

STRESS FRACTURES: The Stress Fracture of Bitterness

Genesis 45:1–15; Genesis 50:15–21

I. INTRODUCTION — The Nature of a Spiritual Stress Fracture

- Stress fractures form under repeated pressure.
- Bitterness is a spiritual fracture formed by repeated wounds.
- Beneath bitterness lies a deeper disappointment with God.

II. THE ROOTS OF BITTERNESS

- Rejection, betrayal, cruelty, broken promises.
- Bitterness grows in the soil of real pain.

III. HOW WE MASK BITTERNESS

- **Silent treatment:** “We’re not bitter — we just don’t talk about them.”
- **Polite exterior:** Smiling “from the teeth out.”

IV. THE MENTAL COST OF BITTERNESS

- Constant mental rehearsal: what we’d say, do, or wish would happen.
- Bitterness drains emotional and spiritual energy.

V. THREE PRINCIPLES OF BITTERNESS

1. Bitterness Usually Involves Family Training

- Joseph’s dysfunctional family: rivalry, favoritism, generational bitterness.

2. Bitterness Normally Includes Real Offenses

- People who are bitter usually have legitimate reasons.

3. Bitterness Usually Finds Local Support

- Bitter people attract bitter people.
- “Misery loves equally miserable company.”

VI. JOSEPH'S STORY — A CASE STUDY IN HEALED BITTERNESS

- Joseph's suffering: slavery, betrayal, lies, prison, isolation.
- Joseph's rise: from pit to palace, Prime Minister of Egypt.
- God gives Joseph a 14-year vision (abundance + famine).
- Brothers come for grain and Joseph recognizes them; they don't recognize him.

VII. JOSEPH'S RESPONSE (GENESIS 45)

- He weeps.
- He reveals himself.
- He reframes the story through God's sovereignty:
 - "God sent me... God sent me... God sent me..."
 - "It was not you who sent me here, but God."

VIII. HOW TO LIVE PAST YOUR BITTERNESS

- Don't ignore the wound.
- Don't fake it.
- Say: "Yes, I was hurt, but God has a greater plan."
- **Let go of bitterness you never know what God will give you back.**
- **Hold onto bitterness you never know what you're keeping yourself from.**
- When you release bitterness, you gain the freedom to forgive.

IX. THE CROSS: GOD'S FINAL WORD ON BITTERNESS

- The worst evil (the cross) became God's greatest good.
- God can redeem your wound just as He redeemed Calvary.
- Forgiveness begins by receiving God's forgiveness through Christ.

X. INVITATION TO DECISION

- Identify the faces and names connected to your bitterness.
- Be honest before God.
- Pray for the courage to forgive.
- Receive the forgiveness God offers through Jesus Christ.