

"Defeating Bitterness"

Dewayne Bryant

Many of us think that it's harmless to harbor negative emotions toward other people. We often excuse it as something natural, like when we get angry at *bona fide* injustice or unfairness. At other times, we spin negativity into something positive, such as when we hold a grudge against someone else as a defense mechanism to remind us that we cannot trust them. Bitterness can be of those things. But if we are going to be the salt and light Christ commands us to be, we have to defeat bitterness in our lives. Here are four things we can do.

Be Self-Aware. Becoming bitter takes time. It grows slowly with every disappointment, frustration, and failure. In time, we can adopt a negative attitude toward everything—and we are more than happy to let other people know it. All of us complain at times. But if it becomes habitual, then we have probably given ourselves over to bitterness. Detecting it requires exercising self-awareness.

Resist Envy. We have a way of measuring our success against that of others. We want to outdo and outperform our rivals. If we are bitter, this becomes more just a game or a goal, but a necessity we must achieve no matter the cost. A great biblical example here is Saul, whose envy drove him to hunt David like an animal (see 1 Samuel 23:14) and even attempt to murder his son Jonathan in a fit of rage (1 Samuel 20:30-33). The Bible teaches that envy and jealousy are deadly and cause us to rot from the inside out (Proverbs 14:30; Job 5:2; James 3:14-18).

Resist Suspicion. Bitterness breeds suspicion. If someone glances at us over or mentions our name in conversation, are we consumed with finding out exactly what was said? Do we assume that others are naturally deceptive or exploitative? Do we immediately blame others for adverse events in our lives? Do we doubt the personal loyalty of friends, family, and associates? Such a pessimistic outlook on life is a constant source of trouble (Proverbs 17:20).

Offer Forgiveness. Human beings are capable of absolutely amazing things, and forgiveness is one of them. Some of the most inspiring stories involve family members forgiving criminals who murdered loved ones or spouses forgiving the unfaithful partner who betrayed them. Jesus indicates that forgiveness should defeat grudges we hold against other people (cf. Matthew 5:23-24). No matter how difficult it may be to forgive, it is far better than the alternative. Holding onto hurts is like gripping a knife—it cuts deeper with each squeeze. Forgiveness means letting go of the blade.

Bitterness makes people resentful, disgruntled, and sullen. It is a lazy, uncomplicated way of dealing with life's problems that keeps us chained in an emotional prison of our own creation. Bitterness is a hard master better let go of than served.



Welcome

TO
KOUNTZE
CHURCH OF CHRIST

July

"A heart at peace gives
life to the body, but
envy rots the bones."

Proverbs 14:30

18th

Meeting Times

Sunday Bible Class – 9:30

AM Worship – 10:30

PM Worship – 1:30

Wednesday Night Bible Class – 7:00

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Kountze, TX 77625

101.3 FM Radio

Kountze Church of Christ

Today's Lessons

AM.....The Jealous King
 PM.....Parable of the Mustard Seed

Men to Serve

Announcements.....Bud Wolcott
 Song Leader.....Parker Martinka
 Opening Prayer.....
 Communion Leader.....Steve Deatruck
 Sermon.....Corey Tackett
 Closing Prayer.....

Announcements and Upcoming Events

- There is a Men's Business Meeting Today
- If your address, phone number, or email has changed from what is in the directory, please give Amber or Corey the updated info.

July 18th – Business Meeting

July 24th – VBS

Aug 4th – Start of School Year (Kountze ISD)

Records

Sunday AM.....63 Wednesday PM.....N/A
 Sunday PM..... Contribution.....N/A

Birthdays:

3.....Vera Shavers
 6.....Judy Landis
 7.....Stuart Laird
 23.....Jaxon Martinka

Anniversaries:

2.....Joe & Melinda
 6.....Luke & Lindsey
 11.....Dallon & Erin
 25..... Jamie & Judy
 27..... David & Ruth

Visitors,

You are welcome and wanted. We are glad you made the decision to be with us.

If you have any questions or needs, please reach out to any of our members and we'll be more than happy to help you.

If you're looking for a Church home, we'd love the opportunity to study with you and have you join our congregation's family.

Prayer Requests and Updates

Members:

- Dwayne Baker
- Ed & Linda Bumstead
- Fred Johnson
- Vera Shavers
- Gaylon & Gladys Williams

Family and Friends:

- Tony Wright & Charles Wright
- Mandy Owens
- Jeanie Beck
- Danny Roberts
- Shawn Gunter
- Susan Golden
- Kyle Tantillo
- Donna Melton