

Bitter Spirits, Bad Attitudes, and Bossy Wives

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This is a title that may not come across very well in our Christian circles today, which have become flooded or inundated with feministic teaching and women leadership. To say the least, the spirit of feminism has saturated home and church life today causing both doctrinal and operational departure from God's original design as it relates to the home (Gen. 3:16) and church (1 Tim. 2:12). But we must remember that *what is popular is not always right and what is right is not always popular*. The truth cannot be sidestepped today or overlooked. It is a growing problem that has only one solution, which is the ministry of the Word of God and Spirit of God, changing the hearts and lives of women. It's the truth and the Spirit that will transform ladies into godly women that God is pleased with and which He can greatly use in His work today (John 15:3; 2 Cor. 3:18).

The combination of a bitter heart, a bad attitude, and a bossy wife can have severe or detrimental effects on a home and church ministry. It's time to bring the skeletons out of the closet and face them! Today both the Christian home and the local church are suffering because of the bitterness, bad attitudes, and bossy dominance of women. Every pastor can attest to the fact that churches suffer because of women who have a sour spirit and who cause division. This is not to say that men cannot have a bitter spirit (Col. 3:19) and become dictatorial (3 John 1:9) in church ministry. Another study could be and should be written from this angle. But ladies, statistics of those in church planting work and who are helping to reestablish church ministries cannot be swept under the carpet. Some 90% of church problems focus on women who do not know their place in the home and in the church.

There has been and continues to be a growing problem with women who are out of order in relationship to home life and church ministry and who are not following God's submissive design for their lives (1 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 5:22-23). Headship is still the man's place and God has not changed His leadership role for the man in the home or on the church level (1 Tim. 3:1; Titus 1:6).

Before going any further, I want to convey that I'm not writing as a male chauvinist, nor am I writing to lambaste women. This is not my desire or purpose. Why would I want to do this as a pastor? My ministry depends upon the service and work of godly women who want to excel in the home and church life. No church would make it without godly women serving in the local church ministry (Phil. 4:3). Every pastor and local church is dependent upon the service of godly women (1 Tim. 3:11). In fact, if the local church ministry would be devoid of serving women there would be no local church ministry. There is no replacement for godly women who have a right heart, a right spirit and a submissive attitude in the home and within the confines of the local church and its leadership.

Mark Twain remarked:

"What sir, would the people of the earth be without woman? They would be scarce, sir, mighty scarce."

Let me add to this that the church would be mighty scarce, flimsy and incapable of operation without godly women serving the Lord. The value of a godly wife to a man in the home and godly women serving faithfully in the local church ministry cannot be overestimated.

Proverbs 31:10

"Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price *is* far above rubies."

But a woman's beauty lasts only as long as her disposition stays sweet. Many times (not all times) the hens can become emotionally distraught or bitter and begin to stir up the chicken coop. This begins when they possess a bad attitude and develop a bitter heart toward their husband. As a result, they then try to become dominant over the husband within the home and marriage relationship (Gen. 3:16). Many times this spirit of domination will also be exhibited toward the male leadership on the local church level as well (1 Tim. 2:11-12). One thing usually leads to another. As the home goes, so goes the local church. So let's begin with a bitter spirit.

A Bitter Spirit



Socrates reportedly warned his students to be careful to marry a good wife. Otherwise, he said, "if you get a bad wife, you'll become a philosopher." A wife who harbors a bitter spirit can sour a marriage. A bitter spirit can develop within a woman's heart when she becomes frustrated with her husband in the home, when another person offends her, when there is a misunderstanding about something, or when she has grown weary with certain situations that she is facing in life.

There may be times when a woman does not even really know what she is bitter about. Nonetheless, she is bitter. Bitterness invades her soul and she becomes overtaken by a bitter spirit. This bitter spirit can then fester in her heart and eventually spread to other people as she shares the reasons for her bitterness with other women and somehow justifies her sin of bitterness.

Hebrews 12:15 reveals this pattern when it states:

"Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble *you*, and thereby many be defiled."

The fact that a bitter spirit can defile other people is clearly taught in the Bible and is experienced in the local church setting time and time again when women begin to share their bitter hearts with each other. This is a recipe for disaster. Ladies, you must come to see bitterness for what it is and remember the damaging effects a bitter spirit can have on a church when you begin to talk (gossip) against church leadership, church people, and the way things are run in the church. Bitterness festers and becomes an enormous problem that could be prevented if you only would have a right view toward leadership, truth, ministry and your place in the local church as a woman.

Each woman must remember that no person or situation in life forces her to be bitter. Bitterness is a choice. This has always been true when it comes to sin. And bitterness or a bitter spirit is a work of the

flesh. There is nothing spiritual about bitterness (Gal. 5:19-20). It sometimes tries to present itself as something that is spiritual and acceptable in God's eyes. We can justify our bitter spirit as we cry those old familiar words, "Nobody knows the trouble I've seen." We pity ourselves and justify our sin far too often. But bitterness appears under the umbrella of anger and wrath and causes strife and division within the local church and home. It is part of the "such like" works of the flesh.

Each woman must face bitterness for what it is. It is sin. It comes from the flesh (old nature). It cannot be disguised as something that is acceptable under certain circumstances. No matter what avenue is used to stir up bitterness in a woman's heart (gossip, words that have hurt them, a misunderstanding, a husband's actions, etc.), we can be sure that ultimately it's the old nature that feeds on these things and causes bitterness to swell up in a woman's heart. Of course, the devil is always in the background trying to use bitterness as a tool to cause havoc in the home and church.

1 Peter 5:8 reminds us:

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."

Ladies, what you need to do is make a point to cleanse yourselves from all bitterness and confess it to the Lord.

1 John 1:9

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

The word "confess" means "to say the same thing" as God would say about our sin. It means to agree with God about your sin. You must confess that your bitterness is a sin which cannot be justified in God's holy sight. You must face it for what it is, confess it, and then forsake it. When you do this a giant load will be taken off your back. Rearranging the furniture, running to another church, or trying to get someone to see your point of view will not fix a bitter spirit. What needs to happen is that you see God's point of view and do some old-fashioned confession of sin. Until this is done a bitter spirit will not leave your heart.

Ephesians 4:31 reminds us to take the initiative and act upon the truth of God's Word in obedience: "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice."

One author said: "Resentment becomes a black, furry, growling grudge. Grudge ... starts with a growl. 'Grr...' Like a bear with bad breath coming out of hibernation." Remember that bitterness imprisons life; love releases it. Bitterness paralyzes life; love empowers it. Bitterness sickens life; love heals it. Bitterness blinds life; love anoints the eyes. God wants to free you from a bitter spirit because it paralyzes your spiritual life and quenches the Spirit. 1 Thessalonians 5:19 says: "Quench not the Spirit."

Bitterness and gossip takes you away from true fellowship with the Lord. You can't be in fellowship with God when you have a bitter spirit. Stop playing the spiritual game. Cleansing is needed before your fellowship and walk can be restored with the Lord (James 4:8-9). Jesus can give you a brand new heart if you want one! He can make a brand new heart! This is the promise of the Word.

Ezekiel 36:26 says:

"A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart (hardened heart) out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh (a soft and sensitive heart again)."

Of course, this refers to the act of regeneration and how God gives the believing sinner a new heart. If you are saved, you have God's nature already implanted within your spirit, so that you do not have to be overcome by a bitter heart. Now you must allow His nature (the new nature) to overtake your life and control you instead of the old nature, which is reflected in a bitter spirit.

"In the desert
I saw a creature, naked, bestial,
Who, squatting upon the ground,
Held his heart in his hands,
And ate of it.
I said: 'Is it good, friend?'

‘It is bitter-bitter,’ he answered;
‘But I like it
Because it is bitter,
And because it is my heart.’”

In his book, “Lee: The Last Years,” Charles Bracelen Flood reports that after the Civil War, Robert E. Lee visited a Kentucky lady who took him to the remains of a grand old tree in front of her house. There she bitterly cried that its limbs and trunk had been destroyed by Federal Artillery fire. She looked to Lee for a word condemning the North or at least sympathizing with her loss. After a brief silence, Lee said, “Cut it down, my dear Madam, and forget it.” Why did Lee respond in this way? Because it’s far better to forgive the injustices of the past than to allow them to remain, and let bitterness take root and poison the rest of your life.

Bad Attitudes



Okay, this is a bit extreme, but you get the picture. Ladies, a bitter spirit will ultimately translate into a bad attitude. If you are not careful you can begin to sit, soak and sour! Many do this in the local church life and they drift away from ministry and possess no heart to do things for the Lord. This becomes a

debilitating and low point in your Christian life. A bad attitude makes you unusable in God’s work. A bad and unforgiving attitude is a mark of the philosophy of the world system that is against God.

1 Corinthians 2:12 states:

“Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.”

The “spirit of the world” speaks of the philosophy, orientation and attitude of the world system. It’s the way the world system, which is against God, thinks and views things. The world says, “You have a

right to be bitter and have a bad attitude. Go ahead and make yourself known.” But Jesus says something altogether different:

Luke 14:26-27

“If any *man* come to me (to be my disciple), and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.”

The believer must learn to hate his own ways that are contrary to God’s ways and love God’s ways more than His own self-will and selfish paths in life. The believer must also “bear his cross” which means to surrender and sacrifice his life on the altar for God to use. This means you must surrender your own selfish ambitions and sins to the Lord, such as a bitter spirit and bad attitude, and begin to sacrifice your time for the Lord once again in a new and fresh way. Only then can you be the kind of disciple that Jesus wants you to be. There is no other choice that can please Jesus! You must choose His way over your own bitter heart and your own way.

You have no rights in the matter. You have a choice to either give up your bad attitude, which comes from a bitter spirit, or keep going on in life possessing a bitter spirit and bad attitude which stems from the world system. But maintaining this kind of attitude will cause you to become out-of-sync spiritually and deaden your effectiveness for the Lord and your fellowship in the marriage relationship.

While browsing in a Christian bookstore one day, I discovered a shelf of "reduced price" items. Among the gifts was a little figurine of a man and woman, their heads lovingly tilted toward one another. "Happy 10th Anniversary" read the inscription. It appeared to be in perfect condition, yet its tag indicated "damaged." Examining it more closely, I found another tag underneath and chuckled - "Wife is coming unglued." When you have a bitter spirit, which develops into a bad attitude, you are becoming unglued from a spiritual perspective.

2 Corinthians 7:1 adds these words:

“Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”

After genuine confession is offered, you then need to take the initiative to cleanse yourself from your bitterness and bad attitude by not allowing this type of spirit and attitude to rule your life. You need to stop engaging in the practices you once did, which flowed forth from a bitter heart, such as gossip, disinterest in God's work and ignoring your husband. When you, as a woman, receive the Word of God in faith ("these promises") and act upon this Word in obedience, it's then that you can be cleansed from bitterness which is nothing more than filthiness of the flesh and spirit.

Ladies, it is vitally important that you guard your heart from bitterness and not allow it to keep resurfacing again and again. This is done by claiming the promises of victory. When sin seeks to invade our lives we need to claim the victorious armor of God and not allow bitterness to control our lives (Eph. 6:10-17). There is victory over a bitter heart. You can be freed from experiencing a bitter spirit and suffering the detrimental effects that go along with a bitter heart.

One author wrote:

"The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude, to me, is more important than facts. It is more important than the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than failures, than successes, than what other people think or say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness or skill. It will make or break a company, a church, a home. The remarkable thing is we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day. We cannot change our past, we cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string that we have, and that is our attitude. I am convinced that life is 10 percent what happens to me and 90 percent how I react to it. And so it is with you. We are in charge of our attitudes."

"Your Christian attitude is contagious.
Is your's worth catching?"

Bossy Wives



Of all the home remedies, a good wife is still the best. Ladies, this is really true. Your spirit and attitude in the home will make it or break it. Your children will pick up on the kind of spirit that you have in your heart. Your attitude sends a message that permeates the entire home atmosphere. If you possess a gentle spirit it will be felt among the family, but if your spirit and character is overriding, argumentative and controlling, then this same type of spirit will begin to permeate the children in the family and create an atmosphere of tension and turmoil instead of love and stability.

Proverbs 14:1

“Every wise woman buildeth her house: but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands.”

Building a house does not refer to house construction with masonry and carpentry work. It refers to knitting together a family in the day-to-day routine by creating a happy and comfortable atmosphere or place for a family to live. Remember that a house is not always a home. It can become a discouraging place to live if the woman does not know her role as a mother and wife and when she fails to exhibit a godly and gentle character. A wise woman will build up her family by living a godly life and setting a godly example instead of becoming a dominant and argumentative woman. A foolish woman will tear down her house and cause the house to no longer be a true home of blessing, order, safety, peace, and delight.

The progression in our study is very easy to see. A bitter spirit and bad attitude will result in a bossy woman who tries to gain dominance over the male. The inevitable end of a bitter spirit and bad attitude is a bossy wife. The Bible teaches that each woman is to have a quiet and humble spirit about them within the home and church ministry instead of an overriding bossy and dominating spirit.

1 Peter 3:3-4 says:

“Whose adorning let it not be that outward *adorning* of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But *let it be* the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, *even the ornament* of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.”

A woman's beauty lasts only as long as her disposition stays sweet. The true beauty of a woman is her inner life or inward spirit. Her inner adornment or beauty is to consist of a meek spirit which points to a mild and gentle disposition that is not argumentative, quarrelsome and prone to disputing. The description of a “quiet” spirit points to an undisturbed, still, tranquil and peaceable spirit. This is the inward adornment that will ultimately be reflected on the outside of a woman's life as she allows the new nature and Holy Spirit to dominate herself instead of the old nature and a bitter or dominant spirit. God wants each lady to possess a gentle and peaceable spirit instead of a dictatorial, dominating type of spirit in the home and church life. Her overall character is to be one of gentleness and peace instead of power and dominance.

Ephesians 5:24

“Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so *let the wives be* to their own husbands in every thing.”

Bossy wives will try to rule the roost, lead the man, and seek to get their way no matter what. I have seen many a man being led around on a leash by their wife. But it's this type of women who becomes a disgrace to God's design for womanhood, a detriment to any home or church, and ultimately they become a thorn in the side of a man and any church ministry.

Bossy and disobedient wives that resist functional authority and male leadership will often carry their dictatorial spirit into church life. You cannot separate a bossy wife in the home from a bossy woman in the church! The two go hand in hand. If a woman tries to overpower her husband in the home she will do so in the church ministry as well. As the home goes, so goes the church. And what about the home and bossy wives? The Bible gives some clear explanations and a very

vivid portrait of bossy and dictatorial women who seek to overtake the home life.

Proverbs 21:9

“It is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman in a wide house.”

Proverbs 21:19

“It is better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and an angry woman.”

Proverbs 25:24

“It is better to dwell in the corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman and in a wide house.”

Proverbs 27:15

“A continual dropping in a very rainy day and a contentious woman are alike.”

We chuckle at these verses sometimes but any man who has a woman living with him who is like this is not chuckling. A brawling and contentious wife is a woman who is noisy, quarrelsome, opposing, controlling and dictatorial. Ladies, it's very clear that you can fail to possess the kind of character and spirit that God wants you to have in life. You can turn into a contentious woman instead of a gentle woman. You can turn into a dictatorial and domineering wife instead of a submissive and peaceable wife. You can become a quarrelsome wife instead of being a gentle and loving wife.

In short, you can become a blight instead of a blessing to your husband. And when there is contention (conflict, struggles, opposition) in the church many times there are women behind these conflicts, as they seek to carry over their dictatorial and dominant spirit that they express within the home, and bring it into the church ministry. This is not always the case but many times this is true and ministries suffer because of controlling women pushing themselves upon a ministry. A church is blessed when the women know their role and place and when they exhibit the godly character of a gentle and peaceable woman. Bitter hearts, bad attitudes, and bossy women have done more to wreck church ministries than anything else.

Woman's Bible studies are notorious for starting gossip against the pastor and the leadership of the church. They become a breeding ground for bitter hearts and bad attitudes to be created where bossy wives can rise to greater heights of power. This is especially true when one or more women do not know their role in the home and when they begin to place subtle hints and doubts in the minds of other women. The natural bend of women is to oppose male leadership (Gen. 3:16) and it only takes a few women to stir up trouble, get the women to try and push their agenda, and express their dominant spirit.

Many times gossip is associated with women who want to dominate and be domineering in the home or church ministry. Their gossip is usually linked in some way to their desire to rule, take charge and express themselves. Furthermore, because of their bitter spirit and bad attitude gossip easily flows forth from their lips. So the old, old story is repeated time and time again.

1 Timothy 5:13

"And withal they learn *to be* idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not."

With the spread and influence of feminism into the homes and church life, it's no wonder that the church today faces a crisis with women stepping over their boundary lines and trying to dominate, control, and possess male leadership roles in the local church. Bossy wives and women in general must remember the clear teaching of the New Testament about women leadership and control within the local churches.

1 Timothy 2:11-12 commands:

"Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence."

1 Corinthians 14:34-35 adds:

"Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but *they are commanded* to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask

their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.”

Of course, these verses do not condemn women from teaching in the local church life, as long as they do not teach men and usurp the local church authority that God has established, or speak out with authority in the stated gatherings. Feminist theology of today, which is supported by Charismatic, women preachers, is quick to assume that these commands are either cultural instructions, which do not apply to today’s church ministries, or that Paul was asserting his male bias when giving these commands about women teaching men within the confines of local church ministry.

Of course, this is an incredibly low view of the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures! We have no right to dismiss clear commands for church polity as being cultural. The elder ruling position within the church was only given to men (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:6). How could a woman be the husband of one wife? Let me just say that women preachers who try to take on the elder position of leadership become a disgrace to the call of womanhood and her submissive role and the kind of gentle, quiet, and peaceable spirit that she is to possess.

Many women have by now written me off, since they will claim that I am speaking from the perspective of a male and not understanding anything about the world of a woman. But what does this mindset and conclusion have to do with obeying truth and changing your character and conduct in light of God’s Word? I’m simply trying to share unchanging truth from the Word of God so the lives of women can be changed who might be struggling with bitterness and bad attitudes. I’m conveying the Biblical truth that women need to stop causing rifts and divisions within church ministries because of their unscriptural and ungodly domineering attitudes, demeanor and character.

This study has nothing to do with entering a woman’s world and her feelings. It is dealing with bitter spirits, bad attitudes, and a bossy authoritative woman. Of course, the man cannot fully enter into the world of a woman but he is instructed to give her understanding and loving care as the “weaker vessel” (1 Pet. 3:7). Men can normally be rough with each other. "Hey, gained a few pounds there, didn't you?"

Guys just laugh it off. "Yeah, man." Men, if you say this to your wife in the same rough-natured manner, you'll find out that a woman is not made the same way. She's more easily damaged from an emotional perspective.

As men, you need to be respectful of your wife as the weaker vessel. This means that you will treat her with tenderness and understanding. And ladies, you know that your emotional constitution or makeup is different than a man's. I do not need to remind you of this. This means that you have a greater responsibility to control your feelings as they fluctuate and not allow those feelings to be used by the old nature to conquer your spiritual life. It takes the truth of God's Word and the ministry of the Spirit's power to not allow feelings to generate into anger and other sins of the flesh (Eph. 5:18). The Lord has promised that our inner human spirit can be under control as we apply God's victorious plan to our lives (1 Cor. 14:32).

Sometimes ladies can almost pride themselves in the fact that men cannot understand what it's like to be a woman (and we can't!). For this reason, they somehow excuse themselves from their responsibilities as a wife and what God really wants women to be like and do in relationship to home, church life, and ministry. But if you choose to ignore and bypass your responsibilities as wives and serving women within the home and local church, then you are actually missing your high and holy calling. God has called you to Biblical womanhood and part of this is to manifest a gentle, quiet, and peaceful spirit.

Ladies, if you are reading this today and have a bitter spirit or a bad attitude, then you need to make some changes. Your spiritual life is out of order. Don't fool yourself (1 John 1:8). Perhaps you have been making the home a heated place of unrest instead of a haven for your husband and children. Perhaps you have overstepped your boundary in the home or church and need to start on a new path of living. You may need to do some old-fashioned confession and make some changes in your attitudes and overall living with the help of the Spirit's power (Zech. 4:6).

You might need to begin expressing a different character around the home and in the church. Your home, husband, pastor and church will

greatly benefit from a wife and woman who expresses a submissive and gentle spirit, who knows her God-given calling, and who has a heart for ministry and service.

Has God in some way spoken to your heart after reading and reflecting on this study? We need godly women in the home and church. I repeat, as the home goes, so goes the church. A man has the tremendous privilege and responsibility to be a godly leader in the home and treat his wife with love and respect (Eph. 5:23). At the same time, each woman must understand her own role and pursue it with an undying passion, learn to submit to the man's loving role of leadership, and keep a non-confrontational spirit within the home. In fact, women sometimes find themselves in a place where they must submit in spite of a man's lack of spirituality, and by doing so, they can have a spiritual impact upon his life through the beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit (1 Pet. 3:1).

Mrs. Albert Einstein was once asked if she understood her husband's theory of relativity. "No," she said, "but I know how he likes his tea." Ladies, may you become the kind of woman that God wants you to be in the home and in the church life which is a godly, submissive, serving and gentle-spirited woman. When a woman understands and practices what God wants her to be, it's only then that she will become a true blessing to her husband, home, pastor and church ministry. Make this your prayer and start a new way of life that will bring healing to you and those around you.

“Take my will, and make it Thine;
It shall be no longer mine.
Take my heart; it is Thine own;
It shall be Thy royal throne,
It shall be Thy royal throne.”