

# THE MAN AND THE THINGS THAT OFTEN DEFEAT HIM

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## ***RECOGNIZING SOME OF THE MORE SERIOUS AREAS OF DEFEAT!***

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Maximizing Your Manhood:  
learning to react  
in a Biblical way!

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**Coping With  
Emotional Problems in Daily Life!**

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**Introduction to this series:**

*It is very important that you study all of this thoroughly.*

**In this study I will present topics that relate to our emotional growth.**

- And there is an interdependent counterpart between the spiritual and the emotional parts of man.
- Growing emotionally means that we men learn to handle anger, fear, bitterness, and other negative emotions as Christ would.
- As we seek to become more like Him, one by-product will be emotional maturity-- the fruit of spiritual growth.

If the Holy Spirit has control of our lives, He will produce in us the fulfillment of His specific instructions on handling anger, bitterness, worry, fear, etc. He will produce unconditional love, self-control, and the joy of the Lord. (Study Galatians 5:22, 23.) It is my intent to touch upon those areas where the Christian has the greatest difficulty. Some of the Biblical answers for the subjects we will deal with could also be applied to burnout, failure, inferiority, anxiety, workaholism, depression, and other problems we face as men.

***As men we are emotionally vulnerable.***

- *Often we do not want to look at the fact that we can be lonely, upset, frustrated, angry, impatient, and struggling with the problems we face.*
- *We were told as children that boys do not cry. We were taught to deny emotions and to play the part of being strong. On that basis we often deny our problems that are manifested emotionally lest we appear weak to those who are important to us.*

***We must learn to--***

1. Identify our emotionally vulnerable areas and apply practical ways to strengthen or overcome them.
  2. Share our feelings with those who are significant to our lives.
  3. Understand our personal worth in Christ.
  4. Overcome emotional struggles effectively by the application of the Word of God through memorization, prayer, and meditation on Biblical promises and principles.
- ***Both genuine Christian fellowship and witnessing depend greatly on our emotional maturity.***
  - Men who are not mature in the emotional factors of life do not make good witnesses, if they witness at all, and do not build much in the way of meaningful fellowship with Christians about them.
  - You will rarely find them involved in discipling because of the sense and conviction of weakness within.

***As a leader of your family, it is important that you seek to be mature yourself, and by the application of the Word be able to help others and prepare your own son or sons for their responsibility.***

# THE DANGERS OF UNFORGIVEN BITTERNESS!

## Lesson One

### Introduction:

It would be wise to look up and study the verses and the context of every portion in the Word of God where *bitterness* is spoken of. Also, if you look into the word *hardness* you probably will discover truth that applies to this subject.

The lack of a forgiving spirit and holding on to bitterness are very closely tied together. In fact, a person who practices bitterness about things that touch him does not practice forgiving others.

### *Memory Verse: Hebrews 12:15*

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**Aim:** Recognizing how bitterness develops and what it does to the person who allows it in his life.

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### Launching Questions:

1. Why do people become bitter?
  2. Why does God state that a man is to love his wife and be not bitter against her? (See Colossians 3:19; I Peter 3:7.)
  3. What does a bitter spirit often produce?
  4. If a person has become bitter, what one thing could you say the person has not done? (Answer -- forgiving others!)
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## I. ARE WE GROWING A PLANT OF BITTERNESS?

(Study Hebrews 12:15-17.)

God has set before us a "race to be run" and a victory to be won. (See Hebrews 12:1-5.) Christ is our example. He endured the cross and the shame. His joy was full as He ran with patience the race before Him and kept His eyes upon the purpose for which He came. It was not an easy race for Moses, who is often spoken of in the book of Hebrews. There were hardships, disappointments, and the pressures which came from every side. It would have been easy for Moses to build bitterness in his life.

It is not an easy race for us either. Many Christians are growing a "root of bitterness" in their lives. The plant may not be obvious, but the root in the heart becomes manifest over a period of time.

This portion in Hebrews 12:15-17 is also very clear and is a very strong warning. The context is vital. In the foregoing verses the writer of Hebrews speaks of God's chastening. God has a purpose in such -- to bring about godly living and to make us Christlike. Chastening sometimes does not make us better, but bitter; for we find it hard to accept what God is doing. The Hebrews were going through many trials in which they had the opportunity to prove God's grace, but they failed in the application of the grace of God. Instead they allowed bitterness to creep into their hearts and lives. Thereby many were defiled.

Trials are opportunities for overcoming these very things by God's grace. But the temptation is to "tell off those lousy people we are working with" or to be upset with "those terrible circumstances we find ourselves in," and to spread our bitter, unhappy spirit. Our bitter spirit is soon injected into the lives of those about us.

## II. DO WE RECOGNIZE THE CLIMATE FOR BITTERNESS?

There are certain things that work in our lives to bring about bitterness. As you study Hebrews 10:32-34 you will note there is a climate that is conducive to producing bitterness.

**1. The Facing of Hardships Often Produces Bitterness.**

The Hebrew Christians were enduring a great fight of afflictions. The early Christians faced great stresses and pressures that we know nothing about. Many had faced losses of many kinds -- jobs, homes, position, love, acceptance, etc.

**2. The Experience of Disappointments Often Brings Bitterness.** (See

Hebrews 10:33, 34, 38.) From their perspective, things did not come out right for the Hebrew Christians. They faced many unfulfilled expectations. *I personally think this -- unfulfilled expectations -- is a major source of bitterness.* We entertain the thoughts that God is not fair to us; He is not doing or allowing what we think or feel we deserve. As men, we have certain expectations about life, about marriage, about our employment, about many things; and if God does not fulfill them, we can very easily become bitter.

**3. Weakened Confidence Helps to Build Bitterness.** According to Hebrews 10:35 they had lost confidence that God cared, or that He was even interested in them or their needs. It is easy to feel that God does not note our burden. Could it be that often we men feel God does not enter into our concerns and so we try to carry them alone? Then we become disturbed and bitter and feel that life is not fair.

**4. Inward Spiritual Fatigue Often Produces Bitterness.**

The last of these four climatic conditions that often brings us to bitterness is a slackened prayer life and neglect of the Word of God and the local church. We are very susceptible to a bitter spirit when we neglect those things that bring a close walk with the Savior. In contrast to this, consider that Christ endured facing the cross with joy and being reviled. But He reviled not again as He committed Himself to the Father who judges righteously. (See Hebrews 12:1-4; I Peter 2:23.) Consider Him who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself.

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### Guiding and Application Questions:

1. Do you think that men are as vulnerable emotionally as ladies? Do men find it hard to share the emotional aspects of life?
  2. In what way do you feel disappointments bring bitterness? Do we often experience unfulfilled expectations?
  3. Have you given your expectations to God, if so what does this mean to you? Is this necessary?
  4. Do people experiencing fatigue find it easier to entertain thoughts of bitterness?
  5. Why are hardships apt to build bitterness in our lives?
  6. How do husbands (and as dads) express their bitterness? Are you allowing such in your own life? Is there a reason for the warning in Colossians 3:19?
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# **THE DANGERS OF UNFORGIVEN BITTERNESS! (con't)**

## **Lesson Two**

**If you are a Teacher:** Bring a review of the foregoing lesson so that you can tie the two lessons together into one unit. Consider the **AIM** of helping the class to recognize bitterness and to be able to deal with it successfully.

### **III. DO WE RECOGNIZE WHAT BITTERNESS PRODUCES IN OUR LIVES AND THE LIVES OF OTHERS?**

When we allow bitterness to take over, to become a root in our minds and hearts, it will produce a plant that has much fruit.

#### **1. We Will Fail To Embrace the Grace of God.**

The Scriptures speak of "failing of the grace of God." (See Hebrews 12:15.) This means that we will fail in appropriating God's grace in our daily Christian life. By the application of God's grace we have God-given ability. Bitterness closes the door for any appropriation of His grace in its outworking in daily life. Grace is God at work in our lives. Bitterness closes the door to God's right and opportunity to work in us by His grace. Therefore, we will find it impossible to make His promises ours. We easily slip back into the old life; we fall short of victory; and the great doctrines are not applied to daily living.

#### **2. We Will Build Depression In Our Lives.**

Bitterness will bring its fruit of the root. Depression has long been proven to be a result of a bitter spirit. Not all depression comes from bitterness, but it is a major result of a bitter life.

King Saul wanted David to play his harp for him because of his depression. Why was Saul depressed? He was so far from God and so bitter and distrustful of others that he was a very depressed person.

#### **3. We Will Become Distrustful of Others.**

Looking at King Saul's life again, it is evident that he distrusted David. He was fearful of his position and bitter toward David and toward his own son, Jonathan. When we countenance bitterness in our lives we will distrust those about us. We probably will have vain imaginations and expect that those around us are out to do us hurt. (Study I Samuel 20.)

#### **4. We Will Manifest an Insensitive Spirit.**

A bitter person usually is or becomes a fault-finding, critical, and insensitive person. His bitter spirit is often poured out on others as he builds up a wall of protection about himself. He will receive criticism from others in the same way he gives it out. What he sows will come back to him in kind and in quantity. Such a person finds it difficult to say a good word about someone else. Along with that insensitive spirit, there is usually a manifestation of ingratitude or unthankfulness and a vengeful attitude. (See II Timothy 3:2; Romans 12:17-21.)

**Note:** When a child grows up in a home of bitterness, fighting, wrath, and squabbling, etc., the effect of such actions will usually be manifested in certain ways. Children are reflectors of a home, and they will usually reflect its bitterness.

Some of the ways children and youth will reflect bitterness is in --

1. ***their impolite attitudes.*** They seem to lack a "civil tongue" as they easily become catty and speak in a tone that shows the bitterness they have toward others.
2. ***their ingratitude.*** They manifest an unthankful spirit, as little appreciation or interest is given to those about them; instead they develop a selfish spirit.
3. ***their extreme unhappiness.*** Bitterness ruins the joy that should be manifested in the life of the Christian youth. They desperately need love, acceptance, and understanding. A bitter spirit leads to misery.

***We see that an impolite, unthankful, selfish spirit is the fruit of the root of bitterness.***

#### **IV. DO WE RECOGNIZE HOW TO OVERCOME BITTERNESS?**

1. ***First, we need to recognize that it is a gradual thing.*** It is like a root or bulb that we may plant. It gradually builds a stock that sticks its head above the ground and will eventually bring forth fruit. Bitterness is something we plant in our lives by our thought life, which in turn builds a plant from which we have much fruit. It can be entertained constantly in the thought life, while basically being unnoticed by others. But it will become obvious and can be like a festering sore.  
The root of bitterness becomes a noxious plant that brings self-destruction and much harm to others as they, too, are defiled.
2. ***Second, make a decision to face bitterness and deal with it.*** (See Hebrews 12:11-15.) Confess it as SIN. Face it as a poison that will ruin. Make a decision to get rid of the root and the fruit of bitterness by the power of God. Recognize that you must forgive others as well.
3. ***Third, Don't blame God.*** Don't expect God to "zap" you will a little righteousness to get rid of the bitterness. Straighten out your walk and your thought life, allowing the Holy Spirit to fully control your life. Apply the truths of II Corinthians 10:3-5.
4. ***Fourth, commit your way to God's purposes.*** (See Hebrews 12:25, 29.) Commit everything to the Lord. Trust Him for His will and way in your life. Realize that God is the primary mover in your life. Accept what God brings into your life in events and circumstances which are His doings to teach you the lessons of patience, trust, dependency, and deliverance from bitterness.

**In Conclusion:**

Look up the following references for bitterness and list the negative effects and personal application.

**Colossians 3:19**

Negative Effects \_\_\_\_\_

Personal application \_\_\_\_\_

**Hebrews 12:15**

Negative effects \_\_\_\_\_

Personal application \_\_\_\_\_

**James 3:10-12**

Negative effects \_\_\_\_\_

Personal application \_\_\_\_\_

**Personal Project:**

Develop a personal anger chart listing several occasions when you were angry. There should be four columns, headed as follows:

Circumstances:            Degree of Anger:            Reaction:            Appropriateness:  
(Check into the web site and materials under counseling for additional helps on anger. Also there is materials in the section -- family/ marriage. Then the next lesson deals with anger.)

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**QUOTABLE QUOTES:**

Bad temper is its own scourge.

Few things are more bitter than to feel bitter.

A man's venom poisons himself more than his victim.

(Megiddo Message)

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**Guiding and Application Questions:**

1. What does it mean to "fail" of the grace of God? What did Paul say about the grace of God in his own life?
2. Discuss in the class or personally reflect on the relationship that King Saul had to his son, Jonathan.
3. Think through the steps to overcoming bitterness in your own life, if that is a problem to you. How could you help someone else with this universal problem?

# HANDLING ANGER CONSTRUCTIVELY

## Lesson Three

### Introduction and aim:

There are the good emotions of the heart and there are the difficult negative emotions that so often control us. God made us with emotions. They come from somewhere and do not just happen. Most of the time they are the product of our thinking. It is our aim to give Biblical help in handling anger.

***The Holy Spirit desires to control our emotional responses.***

### I. THE PROBLEM STATED:

It is said that 80% of the people alive on planet earth have a predisposition to anger, which can be manifested in so many different ways. This means that 80% of us men grapple with this problem and probably often lose the battle. How sad.

The Word of God has a lot to say about anger in its many forms. It can be manifested in hostility, resentment, attack, revenge, malice, withdrawal, sharpness, ignoring, resistance, and a multitude of other ways. Most of the time we men sin in our anger and do not have control over the emotion of anger.

#### A. Look up the following references and fill in a statement from each one:

- Proverbs 14:16 \_\_\_\_\_
- Proverbs 14:17 \_\_\_\_\_
- Proverbs 15:1 \_\_\_\_\_
- Proverbs 15:18 \_\_\_\_\_
- Proverbs 22:24 \_\_\_\_\_
- Proverbs 25:28 \_\_\_\_\_
- Proverbs 28:25 \_\_\_\_\_
- Proverbs 29:22 \_\_\_\_\_
- Ephesians 4:26 \_\_\_\_\_
- Ephesians 4:31 \_\_\_\_\_
- Colossians 3:8 \_\_\_\_\_
- James 21:19,20 \_\_\_\_\_

#### B. All anger is not sin!

You will find in a thorough study of anger that God is angry with sin, and yet does not sin in the manifestation of His anger. Christ manifested anger on a number of occasions. We are commanded to be angry with sin and not sin by being angry. We need a right understanding of anger or a Biblical, balanced view of anger.

#### C. We get angry because. . .

1. *We feel that a perceived personal right was violated.* Far too often we do not have a valid right to be angry. Our "right" was based on selfish demands or on perfectionist standards. In all these instances the best thing we can do is to *yield such perceived rights to God.* This type of anger should not be pursued with an offender since there is, in fact, no valid offender.

2. *We feel that our wills were thwarted.* Often it is because of our own selfish personal desires that we become angry. We have a personal will and desire about something and someone does not fulfill what we thought was right, so we are angry.

## **II. THE PROBLEM FACED:**

As men we must face the problem of anger and its many forms. Few things are more devastating to a marriage than emotions that spoil family fun, family living, and the companionship God planned marriage to be. We lose our friends and destroy relationships because of uncontrolled anger.

Inner anger, expressed or suppressed, will bring all kinds of unnecessary tragedies. We can internalize the anger and let it smolder within until the explosion comes. Uncontrolled anger can cause loss of love, colitis, heart attacks, strokes, impotence, emotional breakdowns and a host of diseases and troubles. If we men hold anger within, it will destroy us and those whom we love.

Many times it is easy for us men to excuse ourselves and feel that it is better to express anger than to suppress it. Expressing our anger can become a way of life, for it entrenches the habit pattern into the subconscious mind. So then we automatically respond in anger without thinking; and every time we respond in anger, it becomes easier to repeat the next time.

## **II. THE PROBLEM CORRECTED:**

We want to look at a number of principles from the Word of God which, if applied, will help us to successfully face the problem of anger.

- A. *The first thing to do is to verbalize your angry feelings in the right Biblical way.*** God's Word teaches us to confront our offender if possible, but in the right way. We must practice "speaking the truth in love." (See Ephesians 4:15.) Matthew 18:15 would teach us to go to the offending person and speak alone with them in order to solve the problem. This must be done in love, admitting that possibly you are totally wrong, and without feelings of vengeance or of getting even. Neither should you imply that you will seek to retaliate in the future.

To verbalize is to turn your angry feelings into words. But you must do so in love as you tell the person exactly what you feel. In doing this, you are not to attack him, but confess your own feelings. Emphasize an "I feel" message rather than a "you" accusation or a "why" question. For example, "I felt very hurt and angry when you belittled me in front of all those people."

- B. *Commit to God all your feelings of getting even.*** To avenge is God's right and not ours. (See Romans 12:19b.) Sometimes when forgiving someone, especially someone who isn't sorry, it seems as if you are ignoring yourself and your own feelings. The best thing is to turn the matter over to God. He has promised to deal with offenders in the way He sees best. Leave that up to God by cleansing your mind of the thoughts of revenge. Don't play God. Give your "so called" personal rights to God and expect Him to do right.

- C. *Totally forgive the offender.*** By the choice of your own will, forgive; not allowing feelings to rule, choose not to bring up these issues to the offender again. They are dead. You must determine not to allow these things to be a

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source of gossip, either. Nor should you allow yourself to continue to meditate on what has happened.

We are to forgive as God forgives. (See Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:10-14.) Brooding on the past will bring no good.

**D. Face the anger as sin before God.** Confess it as sin -- you must repent of it. (See Ephesians 4:30-32; Psalm 51.)

**E. Ask God to take away the thought habit** or pattern of thoughts as you resist continued meditation on your anger. (See I John 5:14,15.) We have a right to expect victory over the problem as we resist in God's power and grace. (See Ephesians 6:10; II Corinthians 12:9.)

**F. Ask for and expect the filling of the Holy Spirit.** Only as we allow the Holy Spirit to control will we have victory over the responses of anger. (See Ephesians 5:18; Galatians 5:22, 23.)

**G. Give thanks for the source of your irritations.** Herein lies a secret -- to thank God for the source of the problem that God has used to help us face our angry spirit. (See Ephesians 5:19, 20; I Thessalonians 5:18.)

**Conclusions:**

The Lord would like to transform our lives. We must put off the old man and put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. (See Ephesians 4:22-24.) It all depends upon our renewing our minds by memorizing, meditating on, and applying the Word of God.

Thought patterns become a part of us, and soon we are living as an angry person constantly. This must all be changed. We must apply the principles for victory and walk in the power of God as we reckon ourselves dead to these sinful practices.

**Scriptures for Study:**

**Anger is an underlying cause of many emotional problems.** By learning to deal with anger, we can learn to cope with other emotional struggles as well. Look up the following Scriptures and identify some constructive steps to take in resolving anger issues.

Psalm 139:23, 24 -- What kind of insight does the Psalmist desire?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Ephesians 4:32 -- What are two keys to forgiveness? \_\_\_\_\_

Philippians 3:13 -- If forgiveness has been granted and we are still tempted to brood in self-pity over past hurt, what does this verse tell us to do? \_\_\_\_\_

James 5:16 -- Rather than "stuff" our feelings inside, what are we to do? \_\_\_\_\_

**How did David verbalize his feelings in the following portions?** How did he use three methods -- praying, singing, and writing -- to verbalize his feelings?

Psalm 55:12-18 -- \_\_\_\_\_

Psalm 57:6, 7 -- \_\_\_\_\_

Psalm 58 -- \_\_\_\_\_

Psalm 42, 43 -- \_\_\_\_\_

**QUOTABLE QUOTES:**

Anger is an acid that can do more harm to the vessel in which it's stored than to anything on which it's poured. -- Baptist Beacon

Anyone who angers you conquers you. -- Sister Kenny's mother

Nothing so reduces us to protoplasm that seethes with turmoil, than does animosity toward someone else. -- Harold Walker

Folks who fly into a rage always make a bad landing.  
-- Globe Gazette

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**Guiding and Application Questions:**

1. Can you identify your anger feelings when they exist?
2. When was the last time you had a significant angry feeling? What did you do about it, and how did you react?
3. How would you apply Psalm 19:12-14 to the problem of anger?
4. What was the situation that caused your deepest anger in the last two years? Why did this circumstance, event or person, (whatever it was) affect you so?
5. How would James 5:16 apply to your life and the problem of anger?

# OVERCOMING INFERIORITY FEELINGS

## Lesson Four

### Introduction:

Perhaps most men struggle with inferiority feelings, and many of these feelings began when we were young children. Feeling inferior is not the serious thing -- it is what we do with the feelings, how we handle the problem, and how we respond to others and to the Lord -- that makes it serious.

**Memory Portion: Psalm 139:14 or Ephesians 1:5, 6.**

**Aim:** That we might, as men, recognize the source of inferiority feelings, and learn how to overcome them.

### I. HOW WE RESPOND TO INFERIORITY

Some of the ways people handle their feelings of inferiority can be described in an acrostic spelling **ACTION**.

- A** **like-ism** -- *"I can hide myself by being like everyone else. I must not be different in appearance and behavior."*
- C** **ompensation** -- *"I'll find what I can do well and concentrate on it; that way I will be accepted and respected for something. I must have the acceptance of others."*
- T** **ripping out** -- *"It's impossible to make the pain go away, so I will hide in whatever I can." (Workaholism, drugs, alcohol, or other addictions might be used as a means to escape.)*
- I** **ntroversion** -- *"If I am a quiet little mouse, maybe no one will know I exist. If I open my mouth or take some initiative, I might make a mistake and people would laugh at me. I can't take the risk."*
- O** **bstinacy** -- *"I will pretend that I am tough and crude. I can bluff people into thinking I am confident by the way I show disrespect to others and work to get my way. I won't allow others to push me around."*
- N** **it-witty** -- *"I will be a clown. I will do stupid things and make people laugh, especially at me. When they laugh, I won't let myself feel they are laughing at me for any reason other than because I make them laugh. I feel important when people are happy because of me."*

Did you recognize yourself in any of those scenarios? Do you see that none of them is the answer? We will always have inferiority feelings at times, but growth into confidence in Christ is very important. Self-confidence comes from our walk with the Lord. It comes from accepting ourselves as uniquely designed by God to magnify his Son in our lives. (Study Psalm 139 and Ephesians 1:3-7.) Paul knew the joy of applying Philippians 4:13. Do you?

### II. WHY WE FEEL INFERIOR

There are many reasons why we might feel inferior. Sometimes it is because we *are* inferior, and that is not something we like to even consider. All of us are inferior to others in some things.

- A. Perhaps inferiority comes from the past.** Some well-intentioned but misguided person corrected us or made fun of us in such a way that we felt generally disapproved of -- or at least embarrassed. These struggles probably came when we were but children. It is sad, but many a parent has inadvertently caused this problem. And then -- are we perpetuating it now within our own family?
- B. It usually is brought about by relationships.** Most of us have experienced teasing from our siblings or peers, and we probably did our share toward others, too. Children can sometimes be quite ruthless and cruel. We may remember being teased because of our ears that stuck out more than some of our friends' ears, a nose that was shaped a little differently, or legs that were somewhat bowed, or a body that was a little shorter, taller, etc., than others. Some have carried the burden of cruel remarks into their adulthood and still have many feelings of inferiority.
- C. Inferior feelings also come from personal failings.** We may indeed feel very inferior because of guilt, unresolved conflicts with those important to us, and because of our lack of meaningful fellowship with the Lord. I think that when we lose confidence in the Lord, it is because things are not right in our lives and hence we feel inferior because of guilt. (Consider I John 3:19-23.)
- D. Inferior feelings are experienced because we do not accept ourselves as God made us.** We were created to be unique, not like anyone else. Just as our fingerprints are unique, everything else about us -- our unchangeable physical characteristics and our inherent talents -- is unique, as well. God's Word tells us that God prescribed every part of us while we were forming, as a beginning human being, in our mother's womb. And even the details about God's plan for us were written in God's design book in heaven. After we were formed, God threw away the blueprint. ***We are unique originals.*** That is the way God wanted it, and He does all things well. Do you accept yourself as God made you? Many men do not accept themselves as God given.

### III. HOW OUR INFERIORITY AFFECTS OTHERS

I think that inferiority feelings on the part of a dad, husband, or grandfather cause a host of troubles.

- A. Feelings of inferiority often result in lashing out toward the family.** It is easy for us men to take the difficult problems home from work. Since we may feel put down at work, we respond as an adversary at home. The anger, hurts, put-downs experienced at work are readily manifested in disgust, hostility, and irritation at home.  
It is easy for us to "take it out on others" because we feel irritated, wronged, or unsettled within ourselves. It takes place because we carry a poor mental description of ourselves in our own minds.
- B. Our behavior and feelings are usually consistent with beliefs we have about ourselves.** Our self-concept affects our relationships with other people, how we deal with trials, and how we see the purpose of our lives. Some common symptoms of a poor self-concept (or inferiority feelings) are over-defensiveness, difficulty in accepting compliments and love, inappropriate behavior or emotions when rejected or embarrassed, an addiction to needing approval, a strong fear of criticism, and/or paralyzing fear of failures.

#### IV. HOW WE SHOULD RESPOND TO INFERIORITY FEELINGS?

When the Apostle Paul began his letters to various churches, he identified *who* he was, *what* he was, and *why* he was. **Who?** Paul. **What?** Among other things, an apostle of Christ. **Why?** "By the will of God." Paul did not shy away from speaking of himself, of the importance of his ministry by the grace of God, or of the fact of God's hand on his life.

**What is the answer** to a poor self-concept that results in feelings of inferiority?

- A. You are unconditionally accepted person;** you are the object of God's care and love. (See Romans 8:33-39.)
- B. You are totally accepted by what He has done.** Your worth is not related to your works or achievements but to your belief in **who** you are -- a person redeemed by the blood of the Son of God. (See Ephesians 1:6, 7.)
- C. You were chosen before the foundation of the world** to be a part of His family, and then adopted into that family. So you are of great worth to God. (See Ephesians 1:3-5.)
- D. God lives in you** and has a personal relationship with you! You are a jewel in God's hands! (See Colossians 1:27.) As a temple of the Holy Spirit, God has taken up abode in your life.
- E. You are an heir** to God's kingdom and a joint-heir with Jesus Christ! (See Romans 8:14-17.)
- F. God has chosen you to be His ambassador.** As a member of God's royal family, you have an important mission to fulfill every day! (See II Corinthians 5:17-20.)

#### **Conclusions:**

Yes, you are special to the most significant being in all the universe, the Triune God! Let God's Word erase your negative self-images of the past and its failures. Allow the Lord to wash away your feelings of worthlessness.

Let your faith become trained to remind you who you really are **in Christ**. Embrace the Word of God about the truth of who you are in Christ -- a person who is loved and belongs, who has been made worthy in Christ, and who is competent to do God's will and fulfill His purposes, one day at a time.

#### **Scriptures for Study:**

- 1. Proverbs 23:7** According to this verse, what is the key internal process that affects a person's behavior and feelings? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2. I Corinthians 1:1** What three things does the apostle Paul tell us about his self-concept in this verse? \_\_\_\_\_  
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- 3. Romans 6:6** How should we regard our history of past sins, once we have trusted Christ as personal Savior? \_\_\_\_\_  
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**4. Romans 6:11** How should our identity with Christ govern our day-to-day behavior? \_\_\_\_\_

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**5. Ephesians 1:4** What phrase in this verse assures you that God wanted a personal relationship with you before you ever wanted Him in your life? \_\_\_\_\_

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**Considerations and Guiding and Application Questions:**

1. Study Psalm 139 and find every possible fact that makes it evident that you are important to God. List them.
2. Study Ephesians 1:3-7 in detail and make a list of every truth that brings encouragement in regard to **who** you are in Christ.
3. Did you see yourself in the **action** acrostic, and if so, what will you do about it?
4. Has your past brought about a poor self-concept? If so, what kind of action will you take about this programming of the past. Will you forgive those who may have wronged you?