

[Roman Catholicism By Lorraine Boettner](#)

[Chapter IX The Confessional](#)



Catholic Church says "In the confessional the minister has the power to forgive all crimes committed after baptism." The Bible says only God can forgive sins.

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[Chapter VII Mary Part 1](#)



This is the continuation of the previous chapter [Roman Catholicism By Lorraine Boettner Section Two Chapter VI The Papacy](#). This chapter is very long which is why I am dividing it into two parts.

1 Mary's Place in Scripture

The New Testament has surprisingly little to say about Mary. Her last recorded words were spoken at the marriage in Cana, at the very beginning of Jesus' ministry: "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it"—then silence. But the Church of Rome breaks that silence, and from sources entirely outside of Scripture builds up a most elaborate system of Mary works and Mary devotions.

Following Mary's appearance at the marriage in Cana, we meet her only once more during Jesus' public ministry, when she and His brothers came where He was speaking to the multitudes, seeking Him, only to draw the rebuke: "Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? Whosoever shall do the will of my Father who is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother" (Matthew 12:46-50). She was present at the cross, where she was committed to the care of the disciple John for the remainder of her natural life (John 19:25-27). Finally, in Acts 1:14, she is mentioned as having been with the disciples and

the other women and the Lord's brethren engaged steadfastly in prayer immediately after the ascension, but she has no prominent place.

The apostles never prayed to Mary, nor, so far as the record goes, did they show her any special honor. Peter, Paul, John, and James do not mention her name even once in the epistles which they wrote to the churches. John took care of her until she died, but he does not mention her in any of his three epistles or in the book of Revelation. We recall that Prime Minister Churchill used to make it a special point of honor to mention the Queen in his eloquent public addresses. Imagine the prime Minister of England never mentioning the Queen in any of his addresses to Parliament or in any of his state papers!

When the church was instituted at Pentecost there was only one name given among men whereby we must be saved, that of Jesus (Acts 4:12). Wherever the eyes of the church are directed to the abundance of grace, there is no mention of Mary. Surely this silence is a rebuke to those who would build a system of salvation around her. God has given us all the record we need concerning Mary, and that record does not indicate that worship or veneration in any form is to be given to her. How complete, then, is the falsehood of Romanism that gives primary worship and devotion to her!

2 "Mother of God"

The doctrine of "Mary, the Mother of God," as we know it today is the result of centuries of growth, often stimulated by pronouncements of church prelates. And yet the full-fledged system of Mariolatry is a comparatively recent development in Roman Catholic dogma. In fact the last one hundred years have quite appropriately been called the "Century of Mariolatry."

As late as the fourth century there are no indications of any special veneration of Mary. Such veneration at that time could begin only if one were recognized as a saint, and only the martyrs were counted as saints. But since there was no evidence that Mary had suffered a martyr's death, she was excluded from sainthood. Later the ascetics came to be acknowledged as among the saints. That proved to be the opening age for the sainthood of Mary, for surely she of all people, it was alleged, must have lived an ascetic life! The church acknowledged that Christ was born of the virgin Mary. Apocryphal tradition built on those possibilities, and slowly the system emerged.

The phrase "Mother of God" originated in the Council of Ephesus, in the year 431. It occurs in the Creed of Chalcedon, which was adopted by the council which met in that city in 451, and in regard to the person of Christ it declared that He was "born of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God according to the manhood"—which latter term means: according to the flesh of human nature. The purpose of the expression as used by the Council of Ephesus was not to glorify Mary, but to emphasize the deity of Christ over against those who denied His equality with the Father and the Holy Spirit. A heretical sect, the Nestorians, separated the two natures in Christ to such an extent that they held Him to be two persons, or rather a dual person formed by the union between the divine Logos and the human person Jesus of Nazareth. They were accused of teaching that the Logos only inhabited the man Jesus, from which

it was inferred that they held that the person born of Mary was only a man. It was therefore only to emphasize the fact that the "person" born to Mary was truly divine that she was called "the Mother of God."

Hence the term today has come to have a far different meaning from that intended by the early church. It no longer has reference to the orthodox doctrine concerning the person of Christ, but instead is used to exalt Mary to a supernatural status as Queen of Heaven, Queen of the Angels, etc., so that, because of her assumed position of prominence in heaven, she is able to approach her Son effectively and to secure for her followers whatever favors they ask through her. When we say that a woman is the mother of a person we mean that she gave birth to that person. But Mary certainly did not give birth to God, nor to Jesus Christ as the eternal Son of God. She was not the mother of our Lord's divinity, but only of His humanity. Instead, Christ, the second person of the Trinity, has existed from all eternity, and was Mary's Creator. Hence the term as used in the present day Roman Church must be rejected.

In the life and worship of the Roman Church there has been a long course of development, setting forth Mary's perpetual virginity, her exemption from original sin and from any sin of commission, and now her bodily assumption to heaven. In the Roman Church Mary is to her worshippers what Christ is to us. She is the object of all religious affections, and the source whence all the blessings of salvation are sought and expected.

The Bible calls Mary the "Mother of Jesus," but gives her no other title. All that the Roman Church has to substantiate her worship of Mary is a sheaf of traditions entirely outside the Bible telling of her appearances to certain monks, nuns, and others venerated as saints. At first glance the term "Mother of God" may seem comparatively harmless. But the actual consequence is that through its use Roman Catholics come to look upon Mary as stronger, more mature, and more powerful than Christ. To them she becomes the source of His being and overshadows Him. So they go to her, not to Him. "He came to us through Mary," says Rome, "and we must go to Him through her." Who would go to "the Child," even to "the holy Child," for salvation when His mother seems easier of access and more responsive? Romanism magnifies the person that the Holy Spirit wants minimized, and minimizes the person that the Holy Spirit wants magnified.

Says S. E. Anderson:

"Roman priests call Mary the 'mother of God,' a name impossible, illogical, and unscriptural. It is impossible, for God can have no mother; He is eternal and without beginning while Mary was born and died within a few short years. It is illogical, for God does not require a mother for His existence. Jesus said, 'Before Abraham was born, I am' (John 8:58). It is unscriptural, for the Bible gives Mary no such contradictory name. Mary was the honored mother of the human body of Jesus—no more—as every Catholic must admit if he wishes to be reasonable and Scriptural. The divine nature of Christ existed from eternity past, long before Mary was born. Jesus never called her 'mother'; He called her 'woman'" (Booklet, *Is Rome the True Church?* p. 20).

And Marcus Meyer says:"

God has no mother. God has always existed. God Himself is the Creator of all things. Since a mother must exist before her child, if you speak of a 'mother of God' you are thereby putting someone before God. And you are therefore making that person God. ... Mary would weep to hear anyone so pervert the truth as to call her the mother of her Creator. True, Jesus was God; but He was also man. And it was only as man that He could have a mother. Can you imagine Mary introducing Jesus to others with the words: 'This is God, my Son?'" (Pamphlet, *No Mother*).

Furthermore, if the Roman terminology is correct and Mary is to be Called God's mother, then Joseph was God's stepfather; James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas were God's brothers; Elizabeth was God's aunt; John the Baptist was God's cousin; Heli was God's grandfather, and Adam was God's 59th great grandfather. Such references to God's relatives sound more like a page out of Mormonism than Christianity.

The correct statement of the person of Christ in this regard is: As His human nature had no father, so His divine nature had no mother.

3 Historical Development

It is not difficult to trace the origin of the worship of the Virgin Mary. The early church knew nothing about the cult of Mary as it is practiced today—and we here use the word "cult" in the dictionary sense of "the veneration or worship of a person or thing; extravagant homage."

The first mention of the legend about Mary is found in the so-called Proto-Evangelism of James, near the end of the second century, and presents a fantastic story about her birth. It also states that she remained a virgin throughout her entire life. Justin Martyr, who died in 165 compares Mary and Eve, the two prominent women in the Bible. Irenaeus, who died in 202, says that the disobedience of the "virgin Eve" was atoned for by the obedience of the "virgin Mary." Tertullian, who was one of the greatest authorities in the ancient church, and who died in 222, raised his voice against the legend concerning Mary's birth. He also held that after the birth of Jesus, Mary and Joseph lived in a normal marriage relationship. The first known picture of Mary is found in the Priscilla catacomb in Rome and dates from the second century.

Thus the Christian church functioned for at least 150 years without idolizing the name of Mary. The legends about her begin to appear after that, although for several centuries the church was far from making a cult of it. But after Constantine's decree making Christianity the preferred religion, the Greek-Roman pagan religions with their male gods and female goddesses exerted an increasingly stronger influence upon the church. Thousands of the people who then entered the church brought with them the superstitions and devotions which they had long given to Isis, Ishtar, Diana, Athena, Artemis, Aphrodite, and other goddesses, which were then conveniently transferred to Mary. Statues were dedicated to her, as there had been statues dedicated to Isis, Diana, and others, and before them the people kneeled and prayed as they had

been accustomed to do before the statues of the heathen goddesses.

Many of the people who came into the church had no clear distinction in their minds between the Christian practices and those that had been practiced in their heathen religions. Statues of pagan gods and heroes found a place in the church, and were gradually replaced by statues of saints. The people were allowed to bring into the church those things from their old religions that could be reconciled with the type of Christianity then developing, hence many who bowed down before the images of Mary were in reality worshipping their old gods under a new name. History shows that in several countries Roman Catholicism has absorbed local deities as saints, and has absorbed local goddesses into the image of the Madonna. One of the more recent examples is that of the Virgin of Guadalupe, a goddess worshipped by the Indians in Mexico, which resulted in a curious mixture of Romanism and paganism, with sometimes one, sometimes the other predominating—some pictures of the Virgin Mary now appearing show her without the Child in her arms.

As we have seen, the expression "Mother of God," as set forth in the decree of the Council of Ephesus gave an impetus to Mary worship, although the practice did not become general until two or three centuries later. From the fifth century on, the Mary cult becomes more common. Mary appears more frequently in paintings, churches were named after her, and prayers were offered to her as an intercessor. The famous preacher Chrysostom, who died in 407, resisted the movement wholeheartedly, but his opposition had little effect in stemming the movement. The Roman Catholics took as their text the words of the angel to Mary, found in Luke 1:28: "And he came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee." It is to be noted, however, that shortly after the angel spoke to Mary, Elizabeth, speaking by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, did not say, "Blessed art thou above women," but, "Blessed art thou among women" (Luke 1:42). Starting with the false premise that Mary was above all other women, there developed the practice of worshipping her.

Invocation of the saints had a similar origin. In the year 610 Pope Boniface IV first suggested the celebration of an All Saints festival and ordered that the Pantheon, a pagan temple in Rome that had been dedicated to all the gods, should be converted into a Christian church and the relics of the saints placed therein. He then dedicated the church to the Blessed Virgin and all the martyrs. Thus the worship of Mary and the saints replaced that of the heathen gods and goddesses, and it was merely a case of one error being substituted for another.

The spiritual climate of the Middle Ages was favorable to the development of Mary worship. Numerous superstitions crept into the church and centered themselves in the worship of the Virgin and the saints. The purely pagan character of these practices, with dates and manner of observance, can be traced by any competent historian.

The art of the Middle Ages represented Mary with the child Jesus, Mary as "mater dolorosa" at the cross, etc. The rosary became popular; poems and hymns were written in honor of the "god-mother." Stories of miracles performed by her started in response to prayers addressed to her.

Also during that period arose the custom of looking to “patron saints,” who in fact were merely Christianized forms of old pagan gods. In polytheism everything had its own god—the sea, war, hunting, merchants, agriculture, etc. After the same fashion there developed the Roman Catholic gallery of “patron saints” for seamen, soldiers, travelers, hunters, and in modern times, for fliers, divers, cyclists, artillerymen, etc. This kinship with the pagan cults explains why Mary worship developed so rapidly after Constantine made Christianity the official religion.

4 Contrast Between Roman and Protestant Teaching

We are indebted to Dr. Joseph Zacchello, editor of *The Convert*, Clairton, Pennsylvania for the following statement concerning Mary’s place in the Christian church, followed by extracts in one column from Liguori’s book, *The Glories of Mary*, and in a parallel column extracts setting forth what the Bible teaches:

“The most beautiful story ever told is the story of the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. And a part of that beautiful story is the account of Mary, the mother of our Lord.

“Mary was a pure virtuous woman. Nothing is clearer in all the Word of God than this truth. Read the accounts of Matthew and Luke and you see her as she is—pure in mind, humble, under the hand of God, thankful for the blessing of God, having faith to believe the message of God, being wise to understand the purpose of God in her life.

“Mary was highly favored beyond all other women. It was her unique honor that she should be the mother of our Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed was Mary among women. Through her, God gave His most priceless gift to man.

“But, though Mary be worthy of all honor as a woman favored of God beyond all others, and though she be indeed a splendid, beautiful, godly character, and though she be the mother of our Lord, Mary can neither intercede for us with God, nor can she save us, and certainly we must not worship her. There is nothing clearer in the Word of God than this truth.

Let us notice this truth as it is diligently compared with the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church and the Word of God. The following quotations are taken from the book, *The Glories of Mary*, which was written by Bishop Alphonse de Liguori, one of the greatest devotional writers of the Roman Catholic Church, and the Word of God taken from the Douay Version which is approved by James Cardinal Gibbons, Archbishop of Baltimore. The Editor’s notice says, ‘Everything that our saint has written is, as it were, a summary of Catholic tradition on the subject that it treats; it is not an individual author; it is, so to speak, the church herself that speaks to us by the voice of her prophets, her apostles, her pontiffs, her saints, her fathers, her doctors of all nations and ages. No other book appears to be more worthy of recommendation in this respect than *The Glories of Mary*.’” (1931 edition; Redemptorist Fathers, Brooklyn). Note the following deadly parallel:

Mary Is Given the Place Belonging to Christ

Roman Catholic Church:

"And she is truly a mediatrix of peace between sinners and God. Sinners receive pardon by... Mary alone" (pp. 82-83). "Mary is our life. ... Mary in obtaining this grace for sinners by her intercession, thus restores them to life" (p. 80). "He fails and is LOST who has not recourse to Mary" (p. 94).

The Word of God:

For there is one God, and ONE Mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5). "Jesus saith to him: I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No man cometh to the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). "Christ... is our life" (Col. 3:4).

Mary Is Glorified More than Christ

Roman Catholic Church:

"The Holy Church commands a WORSHIP peculiar to MARY" (p. 130). "Many things... are asked from God, and are not granted; they are asked from MARY, and are obtained," for "She... is even Queen of Hell, and Sovereign Mistress of the Devils" (pp. 127, 141, 143).

The Word of God:

"In the Name of Jesus Christ... For there is no other name under Heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 3:6, 4:12). His Name is "above every name... not only in this world, but also in that which is to come" (Eph. 1:21).

Mary Is the Gate to Heaven Instead of Christ

Roman Catholic Church:

"Mary is called... the gate of heaven because no one can enter that blessed kingdom without passing through HER" (p. 160). "The Way of Salvation is open to none otherwise than through MARY," and since "Our salvation is in the hands of Mary... He who is protected by MARY will be saved, he who is not will be lost" (pp. 169-170).

The Word of God:

"I am the door. By me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved," says Christ (John 10:1,7,9). "Jesus saith to him, I am the way... no man cometh to the Father but by me" (John 14:6). "Neither is there Salvation in any other" (Acts 4:12).

Mary Is Given the Power of Christ

Roman Catholic Church:

"All power is given to thee in Heaven and on earth," so that "at the command of MARY all obey—even God... and thus... God has placed the whole Church... under

the domination of MARY" (pp. 180-181). Mary "is also the Advocate of the whole human race... for she can do what she wills with God" (p. 193).

The Word of God:

"All power is given to me in Heaven and in earth," so that "in the Name of JESUS every knee should bow," "that in all things He may hold the primacy" (Matt. 28:18, Phil. 2:9-11, Col. 1:18).

"But if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, JESUS CHRIST the Just: and he is the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 2:1-2).

Mary Is the Peace-Maker Instead of Jesus Christ Our Peace

Roman Catholic Church:

Mary is the Peace-maker between sinners and God" (p. 197).

"We often more quickly obtain what we ask by calling on the name of MARY, than by invoking that of Jesus." "She... is our Salvation, our Life, our Hope, our Counsel, our Refuge, our Help" (pp. 254, 257).

The Word of God:

But now in CHRIST JESUS, you, who sometimes were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For He is our peace" (Eph. 2:13-14).

"Hitherto you have not asked anything in my name. Ask, and you shall receive," for "Whatsoever we shall ask according to His will, He heareth us" (John 16:23-24).

Mary Is Given the Glory that Belongs to Christ Alone

Roman Catholic Church:

"The whole Trinity, O MARY, gave thee a name... above every other name, that at Thy name, every knee should bow, of things in heaven, on earth, and under the earth" (p. 260).

The Word of God:

God also hath highly exalted HIM, and hath given HIM a Name which is above all names, that in the Name of JESUS every knee should bow, of those that are in Heaven, on earth, and under the earth" (Phil. 2:9-10).

Liguori, more than any other one person, has been responsible for promoting Mariolatry in the Roman Church, dethroning Christ and enthroning Mary in the hearts of the people. Yet instead of excommunicating him for his heresies, the Roman Church has canonized him as a saint and has published his book in many editions, more recently under the imprimatur of Cardinal Patrick Joseph Hays, of New York.

In a widely used prayer book, the *Raccolta*, which has been especially

indulged by several popes and which therefore is accepted by Romanists as authoritative, we read such as the following:

"Hail, Queen, Mother of Mercy, our Life. Sweetness, and Hope, all Hail! To thee we cry, banished sons of Eve; to thee we sigh, groaning and weeping in this vale of tears."

"We fly beneath thy shelter, O holy Mother of God, despise not our petitions in our necessity, and deliver us always from all perils, O glorious and Blessed Virgin."

"Heart of Mary, Mother of God... Worthy of all the veneration of angels and men. ... In thee let the Holy Church find safe shelter; protect it, and be its asylum, its tower, its strength."

"Sweet heart of Mary, be my salvation."

"Leave me not, My Mother, in my own hands, or I am lost; let me but cling to thee. Save me, my Hope; save me from hell."

Also in the *Raccolta* prayers are addressed to Joseph:

"Benign Joseph, our guide, protect us and the Holy Church."

"Guardian of Virgins, and Holy Father Joseph, to whose faithful keeping Christ Jesus, innocence itself, and Mary, Virgin of Virgins, were committed, I pray and beseech thee by those two dear pledges, Jesus and Mary, that being preserved from all uncleanness, I may with spotless mind, pure heart, and chaste body, ever most chastely serve Jesus and Mary. Amen."

The rosary, which is by far the most popular Roman Catholic ritual prayer, contains fifty "Hail Mary's." The *Hail Mary* (or *Ave Maria*) is follows:

"Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now, and at the hour of our death. Amen."

5 Mary as an Object of Worship

The devotions to Mary are undoubtedly the most spontaneous of any in the Roman Catholic worship. Attendance at Sunday mass is obligatory, under penalty of mortal sin if one is absent without a good reason, and much of the regular service is formalistic and routine. But the people by the thousands voluntarily attend novenas for the "Sorrowful Mother." Almost every religious order dedicates itself to the Virgin Mary. National shrines, such as those at Lourdes in France, Fatima in Portugal, and Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico, are dedicated to her and attract millions. The shrine of St. Anne de Beaupre, in Quebec, the most popular shrine in Canada, is dedicated to Saint Anne, who according to apocryphal literature was the mother of Mary. Thousands of churches, schools, hospitals, convents, and shrines are dedicated to her glory.

It is difficult for Protestants to realize the deep love and reverence that devout Roman Catholics have for the Virgin Mary. One must be immersed in and saturated with the Roman Catholic mind in order to feel its heartbeat. Says Margaret Shepherd, an ex nun:

"No words can define to my readers the feeling of reverential love I had for the Virgin Mary. As the humble suppliant kneels before her statue he thinks of her as the tender, compassionate mother of Jesus, the friend and mediatrix of sinners. The thought of praying to Christ for any special grace without seeking the intercession of Mary never occurred to me" (*My Life in the Convent*, p. 31).

The titles given Mary are in themselves a revelation of Roman Catholic sentiment toward her. She is called: Mother of God, Queen of the Apostles, Queen of Heaven, Queen of the Angels, the Door of Paradise, the Gate of Heaven, Our Life, Mother of Grace, Mother of Mercy, and many others which ascribe to her supernatural powers.

All of those titles are false. Let us consider just two of them. When she is called "Queen of the Apostles," is that an apostolic doctrine? Where is it found? Certainly it is not in Scripture. When did the apostles elect Mary their queen? Or when was she appointed by God to be their queen? And the title "Queen of Heaven" is equally false, or even worse. Heaven has no "queen." The only references in Scripture to prayers to the "queen of heaven" are found in Jeremiah 7:18, 44:17-19,25, where it is severely condemned as a heathen custom practiced by some apostate Jews. This so-called "queen of heaven" was a Canaanitish goddess of fertility, Astarte (plural, Ashtaroth) (Judges 2:13). How shameful to impose a heathen title on Mary, and then to venerate her as another deity!

How can anyone of the perhaps one hundred million practicing Roman Catholics throughout the world who desire Mary's attention imagine that she can give him that attention during his prayers to her, his wearing her scapulars for special protection, his marching in parades in her honor, etc., while at the same time she is giving attention to all others who are praying to her, attending to her duties in heaven, conducting souls to heaven, rescuing souls from purgatory, etc.? The average Roman Catholic acts on the assumption that Mary has the powers of deity. There is nothing in the Bible to indicate that any departed human being, however good, has any further contact with affairs on this earth, or that he can hear so much as one prayer from earth. How, then, can a human being such as Mary hear the prayers of millions of Roman Catholics, in many different countries, praying in many different languages, all at the same time? Let any priest or layman try to converse with only three people at the same time and see how impossible that is for a human being. They impose on Mary works which no human being can do. How impossible, how absurd, to impose on her the works which only God can do! Since Mary is not omnipresent nor omniscient, such prayers and worship are nothing less than idolatry—that is, the giving of divine honors to a creature. Nowhere in the Bible is there the slightest suggestion that prayer should be offered to Mary. If God had intended that we should pray to her, surely He would have said so. Worship is accorded to the infant Jesus, but never to His mother. When Jesus was born in Bethlehem, wise men came from the East, and when they

came into the house, they saw the young child with Mary His mother. What did they do? Did they fall down and worship Mary? Or Joseph? No! We read: "They fell down and worshipped him" (Matthew 2:11). And to whom did they give their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh? To Mary? Or to Joseph? No! They presented their gifts to Jesus. They recognized Him, not Mary or Joseph, as worthy of adoration.

Furthermore, in Old Testament times the Jews prayed to God, but never to Abraham, or Jacob, or David, or to any of the prophets. There is never the slightest suggestion that prayers should be offered to anyone other than God. Nor did the apostles ever ask the early Christians to worship, or venerate, or pray to Mary or to any other human being.

The objections against prayers to Mary apply equally against prayers to the saints. For they too are only creatures, infinitely less than God, able to be at only one place at a time and to do only one thing at a time. How, then, can they listen to and answer the thousands upon thousands of petitions made simultaneously in many different lands and in many different languages? Many such petitions are expressed, not orally, but only mentally, silently. How can Mary and the saints, without being like God, be present everywhere and know the secrets of all hearts?

That living saints should pray to departed saints seems on the face of it to be the very height of the ridiculous. But the fact is that most Roman Catholics pray to Mary and the saints more than they pray to God. Yet they cannot explain how departed saints can hear and answer prayers. The endless prayers to the Virgin and to the countless saints cannot bring one closer to God. And particularly when we see all the gaudy trappings that are resorted to in Rome's distorted version of a glamour queen the whole procedure becomes, to Protestants, truly abhorrent.

The Roman Church commits grievous sin in promoting the worship of Mary. It dishonors God, first, by its use of images, and secondly, by giving to a creature the worship that belongs only to the Creator. We have here merely another example of Rome's persistent tendency to add to the divinely prescribed way of salvation. Romanism sets forth faith and works, Scripture and tradition, Christ and Mary, as the means of salvation.

Charles Chiniquy, a former priest from Montreal, Canada, who became a Presbyterian minister, tells of the following conversation between himself and his bishop when doubts began to assail him regarding the place given to Mary:

"My lord, who has saved you and me upon the cross?"

He answered, "Jesus Christ."

"Who paid your debt and mine by shedding His blood; was it Mary or Jesus?"

He said, "Jesus Christ."

"Now, my lord, when Jesus and Mary were on earth, who loved the sinner more; was it Mary or Jesus?"

Again he answered that it was Jesus.

"Did any sinner come to Mary on earth to be saved?"

"No."

"Do you remember that any sinner has gone to Jesus to be saved?"

"Yes, many."

"Have they been rebuked?"

"Never."

Do you remember that Jesus ever said to sinners, "Come to Mary and she will save you?"

"No," he said.

"Do you remember that Jesus has said to poor sinners, "Come to me?"

"Yes, He has said it."

"Has He ever retracted those words?"

"No."

"And who was, then, the more powerful to save sinners?" I asked.

"O, it was Jesus!"

"Now, my lord, since Jesus and Mary are in heaven, can you show me in the Scriptures that Jesus has lost anything of His desire and power to save sinners, or that He has delegated this power to Mary?"

And the bishop answered, "No."

"Then, my lord," I asked, "why do we not go to Him, and to Him alone? Why do we invite poor sinners to come to Mary, when, by your own confession she is nothing compared with Jesus, in power, in mercy, in love, and in compassion for the sinner?"

To that the bishop could give no answer ([Fifty Years in the Church of Rome](#), p. 262).

Even to this day the province of Quebec is almost solidly Roman Catholic. Throughout the province one can scarcely hear the Gospel in any church, or on any local radio broadcast, or obtain anything but Roman Catholic literature. Quebec is full of idols. The late pope Pius XII declared that the province of Quebec was the world's most Catholic country. But everywhere Mary, and not Christ, is represented as the only hope of the four million French-Canadians. And, let it be noticed further, the province of Quebec has the most illiteracy, the poorest schools, and the lowest standard of living of any province in Canada.

It is very difficult to convince Roman Catholic people that Christ has won for them the right to go directly to God in prayer. They read the Bible but very little. Instead they fall back on what their priests have taught them, that to obtain mercy and forgiveness they must cajole some saint, some close and favored friend of God, to intercede for them. And the most powerful intercessor of all, of course, is Mary, since she is the mother of Christ. But the absurd thing about saint worship is that neither Mary nor any of the others ever promised, when they were living, that they would pray for their devotees after reaching heaven.

According to New Testament usage, all true Christians are saints. Paul's letters to the Ephesians was addressed, "to the saints that are at Ephesus" (1:1); his letter to the Philippians, "to all the saints that are at Philippi" (1:1). See also Romans 1:7, 16:15; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 2 Corinthians 1:1. It has well been said, If you want a "saint" to pray for you, find a true Christian and make the request of him. His prayer will be more effective than any request that can be made through departed saints. We have no need for the intercession of Mary, or departed saints, or angels, for we ourselves have direct access to God through Christ. Furthermore, not only do we have no single instance in the Bible of a living saint worshipping a departed saint, but all attempts on the part of the living to make any kind of contact with the dead are severely condemned (Deuteronomy 18:9-12, Exodus 22:18, Leviticus 20:6, Isaiah 8:19-20).

The Scriptures directly repudiate all saint worship. We have specific examples of Peter, and Paul, and even of an angel rejecting such worship. When Peter went to the house of Cornelius in response to the vision that he had while at prayer on the housetop, we read that "Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him. But Peter raised him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man" (Acts 10:25-26). Although Peter was one of the twelve, and had been personally associated with Jesus, he knew that he had no right to such worship for he was only a man. At Lystra, after Paul had healed a lame man, the multitude attempted to worship him and Barnabas. We read: "But when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of it, they rent their garments, and sprang forth among the multitude, crying out and saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you and bring you good tidings, that ye should turn from these vain things unto a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that in them is" (Acts 14:14-15). And the apostle John writes concerning his experience on the island of Patmos: "And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel that showed me these things. And he saith unto me, See thou do it not: I am a fellow- servant with thee and with thy brethren the prophets, and with them that keep the words of this book: worship God" (Revelation 22:8-9). But how different is the attitude of popes, bishops, and priests who expect people to kneel before them and to kiss their hands or rings! The pope allows or expects that under some conditions they shall even kiss his feet! But what nonsense that is, both on the part of the pope and on the part of those who submit themselves to such a servile practice!

6 In Romanism Mary Usurps the Place of Christ

A striking phenomenon in Roman Catholicism is the effective way in which they have caused Mary to usurp the place of Christ as the primary mediator between God and men. Christ is usually represented as a helpless babe in a manger or in His mother's arms, or as a dead Christ upon a cross. The babe in a manger or in His mother's arms gives little promise of being able to help anyone. And the dead Christ upon a cross, with a horribly ugly and tortured face, is the very incarnation of misery and helplessness, wholly irrelevant to the needs and problems of the people. Such a Christ might inspire feelings of pity and compassion but not of confidence and hope. He is a defeated, not a victorious, Christ. The Roman Church cannot get its people to love a dead Christ, no matter how many masses are said before Him or how many images are dedicated to Him. There can be no real love for Christ unless the worshipper sees Him as his living Savior, who died for him, but who arose, and who now lives gloriously and triumphantly—as indeed He is presented in Protestantism. In the Roman Church the people prefer a living Mary to a dead Christ. And the result is that the center of worship has shifted from Christ to Mary.

Despite all protestations to the contrary, the fact is that the worship, intercessions, and devotions that are given to Mary obscure the glory of Christ and cause the church to set forth a system of salvation in which human merit plays a decisive part. While asserting the deity of Christ, Rome nevertheless makes Him subservient to the Virgin, and dispenses salvation at a price through the agency of the priest. This most blessed of women, the mother of Jesus, is thus made His chief rival and competitor for the loyalty and devotion of the human heart. In Romanism Mary becomes the executive director of deity, the one through whom the prayers of the people are made effective.

Mary has nothing whatever to do with our salvation. All who think she does are simply deceived. And yet in Romanism probably ten times as much prayer is directed to her as to Christ. The most popular prayer ritual of Roman Catholics, the rosary, has ten prayers to Mary for each one directed to God. The prayer book contains more prayers which are to be offered to Mary and the saints than to Christ. Mary is unquestionably the chief object of prayer.

7 Mary Represented as More Sympathetic than Jesus

The spiritual climate of the Middle Ages was favorable for the development of the Mary-cult. Particularly in that age Christ was represented as a Man of stern wrath, a strict judge, avenging evil with an inexorable justice, while Mary was clothed with the virtues of lovingkindness and mercy. Where Christ would demand justice, Mary would extend mercy. The simple believer, who had been told that God was an angry judge always ready to send the sinner to hell, wanted to flee to the protection of the tender-hearted and loving Mary. Even monks who lived ascetic lives and shunned or even hated women as instruments of their temptation and downfall sought the protection of Mary.

In *The Glories of Mary*, Liguori pictures Christ as a stern, cruel Judge, while Mary is pictured as a kind and lovable intercessor. Among other things Liguori says: "If God is angry with a sinner, and Mary takes him under her

protection, she withholds the avenging arm of her Son, and saves him" (p. 124); "O Immaculate Virgin, prevent thy beloved Son, who is irritated by our sins, from abandoning us to the power of the devil" (p. 248); and again: "We often obtain more promptly what we ask by calling on the name of Mary, than by invoking that of Jesus" (p. 248).

In another instance Liguori teaches that Mary is the Savior of sinners, and that outside her there is no salvation. He describes an imaginary scene in which a man burdened with sin sees two ladders hanging from heaven, with Christ at the head of one and Mary at the other. He attempts to climb the ladder at which Christ is the head, but when he sees the angry face he falls back defeated. As he turns away despondent, a voice says to him, "Try the other ladder." He does so, and to his amazement he ascends easily and is met at the top by the blessed virgin Mary, who then brings him into heaven and presents him to Christ! The teaching is, "What son would refuse the request of his mother?"

The same reasoning is found among Roman Catholics today. Christ still is looked upon as a stern judge. But Mary, being a mother, is looked upon as having a mother's heart and therefore as more capable of understanding the problems of her children. She can go to her Son with her requests and petitions, and He can never refuse to grant any favor that she asks. She is represented as everywhere present. Romanists are taught to appeal to her with confidence to allay the fierce judgment of Christ, and to turn His serious frown into a friendly smile—all of this in spite of the fact that no prayer by Mary for a sinner can be found anywhere in the New Testament.

But what a travesty it is on Scripture truth to teach that Christ demands justice, but that Mary will extend mercy! How dishonoring it is to Christ to teach that He is lacking in pity and compassion for His people, that He must be persuaded to that end by His mother! When He was on earth it was never necessary for anyone to persuade Him to be compassionate. Rather, when He saw the blind and the lame, the afflicted and hungry, He was "moved with compassion" for them and lifted them out of their distress. He had immediate mercy on the wicked but penitent thief on the cross, and there was no need for intercession by Mary although she was there present. His love for us is as great as when He was on earth; His heart is as tender; and we need no other intermediary, neither His mother after the flesh, nor any saint or angel, to entreat Him on our behalf.

8 One Mediator

The Bible teaches that there is but one mediator between God and men. It says: "For there is one God, one mediator also between God and men himself man, Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5). When this verse is understood the whole system of the Roman Church falls to the ground, for it invalidates the papacy, the priesthood, and all Mary worship. Other verses which teach the same truth are:

"I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6).

"And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

"He is the mediator of a new covenant" (Hebrews 9:15).

"If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1).

"Christ Jesus... who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." Christ, not Mary, the Scripture says, is at the right hand of God making intercession for us (Romans 8:34).

"Wherefore also he is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Hebrews 7:25).

Thus Christ, because He is both God and man, is the only Saviour, the only Mediator, the only way to God. Not one word is said about Mary, or a pope, or the priests, or the saints, as mediators. Yet Romanism teaches that there are many mediators, and the great majority of Roman Catholics, if asked, would say that our primary approach to God is through the Virgin Mary, and that only as she begs for us can we enter the presence of God.

The priests detract from the glory of Christ when they teach that Mary is a mediator. Humanly speaking, that must grieve her who would want all honor to go to Christ. The priests have no right to place her in such an unscriptural position. Mary is presented in Scripture as a handmaiden of the Lord who fulfilled her office in the church according to promise, just as did John the Baptist and others, but whose work has long since ceased. The great antithesis is not between Eve and Mary, as Rome sets it forth, but between Adam and Christ (Romans 5:12-21; 1 Corinthians 15:21-22,45,47). Roman tradition has so altered the picture of Mary that the Mary found in the New Testament and the Mary found in the Roman Catholic Church are two different and conflicting persons. Any fair-minded Roman Catholic knows that his church gives first place to Mary and that Christ is kept in the background.

The reason that Mary, the saints, or angels cannot act as our priest or mediator is because they have no sacrifice, nothing to offer in behalf of our sins. Only a priest with a true sacrifice can serve as mediator between God and men. Christ alone has a true sacrifice, and He alone can act as our priest. In this connection Calvin says:

"I deem it indisputable that the papal priesthood is spurious; for it has been formed in the workshop of men. God nowhere commands a sacrifice to be offered now to Him for the expiation of sins; nowhere does He command that priests be appointed for such a purpose. While then the pope ordains his priests for the purpose of sacrificing, the Apostle [Paul] denies that they are to be accounted lawful priests."

(Continued in [Chapter VII Mary Part 2.](#))

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There is no priesthood in the New Testament. Christ is our priest, not a man on the earth. Hebrews 3:1b “...consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;”

False Doctrines from the SDA Church on Social Media



The Sabbath was a day of rest and not specifically designated as a day of worship! In the books of Exodus, Leviticus and Deuteronomy, there are 8 verses with the words Sabbath and rest. The word worship is not in any of them.

Hurt and Bitterness—By Bill Gothard



William W. Gothard Jr. (born November 2, 1934) is an American Christian minister, speaker, and writer, and the founder of the Institute in Basic Life Principles (IBLP), an independent fundamentalist Christian organization. His conservative teachings encourage Bible memorization, large families, homeschooling, aversion to debt, familial patriarchy, the submission of wives to husbands, and modest attire. At the height of Gothard's popularity during the 1970s, his Basic Youth Conflicts seminar was regularly

filling auditoriums throughout the United States and beyond with attendance figures as large as ten thousand and more for a one-week seminar. (from Wikipedia)

I attended Bill Gothard's Basic Youth Conflicts seminar when I served in the USAF when stationed in Sacramento, CA., circa 1972. I probably didn't get as much out of it as I should have because I felt I was forced to attend the seminar by the Navigator leadership, the non-denominational Christian fellowship that led me to Christ. I didn't always agree with what Bill Gothard was teaching. I was deceived then by Pentecostal pastors who told me I didn't need to study the Bible as much as the Navigators told me to study it or memorize so many Scriptures as the Navigators encouraged me to memorize. The Pentecostals told me all I needed was the infilling of the Holy Spirit. This supposed shortcut to spirituality was in *direct contradiction* to what the Navigators were telling me, namely, there is no shortcut! I rejected the Navigator's view of how to grow spiritually the time, but guess what? After a couple of decades of the school of hard knocks, I learned the Navigators and Bill Gothard were right. It was only through decades of Bible study, Scripture memorization, listening to the right people, experience, *and* guidance of the Holy Spirit that I came to know I know today.

The Scripture that comes to mind about this subject is what Jesus told His disciples.

It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: *the words* that I speak unto you, *they are spirit*, and they are life. – John 6:63

The Lord blessed Bill Gothard with good health. At the time of this post, he's 89 years old.

Hurt has got to be one of our major problems today. You can get hurt so badly that you cut yourself off from feeling altogether. I've met girls who've said, "Hey, I've been hurt too many times. I'm never going to love anybody again. Forget it." So you get hard and cynical. That's one way people deal with pain—they just withdraw themselves so that they won't be hurt again. But when you come to Jesus, God heals your heart and He takes the cynicism out of your life. You can once again open your heart to others and love again.

Even Christians can get hurt. It's not wrong to be hurt, but the way you deal with your hurt makes all the difference in the World. Being hurt is a big enough problem in itself, but if that hurt is not handled in the right way, bitterness will set in. In the end it is bitterness, not "being hurt," that will destroy you.

RECOGNIZING BITTERNESS

It is really not that complicated to recognize bitterness. Let's think of some of the characteristics of an extremely bitter person:

1. They show a lack of concern for others. A bitter person cares very little about anybody else.

2. They're sensitive and touchy. For instance, if a bitter person walks into a room where two other people are talking, and those people get quieter as he walks in, the bitter person thinks, "They're talking about me."
3. They become very possessive with just a few friends, and rarely ever have any really close friends. They also have an unnatural fear of losing their friends.
4. They tend to avoid meeting new people.
5. They show little or no gratitude at all.
6. They will usually speak words of empty flattery or harsh criticism.
7. They hold grudges against people, often for a long time. They find it extremely difficult to forgive.
8. They often have a stubborn or sulking attitude.
9. They are usually unwilling to share or help anybody.
10. They end up experiencing mood extremes—very high and happy one minute, and the next thing you know, they're so low they can reach up and touch bottom.

(Editor's note: Although these symptoms often indicate bitternesses, they can also result from other causes as well.)

BITTERNESS: THE SEED OF HELL

One of the bad things about bitterness is that it doesn't stop. It keeps getting worse. It may only start as a little seed of hurt, but then it grows and festers into a very dangerous thing. Many people can be hurt by one person's bitterness. (See Heb.12:15 .)

THE "FILING CABINET OF YOUR MIND"

In bitterness, you focus on what that "horrible person" has done to you. You make a filing cabinet with their name on it, saying, "Rotten Things This Person Has Done To Me." Now this is a big filing cabinet, and every time that person does even the smallest thing that hurts or bothers you, you file it in with the rest of the hurts. Usually we have more than one filing cabinet.

One of the causes of continual or persistent bitterness is that we try to balance out the guilt with blame. We say, "Well, I'm wrong, but they're worse. I have a good reason to be bitter. You don't know what they did to me!" That's how we try to ease our conscience.

Many people use bitterness for revenge. That's why we hold on to it sometimes. "I'll show you, and you're really going to be sorry." But who is sorry first? You're the one who's killing yourself! You are not only hurt spiritually and emotionally, but physically as well. Bitterness and resentment often bring on all sorts of medical problems, such as ulcers and high blood pressure. People who carry deep bitterness around can't even enjoy a great meal. They sit down to eat, but all they can think of is the person who hurt them—they might as well be eating cardboard.

GETTING OUT OF THE BITTERNESS TRAP

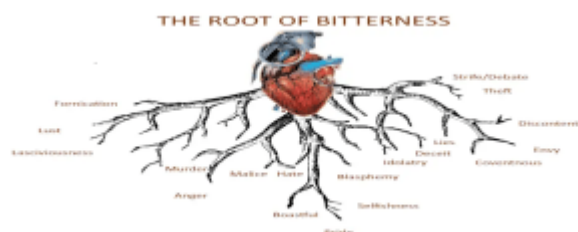
The Lord's Prayer says, "God, You forgive me the way I forgive others." The

thing that causes hurt to develop into bitterness is failing to respond to the help God can give at that time of being hurt. To forgive someone doesn't mean pretending you're not hurt. That isn't Christianity—that's insanity. You need to be honest with yourself and admit that you've really been hurt. But how do we overcome our hurts? Here are some basic steps.

Pray, and ask God to forgive you for your bitterness and unforgiving spirit. This is not a complicated thing, but it may be costly. You may need a bit of time on your own. Take time to actually write a list of how you have hurt God and others, and let the Lord break you. Ask God's forgiveness for these things one by one.—And when you get finished, take the list and rip it up. It's a good feeling. Burn it if you like.

Destroy your files. Remember that list of things that others have done to hurt you? Open the filing cabinets of your mind, take out all the files, and get rid of them. Tear up your list and burn it. You must release it all to God. Forgiveness is opening the filing cabinet before God and clearing the debts. "I'm not going to hold this against them anymore. I'm not even going to keep a record of it." No record. That's what God does with you. Do you want Him to remember and recall all the debts He has cleared you of? Of course not, so you do the same. The Bible says, "For if you forgive men for their transgressions, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions."—Mat.6:14,15 . It's a choice you must make in response to God's offer of forgiveness to you. What will you do?

Bitterness: Weeding Out the Poisonous Root



—BY Jim Henry

I read this article long ago some in the 1980s. It helped me greatly to overcome the grudges and bitterness I used to have toward various people for their perceived wrongs against me. If you have bitterness in your heart toward anyone, I urge you to read it! When I was bitter toward a person, it was like a spiritual acid in my soul. I learned over time to forgive others as Christ has forgiven me. I've realized how sinful I have been in the past in my attitudes words and deeds toward some people, and knowing that humbles me greatly. I can say now by God's grace I'm free from the past and have my

eyes only on the present and future, praise God!

I'm not sure who the author of this article, Jim Henry is. There's a Baptist pastor by that name. It could be him.

Bitterness is that hateful, spiteful sourness in the heart that creeps in when you have been, or think you have been, maliciously wronged. I looked up the word in a dictionary, and it was defined as a sharpness affecting the taste, the feelings, or the mind. It comes from an old English word that meant "sharpness to the taste."

If you've ever had a difficult experience with someone who made you mad, and you resented it, held on to it—you know how bad it tasted spiritually, and in your mind it raised hateful feelings and thoughts. That is bitterness, and God's Word has something to say about it.

RECOGNIZING BITTERNESS

How does bitterness show itself?—In at least three ways.

One kind of bitterness is directed against God. You can become bitter against God in the loss of a loved one, when a friend swindles you out of money, when the boss passes you over for a promotion you really deserved and gives it to someone else, or when your husband walks off and leaves you for another woman.

You are angry, and you say, "Lord, if You love me so much, why did this happen? If You answer prayer, why didn't You answer mine? Either You are not powerful enough, or You didn't care enough. Either way, I am angry with You!"

A second kind of bitterness is against other people. It can be there in a child who decides to rebel against his parents, to run away from home because he believes they are unfair to him. It can be there in a wife who says, "I'll have a nervous breakdown if my husband keeps treating me like this, and I'll get even with him."

It might be a person who says, "OK, if I forgive them for what they did to me, that wouldn't be fair. They don't deserve to be forgiven. I'm going to carry this a little longer and maybe somehow along the way they'll see what it has done to me, and something will happen to them."

You and I cannot afford the luxury of holding on to bitterness and resentment against others, because it only becomes the root of other problems.

Your bitterness can also be directed against yourself, and show itself in an inability to forgive yourself, even though God has forgiven you. You carry that load until you say, "I deserved it, but I'm strong enough to take it, and I'll just carry this thing and deal with it myself." Self-centered pride latches onto your heart and you refuse the forgiveness of God and others.

This can also cause you to live in self-pity. You say, "OK, I deserve this. God's trying to punish me. I shouldn't have done this or that, and now I deserve what I'm getting, and I'm just going to have to be a martyr and carry

it.” So you trudge along in life nursing bitter resentment and a grudge against God or someone else. You carry it until you make life miserable for yourself and everyone around you. Why? Because you never dealt with your bitterness. The Bible says, “Watch out for such bitterness!” (“Look diligently”— Heb.12:15 .)

BITTERNESS BEGINS UNSEEN

Not only am I to “look diligently” for bitterness, but because it may be unseen, I may not be aware of it; and being unaware of it, I may be especially liable to its danger.

Look what the Scripture says: “See to it that no one misses the grace of God, that no bitter root grows up...” Now, where is a root? Usually under the ground. You don’t see it, but it’s there. I have some weeds in my yard, growing through everything—even bricks! There are roots down there somewhere. They cause weeds to grow, whether there’s shade or sunshine—I can’t get rid of them. I don’t see the roots, but the evidence is everywhere.

Bitterness can be an unseen enemy, growing like a tumor in your mind and in your spirit. The Bible says we should look out for it. Just because we don’t see it, doesn’t mean it’s not there.

Bitterness is the unharvested fruit of anger, and in time it will show itself. As Numbers 32:23 says, “Be sure that your sin will find you out.”

BITTERNESS SPRINGS UP & CAUSES TROUBLE

The Bible warns that the root of bitterness will spring up, and when it does, what does it do? Cause good things to happen? No! Cause joy? No! Cause love? No! Cause peace? No! “See to it...that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble!”

Bitterness, improperly handled, causes trouble—and it does so in at least two ways.

First, it causes physical problems. In his book “None of These Diseases,” S. I. McMillan says, “Anger, unhandled, will show itself in at least 50 diseases.”

Dr. Norman Wright, a professor of psychology at Biola University and a Christian writer, agrees with McMillan. God has constructed us, says Dr. Wright, with a tube about 30 feet long that begins at our throat and runs to our rectum (the alimentary canal). That long tube, disturbed by bitterness and anger, produces things like colitis, diarrhea and ulcers. (Editor’s note: Of course, such ailments often result from many other causes besides bitterness or anger.) When we are angry and do not handle it properly, there are physical consequences.

Bitterness can also show itself in our mental condition. Bitterness is really displaced anger. We can be angry at other things, other people and other

objects, not knowing it comes from bitterness. All our energy and mind are set in an anger-mode, and we're affected mentally. There is no joy, no creativity, no positive power flowing through our lives because there is resentment there.

We are also affected spiritually when bitterness is not resolved. How? By an inability to accept God's Love. It can cause you to doubt your relationship to God. Ray Burke has written a book called *Anger-Diffusing the Bomb*, and in it he says that each time he dealt with those who doubted God's Love for them, somewhere along the line he discovered they harbored bitterness against God, themselves, or someone else. When this bitterness was dealt with and resolved, their ability to accept God's Love and forgiveness returned.

HOW DO WE OVERCOME BITTERNESS?

The good news is that anyone can overcome a bitter spirit. God encourages us to deal with it. He says in Ephesians 4:31, "Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger..."

The Bible is so practical and clear that if we take what God teaches us about overcoming bitterness and apply it, we can be free of the bondage of bitterness.

BITTERNESS TOWARD GOD

Begin by dealing with any bitterness toward God. The following steps may help.

First, trust God's wisdom. This doesn't mean you should believe that everything that happens on Earth is good. Sin is in the World. Satan is still the prince of the air. Yet I must believe that God allows things to happen that He may not like, and which we may not like. But in His wisdom, somewhere down the line, God will turn it around for good for His children, according to His promise in Romans 8:28.

Second, I have to ask God what He's trying to teach me through this. The Bible says we're the disciples of Jesus. What is a disciple?—A learner. The Bible says the Father is the teacher, and we are disciples. We are learners. The experiences of life are teaching experiences. Sometimes we are so anxious to get to our destination that we forget how much joy can be ours along the way. When bitterness comes and you are tempted to be angry with God, ask Him what He is trying to teach you.

Third, apply one of God's promises to your situation.

Fourth, reject self-pity. Have you ever been a victim of the "Poor Me Syndrome"? Perhaps you know someone else who always seems to be saying, "Poor me, just look what's happened to me." No one likes being around such a sad-sack for very long, because it's no fun. So don't get into that syndrome.

Fifth, put time into proper perspective. Every difficult experience you may be dealing with now, circumstances that tend to make you angry and bitter,

will in time pass away.

Sixth, be quick to give thanks. I've learned a little chorus recently, and I start singing it almost from the time I wake up in the morning: "It's amazing what praising can do." The song goes:

It doesn't matter when things go wrong,
Jesus fills my heart with a song.
It's amazing what praising can do.

You can't be bitter against God and praise Him at the same time. You can't be blessing Him while you're also shaking your fist at Him. So the Bible says, "In all things, give thanks."— 1Th.5:18 . Learn to give thanks unto the Lord and praise His Name, and it's really amazing what praising can do.

BITTERNESS TOWARD YOURSELF

Many times we get angry with ourselves. It shows up in many forms—we feel rejected, we wallow in self-pity, and our self-image is poor.

It may be because of some sin or failure of yesteryear, something that, if we had it to do all over again, we wouldn't do for a million dollars; but we did do it, and we're having trouble forgiving ourselves.

How do I deal with that?

I begin by confessing my sin to the Lord, and believing His promise: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"— 1Jn.1:9 . Then once I know God has forgiven me, I can forgive myself.

BITTERNESS TOWARD OTHERS

How do you deal with bitterness against others? One thing you must do is to keep your anger temporary. In Ephesians 4:26 God tells us we should not let the sun go down on our anger. If you're mad at somebody today, you should get it settled before the sun goes down. If it goes down and you don't deal with it, it will simmer all night, and tomorrow there's a good chance you'll be twice as angry and bitter about it as you are today. Washington Irving said that a tart temper is the only thing that doesn't mellow with age. So deal with your anger before the sun goes down. Keep a short account.

Another crucial area is the tongue. The Bible reminds us that though the tongue is a little instrument, it causes a lot of problems. You can't get into trouble for something you didn't say. That's why it's so often best to mentally stamp "N.C." on things you hear or observe. Do you know what that is? "No Comment." You can keep out of trouble that way. Watch your words. A sharp tongue is a tool that grows keener with use. Watch it.

We can also pursue peace. "Make every effort to live in peace with all men."— Heb.12:14 . "Seek peace and pursue it."— 1Pet.3:11 . We must chase after peace, like a dog after a fox! Go for it! In Philippians 4:5 we are

commanded, "Let your gentleness be evident to all." Be gentle—not to most people, or to some, but to all of them. Live gently. Pursue peace.

Also, if you know someone is harboring anger, hurt or bitterness towards you because of some wrongdoing on your part, you can take the positive step of initiating reconciliation. In Matthew 5:23-24, Jesus says that if you come to Him with your offering in hand, and then remember that a brother has something against you, leave your offering, go to your brother, and make your offering after you're reconciled with your brother. So the Lord not only tells us to go to others when we're bitter or unforgiving towards them, but He covers both angles and also tells us to go to those who are bitter or angry towards us.

There's something else: Forgive and forget. How can you forget something negative that's stuck in your mind? The Bible says God remembers our sins no more. So how can God forget something when He is omniscient? How can He know everything and still forget? Here's the secret: When you forgive and forget, the forgetting means that you, like God, don't hold that wrongdoing to the offender's account. God forgets the charge against us; He remembers it no more. Oh, He knows about it, just as you do, but He will never bring it up again. That's what we are to do. Don't fish in the pond of history. Leave it there.

Sometimes we are like the man who came running into the office of a marriage counsellor. "Sir, you've got to do something about my wife. Hurry! She's historical, she's historical!" The counselor said, "Now, wait a minute. You mean she's hysterical." He said, "No! She's historical! She's bringing up everything from the past!"

Some people can go back and reel off in chronological order everything that a person has done against them during their entire relationship. If you forgive a person, forget their offenses and never bring them up again. Don't dwell in the past and don't let the past dwell in you.

Robert E. Lee, after the Civil War, visited a home in Kentucky. The lady of the house pointed to a limbless, battered tree trunk standing on the front lawn, and said, "Before the Union army came through here, that was a beautiful, magnificent magnolia tree. Then they blasted it with their artillery, and that's all that's left. What do you think about that?"

She expected the general to sympathize with her and criticize the Union Army. But instead, he looked at her and said one sentence: "Cut it down and forget it."

HOW ABOUT YOU?

Do you have some trees of bitterness standing in your life? Bitterness toward God? Toward others? Toward yourself? Cut them down and forget them.

Resolve to deal with your bitter spirit. "Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God

forgave you.”– Eph.4:31-32 .

[The Excellency of Christ Part I By Jonathan Edwards](#)



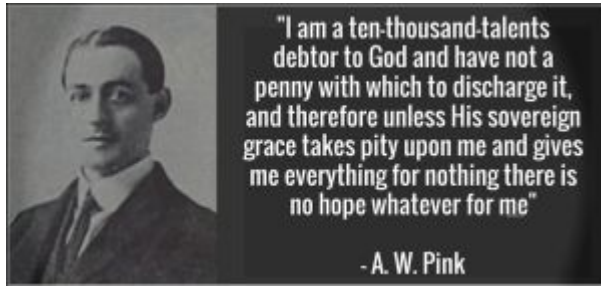
In the person of Christ do meet together infinite glory and lowest humility. Infinite glory, and the virtue of humility, meet in no other person but Christ.

[Martin Luther and the Protestant Reformation](#)



The Protestant Reformation stands today as a testament to men's desire to find a greater understanding of the Scriptures and of God. The Protestant Reformation also stands as a reminder that when one omnipotent authority claims supremacy over the affairs of men, whether they be religious or secular, it is in the interest of all men to question where that authority is derived from, and whether it is just, and/or mistaken.

The Unpayable Debt Of Ten Thousand Talents Of Matthew 18:24



I was asked to figure out how much ten thousand talents would be worth in today's money. I got the following information from various web sources.