

Defeating Bitterness

You can either have your sins forgiven by the blood of Christ, or you can allow bitterness to destroy you. Only one thing lifts the depressed spirit crushed by a load of sin: confession & forgiveness! David's 'music therapy' did not help King Saul. It soothed him temporarily, but it did not change him (1 S 16). Saul's own attitudes and actions kept making his condition worse, as day by day he brooded with jealousy and resentment. Saul's pride and self-centeredness affected every aspect of his life. The Scriptures do not attribute Saul's madness to 'sickness,' nor was his sin excused because he was considered mentally ill. Rather, his madness and his sin are linked directly (1 S 18:6-11).

Good lives come from good deeds. Good consciences come from good behavior. From his guilt, David cried out, "*Day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; my vitality was turned into the drought of summer*" (Ps 32:4). It was as if God's hand was crushing him. He believed his depression was from God and he considered it the merciful punishment of God warning him and leading him to repentance. David acknowledged his sin and sought forgiveness (vss 5-7). David's forgiveness restored to him the joy of salvation (Ps 51:1-13). As Isaiah said, "*Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.*" (Isa 55:7).

– David Padfield (edited for space)

Just Thinkin'

A pearl of wisdom, passed down through time: 'Never ask a barber if you need a haircut'. We call it a 'conflict of interest'; and, it afflicts more than just barbers.

For example, many of the Jewish leaders rejected Christ (at least in public) because they valued their position in Jewish theological circles more (Jn 12:42-43). And, Demetrius the silversmith was disinclined to hear the gospel message because accepting the truth would have destroyed his livelihood (Acts 19:25-27). These people experienced a conflict of interest. Should they preserve their position - or their soul?

And, so it is today. Whether the pressure comes from our job, or from our peers, or from our family, the temptation to sacrifice truth and principle in order to maintain our station, status, or comfort zone can be great. But with our soul on the line, do we think there is really an option?

A barber's dishonesty may earn him a buck; but, he sacrifices integrity to get it. Me-thinks 'tis better to let the burr-head be.