from tens of thousands of people, including long-time believers, Bible study leaders, and vocational Christian workers. It doesn’t matter what the setting is or who’s in the audience. In virtually every case, somewhere between 80 and 95 percent of the hands in the room have been raised.

It affects me profoundly to think the vast majority of people in church Sunday after Sunday (and many who left the church, disillusioned) have at least a seed—if not a forest—of unforgiveness in their heart.

In many cases, those raised hands reveal hearts that are still wounded, still having a hard time getting over what happened.

The journey into forgiveness may require you to delve into areas of your life that are sensitive and still hot to the touch. But our natural way of handling these hurts only results in keeping them sore and inflamed.

God’s way alone holds out any hope of healing and rescue from the inevitable troubles of life that we face. It was no idle promise or wishful thinking for Jesus to say, “You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (John 8:32). To choose forgiveness and to walk in His truth is God’s prescribed pathway—your journey to freedom.



ABOUT THE WRITERS

NANCY LEIGH DEMOSS wrote *Choosing Forgiveness: Your Journey to Freedom*. She hosts two nationally syndicated radio programs in addition to authoring numerous books. Her works have sold over two million copies and include *Lies Women Believe*, *A Place of Quiet Rest*, and *A 30-Day Walk with God in the Psalms* besides *Choosing Forgiveness*.

MARGARET COLSON wrote the personal learning activities, discussion questions, and suggested teaching plans for this study. She teaches adult Sunday School at FBC, Marietta, GA. A graduate of the University of Georgia and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, Margaret has written frequently for LifeWay Bible studies.

What Happens When We Refuse



DAY ONE

From Hurt to Bitterness

Wounded hearts can experience powerful emotions. As I've worked on this study, I've carried a great burden for a group of readers. Hatred and bitterness are destroying their lives and relationships—and they know it. But for whatever reason they've never been willing, or felt able, to release that bitterness and forgive their offenders.

I've also been burdened for another group that I suspect is much larger—those who don't think of themselves as bitter, unforgiving people. But if they would let the Spirit of God open them up, they would discover seeds of bitterness have taken root in their hearts.

In our therapeutic culture, it's widely acceptable to acknowledge we've been "hurt" or "wounded"—words that focus on the wrong done to us. But it's a lot harder to admit we've let that hurt escalate (or *descend*, to use a better word) into unforgiveness or bitterness—which puts responsibility on our shoulders.

Our society has become so riddled with rancor and bitterness we almost consider it a normal response to life. Every day in America, tens of thousands of new lawsuits are filed—millions a year! And those who don't let their bitterness lead them into litigation or erupt into violent crimes and addictions are often saddled with more subtle forms of expression: silent distrust, insecurity, illogical fears, sullen indifference, compulsive agitation and restlessness.

How can you know if hurt has turned to bitterness in your life? For starters, see if you relate to any of these statements:

- I often replay in my mind the incident(s) that hurt me.
- When I think of a particular person or situation, I still feel angry.
- I try hard not to think about the person, event, or circumstance that caused me so much pain.
- I have a subtle, secret desire to see this person pay for what he or she did to me.
- Deep in my heart, I wouldn't mind if something bad happened to the person(s) who hurt me.
- I often find myself telling others how this person has hurt me.
- A lot of my conversations revolve around this situation.
- Whenever his or her name comes up, I am more likely to say something negative than something positive about him or her.

1. On the list of eight statements regarding bitterness, place a check beside the statements that regularly characterize your life. Pray that God will allow you to see the pockets of bitterness in your life and strengthen you to let them go.

These kinds of thoughts reveal pockets of resentment and unforgiveness in our hearts. They allow us to see something in ourselves we never thought we'd become.



DAY TWO

The Taste of Bitterness

My intention is not to load you down with guilt or insert additional blame into a situation already charged with hurt and emotion. But if we want to be free, we first have to acknowledge the depths unforgiveness has reached in our lives; we have to recognize the damage it's caused—and *can* cause. And we have to deal with the fact our unforgiveness is a sin, just as the original offense was. No *worse* of a sin, but certainly no less of one.

Discussion Question

How can Christians become counter-cultural in actively forgiving others?

Discussion Question

How do you believe an attitude of bitterness develops in a person's life?

When we fail to deal with hurts God's way, when we harbor resentment in our hearts, that bitterness—like an infection—will fester and work its way into our system, until ultimately we start viewing everything through the eyes of hurt—everything others do, everything that happens to us.

So as I try to bring God's Word to bear on this subject and on the painful circumstances you may have experienced, my desire is not to add to your burden, but to spare you more pain. I long for you to enjoy the blessing, the freedom, and the transformational power of walking in obedience.

Now, let's explore further what bitterness really is, what it can do, and—more important—begin to discover how it can be overcome by the power and grace of our great God.

Most of us are familiar with the apostle Paul's exhortation in Ephesians 4: "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice" (v. 31). We'll take a look later at the other side of the coin as expressed in the following verse. But first, let's focus on what it is we're to get rid of.

The Greek word translated "bitterness" in the New Testament comes from the root word *pik*. It sounds like what it means—the word literally means to "prick" or "cut." It can refer to a sharp or pointed object or to a bitter, sharp taste. Used figuratively, it describes "that angry and resentful state of mind that can develop when we undergo troubles."¹

Now look again at the other words Paul includes in this list—at the kinds of actions and attitudes that invariably orbit around bitterness:

1. Draw a stick figure of a bitter person. Draw conversational bubbles out from the person and write words that would exemplify the attitudes described below.

- *Wrath* and *anger*—intensifying degrees of resentment, hostility, and rage that, given the right amount of prodding or pressure, can quickly overflow its banks like a flash flood in a summer storm.

- *Clamor* and *slander* (or *evil speaking*)—outbursts of anger out of control; using words to retaliate, to demean, to paint others in a negative light, to wish for them an ill reputation.

- *Malice*—a deliberate desire to inflict pain, a premeditated strike at the weak spot in our offender, acting out the bitter thoughts and feelings of our hearts.

2. What tastes bitter to you? What do you do when you get a bitter taste in your mouth? What does your physical reaction teach you about what God wants us to do with bitterness in our hearts?

Have any of these found a dwelling place in the soil of your heart?

Bitterness in our hearts will inevitably find its way into our speech and our tone of voice. See, for example, how closely “bitterness” and “cursing” appear together in Romans 3:14—“Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness.” Both of these are cut from the same ugly cloth.

In Colossians 3:19, Paul contrasts love with bitterness, and warns against letting bitterness infect the marriage relationship: “Husbands, love your wives,” he instructs, “and do not be bitter toward them” (NKJV). Other translations say, “Do not be *harsh* with them.”



DAY THREE

Inviting Torment

You may be thinking at this point, “But you don’t understand my situation—it’s just not that cut and dried.”

Yes, your situation may be much different from those of others. But there are some universal consequences that result from refusing to forgive, no matter how big or small the offense, no matter how tangled or complex the issue.

Discussion Question

How can an attitude of bitterness lead to sinful words and actions?

In that probing parable of the unforgiving servant in Matthew 18, which Jesus told in response to Peter's question, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" (v. 21 NKJV) we see the awful result of harboring grudges against others, in light of how much God has forgiven us.

1. Read Matthew 18:21-35. Reword the parable into a modern-day scenario.

You know the story. A king discovered that one of his servants owed him "ten thousand talents." One "talent" was equal to about twenty years worth of wages for a normal laborer—so ten thousand talents would be *two hundred thousand years' wages*. If we just use a simple figure of \$30,000 as being a fair annual salary, ten thousand talents would be some *\$6 billion*, a debt that could not possibly be repaid in many lifetimes!

To put it in perspective, in those days the total revenue collected by the Roman government each year from the entire land of Palestine averaged about nine hundred talents, nowhere near ten thousand! Jesus chose this astronomical figure deliberately, intending to represent an unfathomable amount.

The king ordered the man be brought before him, demanding he and his family be sold in hopes of recouping at least some of the debt. The servant fell to his knees, begging the king to be patient with him, assuring him (as if he really could) that he would repay every penny he owed. Even though the king knew the man could never hope to amass such an enormous amount of money, he took pity on him. He canceled the debt. He let him go.

But the plot thickens. For when this servant returned home a forgiven man, he went out looking for one of his fellow servants who owed him "a hundred denarii, and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, 'Pay what you owe' " (v. 28).

You may have heard "a hundred denarii" equated to no more than a few bucks, mere pocket change. But a single denarius represented a day's wage for a common laborer, so a hundred denarii cashed out at around three months' earnings.

If we use again our assumption of a \$30,000 annual salary, this man would have been out around \$10,000—no small amount for most workers!

So we might find ourselves sympathizing with this servant's response to his debtor—if it weren't for the fact that what was owed him was *nothing* in comparison to the enormous debt he had just been forgiven.

When I read what the forgiven servant did to his fellow servant, I can feel my blood pressure begin to rise. I find his coldheartedness and ingratitude incredulous. But it's right about that time that I sense the Holy Spirit gently pointing His finger at my own heart, saying, "Isn't that what you do?"

Every time I refuse to forgive, anytime I hold a grudge, I am like the man who grabbed his debtor by the throat, demanding, "Pay back what you owe me."

When hauled back before the king who had canceled his impossible debt, this man was handed over to "tormentors" (v. 34 KJV)—"jailers," the English Standard Version says—until he paid back everything he owed.

"Jailers." Isn't that telling when we think of the prison we find ourselves in by virtue of our unforgiveness?

The man who had his debtor thrown into prison ended up in debtors' prison himself, being tormented in the very way he had treated his debtor.

2. Think about the four characters in the parable in Matthew 18:21-35 (the king, servant 1, servant 2, and the jailers). Which do you identify with the most? Why?

Discussion Question

How is harboring an unforgiving spirit similar to being in shackles?



DAY FOUR

Consequences of Unforgiveness

In case we've managed to miss it, Jesus made the main point of the parable in Matthew 18 unmistakably clear in verse 35: "So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart."

1. Read the three consequences of an unforgiving spirit (following). Indicate whether you agree with the statement. Consider how that result might have been manifested in your life, and cite biblical support for the consequence.

So let's start there.

(1) When we refuse to forgive, we set ourselves up to be turned over to "tormentors."

There is a sense in which Jesus was referring to ultimate, eternal torment—those who remain intransigent in their unforgiveness give no credible evidence they have ever been forgiven themselves; if that is the case, they will be subject to the eternal wrath and judgment of God.

But there's another application of Jesus' words: people who refuse to forgive those who sin against them may be turned over to more immediate, temporal "jailers" or "tormentors."

What are some of those tormentors? I believe many of the chronic mental, emotional, and physical disorders people struggle with today are rooted in bitterness and unforgiveness. Not all, of course. But a growing body of research is beginning to confirm that anger and resentment are responsible for many of our physiological problems.

Please hear me. I'm not suggesting for a moment that every physical ache or pain is caused by bitterness or unforgiveness. But in many cases, I am convinced it's true. You see, God never intended our bodies to hold up under the weight of unresolved conflict and bitterness.

I want to be clear—being a forgiving person will not guarantee you a pain-free life. But I can't help but wonder how much pain we might be spared and how much money we could save on doctors' and therapists' bills if we refused to let any bitterness take root in our hearts.

(2) When we refuse to forgive, we cannot experience God's love and forgiveness.

Read again Jesus' words at the end of the parable about the unforgiving servant: "So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart" (v. 35).

Most of us have quoted many times this petition from the Lord's Prayer: "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." That request should lead us to ask ourselves, "What if God only forgave me to the extent I've been willing to forgive those who've sinned against me?" It's sobering to think about.

And it's something we can't ignore. In the verses directly after the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6, Jesus said, "If you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (vv. 14-15).

Strong words. They challenge us to examine our hearts to see if we have ever truly been forgiven. The point is not that a forgiving spirit causes us to merit God's forgiveness, but simply that forgiven people forgive others, and that those who persistently refuse to forgive others have no basis to claim to have been forgiven by God.

Those who hold on to bitterness, who refuse to forgive, cannot hope to enjoy the full, sweet taste of His compassion and mercy.

(3) When we refuse to forgive others, we give Satan an advantage in our lives—both individually and in our corporate fellowship.

In trying to show the Corinthians what was causing the disunity in their fellowship, the apostle Paul talked to them about the importance of forgiveness. There was apparently someone among them whose sin had been exposed, someone who had "caused pain" to their fellowship (2 Cor. 2:5) but had presumably repented and sought restoration. Yet forgiveness toward him from some was coming slowly, reluctantly, being held back in reserve, making it even harder for him to enter into the grace of his Father's mercy and begin living in freedom.

So Paul urged the Corinthians to "forgive and comfort" their repentant brother (v. 7), as Paul himself had done, "for your sakes in the presence of Christ, so that no advantage would be taken of us by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his schemes" (vv. 10-11 NASB).

The devil always wins when we fail to forgive.

When we refuse to forgive, he is given an opportunity to take advantage of us—to win arguments in our minds, to have his way in our relationships, and to desensitize our hearts to the Spirit's voice.

That's why the Scripture exhorts us: "Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil" (Eph. 4:26-27). We may at times have righteous anger against sin. But if we let that anger turn to bitterness or fester in our hearts, we provide a beachhead for Satan's activity in our lives.

When we shut the door on forgiveness, we open it for Satan to have an inroad into our life, giving him just the weapon he needs to get an advantage over us.

Discussion Question

How is an attitude of forgiveness toward others an indication that you have been forgiven by God?

Discussion Question

Why do you think an unforgiving spirit provides an open door for Satan to have his way in your life?



DAY FIVE

Dare to Be Disciplined

Yet even with these grim reminders, we still often find ourselves choosing the path of unforgiveness. And if we choose it long enough, we become something we neither intended nor wanted. We become bitter people—whether we’re willing to admit it or not.

As is the case with any sin, the more we practice it, the more it becomes ingrained as a normal pattern of behavior. The more we hold on to our hurts, anger, and bitterness, the more we become slaves to unforgiveness (see Rom. 6:16). And the longer we stay in that condition, the more difficult it becomes for those chains to be broken.

Bitterness grows in us when we fail to see the trouble and pain in our lives from God’s point of view, and when our *expectations* of what life should be diverge from the *reality* of what life really is.

1. On a scale of 1 to 10, to what extent is your life what you expected it to be? Has that contributed to a spirit of bitterness in your life? Explain. Confess any sin of bitterness to God.

The fact is, life in a sinful, fallen world is not easy.

A “root of bitterness” (Heb. 12:15) may not seem like a big deal. In fact, given the circumstances, it may seem perfectly understandable and justifiable. But be assured it is no small matter. Unacknowledged and unaddressed, its poison will affect and infect you and others beyond anything you ever imagined possible.

When you are unjustly maligned or injured by the actions of others, bitterness may feel like a birthright. It can become your safety zone.

Discussion Question

Read Hebrews 12:15.
How can a root of bitterness cause trouble and defile many?

You may feel incapable of any other response. But it is a fallback position doomed to failure.

Not only is it sin; it is senseless.

2. In what ways is bitterness a sin?

In what ways is bitterness senseless?

The cure for bitterness is to trust both His hand and His heart and to “draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that [you] may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb. 4:16 NASB). Yes, grace is there, because *He* is there.

Through this circumstance—no matter how painful or difficult—you have both the potential and the opportunity to be made more like Christ. This is the Father’s highest purpose in your life, that you become “conformed to the image of his Son” (Rom. 8:29). Even Jesus Himself, by the Father’s divine plan and purpose, was perfected “through suffering” (Heb. 2:10), not only to gain our eternal salvation but also to know what it feels like to be treated harshly, to be taken advantage of, to be misunderstood—as you have been.

The root of bitterness will infest every inch of ground in your life if you let it. But God invites you—urges you—to reach out and receive His grace. In so doing, your heart will be set free from the vise of unforgiveness; you will be released to love and serve Him and others. No longer will that root of bitterness trouble you and “defile” others; instead, His grace will flow through you to others, blessing everything you touch.

Discussion Question

Read Hebrews 4:16.
Why is drawing near to God the only way to banish bitterness from your life?

1. Lawrence O. Richards, *New International Encyclopedia of Biblical Words* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991), 127.

LEADER GUIDE



The main point of this

lesson is: Harboring bitterness and unforgiveness in our hearts opens us to devastating consequences.

Focus on this goal: To help adults understand the dangers of harboring bitterness and unforgiveness in their hearts

Key Bible Passage:

Matthew 18:21-35

Before the Session

Bring a dictionary to class. (Step 3)

During the Session

1. Begin by asking: *What is the most difficult experience you have ever faced in which you had to forgive someone?* If people in your group are reluctant to share, be prepared to share a personal experience in which you had to forgive someone. State that all people face experiences in which other people hurt them or someone they love. This session will discuss the dangers of harboring bitterness or unforgiveness in our hearts.
2. Challenge learners to think of current news stories that reflect a spirit of rancor and bitterness in today's world. Ask: *How does such an attitude square with what Jesus taught about forgiveness?* Explain that sometimes we may believe we have forgiven someone while still having pockets of unforgiveness in our hearts. Invite learners to share what they learned about themselves as they worked through Day One, activity 1 (p. 7). Ask: *How is acknowledging that we may have some pockets of unforgiveness a necessary first step in choosing forgiveness?*
3. Call on a volunteer to read Ephesians 4:31-32, and ask learners to name the six actions or attitudes Christians are supposed to remove, listing these on the board or other writing surface. Discuss the meaning of each word, using the dictionary as needed. Invite volunteers to read Romans 3:14 and Colossians 3:19. Ask: *Why do you think the apostle Paul emphasized at least three times in Scripture that Christians need to put away bitterness?* Ask learners to identify what tastes bitter to them and to describe what they do when they taste something bitter (Day Two, activity 2, p. 9). State that just as we want to get a bitter taste out of our mouths, Christ wants His people to get bitterness out of their hearts.
4. Call on a volunteer to read Matthew 18:21-35. Briefly review the parable and invite learners to read their modern-day parables (Day Three, activity 1, p. 10). State that this parable is an obvious and outward

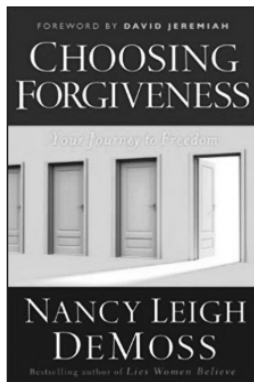
example of one who has been forgiven not forgiving someone else. Ask: *What are some examples of an unforgiving spirit that might not be so obvious or outward? In what ways is an unforgiving spirit that we think is hidden just as destructive as an outward show of unforgiveness?*

5. Organize the class into three groups. Assign one consequence of an unforgiving spirit to each group. Instruct each group to discuss whether they agree or disagree with the consequence, how that consequence might have been manifested in someone's life, and biblical support that the consequence is a result of an unforgiving spirit (Day Four, activity 1, p. 12). Write these three statements on the board related to the consequences: (1) "Anger and resentment are responsible for many of our physiological problems" (p. 12). (2) "Forgiven people forgive others" (p. 13). (3) "The devil always wins when we fail to forgive" (p. 13). Call on the groups to report; draw attention to the statements as the groups report.
6. Ask rhetorically: *Do you want to be bitter or better?* State that the author wrote that bitterness is not only sin; it is senseless (p. 15). Ask: *How can we get rid of bitterness in our lives?* Invite a volunteer to read Hebrews 4:16. Ask learners to identify the action believers are called to take and the two-fold result of that action. State that drawing near to God is the only way to banish bitterness from our lives and that God keeps His promises. Tell learners to look at what they wrote about expectations and reality of life (Day Five, activity 1, p. 14). Have a brief time of silent prayer for learners to confess any bitterness to God and to seek His mercy and grace.
7. Briefly tell the story of pastor Anthony Thompson, whose wife was killed on June 14, 2015, at Mother Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, South Carolina. Two days after the murder, Thompson went to the bond hearing for shooter Dylann Roof. He looked at the shooter and said, "I forgive you, and my family forgives you, and you need to confess to God and repent." As he spoke words of forgiveness, anger and bitterness left his body and he experienced God's peace. (<http://www.bpnews.net/52021/firstperson-hatred-racism-forgiveness>) Say: *As Thompson chose forgiveness rather than bitterness, may we be inspired to do the same.* Close in prayer.

After the Session

Pray for the individuals in your group to not allow bitterness to take root in their lives.

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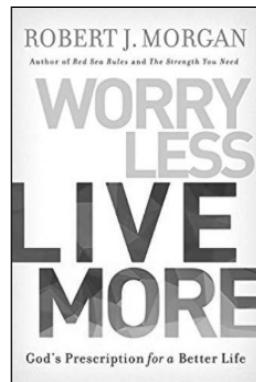


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