

Week Thirteen: "House-Clean"

Day One: "Get Rid of Bitterness"

Read: Ephesians 4:31

Reflect: Why are occasional house-cleaning or thorough cleanings necessary for your room or house or yard?

What do we accumulate in our home that requires cleaning?

Dig: According to Romans 3:10-18 (which mentions "bitterness" in verse 14), who struggles with these issues (vs. 10)?

What is wrong with their spiritual sight (vs. 18)?

According to Acts 8:18-24, what was the evidence of bitterness (vs.23) in Simon's life? (see vs. 18 and 21 of Acts 8).

According to Hebrews 12:15, what does bitterness cause us to miss and who does bitterness defile?

Apply: Ask God to clean your house (soul) of bitterness and its effects, since bitterness usually comes as a result of a hurt or disappointment in our lives which has not been released to Jesus' healing hands.

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Day Two: "Get Rid of Rage and Anger"

Read: Ephesians 4:31

Reflect: Anger is usually discouraged in the Bible. Is anger discouraged in our culture?

In movies and songs and advertising, how is anger treated?

Dig: Rage ("thumos" in Greek) and anger ("orge" in Greek) are the passion of the moment (rage) and a more internal smoldering (anger).

What does James 1:20 teach you about God's attitude toward anger?

According to Proverbs 19:11, what does a foolish person do with his anger?

According to Ephesians 4:31 and Eph. 4:20-24, if we are easily angered (toward our spouse, our children, our boss, etc.) what does that tell us about our lack of progress in becoming like Christ?

Apply: What often ticks you off?

Since your anger level is one indication of your maturity level as a Christian, how mature are you on a scale of 1-10?

Ask God to help you to get rid of rage and anger.

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Day Three: "Get Rid of Brawling and Slander"

Read: Ephesians 4:31

Reflect: What does the term "passive aggressive" mean to you?

How have you "stabbed someone in the back" while smiling to their face?

Dig: "Brawling" (Greek: "krauge") suggests a lack of restraint which erupts in angry yelling, while "slander" (Greek: "blasphemia") indicates abuse of others using our tongues.

According to Romans 1:30, what other sins are associated with slander?

According to 1 Corinthians 4:13, how did Paul respond when he was slandered?

Yelling and abuse, sadly, are often part of so called "Christian" homes. According to this passage, is there any room in our marriages and church life for name-calling or other forms of verbal abuse?

Apply: Ask God to give you a spirit of confession regarding your own verbal abuse of others. Ask God to give you the power to forgive (not tolerate) the verbal abuse of others.

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Day Four: "Get Rid of All Malice"

Read: Ephesians 4:31

Reflect: "Malice-aforethought" is a legal term which indicates that a criminal act was planned or pre-meditated. What malice, or pre-meditated unkindness, have you done?

Dig: Malice (Greek: "kakia") refers to any action or attitude which intends to harm one's neighbor.

According to I Corinthians 5:6-8, malice is characterized by what bread ingredient?

What characteristics of yeast (and therefore of malice) are being warned against?

In I Cor.14:20 the word translated "evil" is the same Greek word ("kakia") which is translated "malice" in Ephesians 4:31. What is God's desire regarding malice as expressed in I Cor. 14:20?

In Titus 3:3, what other sin is malice paired with?

Why might they be paired together?

Apply: Today the Word of God taught you regarding a sin called malice. Ask God's Spirit to identify that sin in you and kill it.

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Day Five: "Lectio Divina"

Read: Ephesians 4:31 "Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every

form of malice."

Lectio divina (a Latin expression which means Sacred reading) is done in three stages:

- **reading**: you read the passage slowly and reverentially, allowing the words to sink into your consciousness: after you have memorized the text, write down one word which strikes you and draws your attention and note why you chose that word.
- **meditation**: you allow the passage to stir up memories within you, so that you recognize in it your own experience or that of people who have touched your life: write down memories of events or conversations or other scripture passages.
- **prayer**: you allow the meditation to lead you to prayer -- thanksgiving, humility and petition. Write out a prayer based on the passage.