

Further Answers to Questions from Sermon 11.15.2020

By Ryan Jorgenson

- **Do you believe that unwholesome words can be something Hebrews 12:15 speaks about, a bitter root? Should we confess our attitudes, beliefs, and judgements, which are justifiable by past events as sin, and ask forgiveness?**

It sounds like you are asking two questions. To answer your first one whether the root of bitterness in Hebrews 12:15 is referring to unwholesome words, the answer is no. The root of bitterness in Hebrews is referring back to Deuteronomy 29:18 where God was talking about someone who professed to be a follower of God and lived among His people only to later turn to false Gods. They are like a diseased root that causes others to possibly go after false Gods as well. For Hebrews the author is addressing professing false Christians who fall away back to the world and influence others along the way.

Without knowing what exact attitudes, beliefs and judgments you are referring to in your latter question, I would say if you believe they are sin and you have yet to repent of them to the Lord and receive His forgiveness, then you should. 1 John 1:9 says we are to do so and we can receive His great and instant forgiveness. Once we have repented, then God has forgotten our sins and we can move on with life enjoying His presence and obeying His statutes. We are not to look back from that day forward except to relish the grace of God.

- **Speak the Gospel and if necessary use words. Do you think that comes from the scripture about wives winning their husbands over without words?**

For the sake of those reading who do not know what verses are being referred to here, it is 1 Peter 3:1-2 which say, *"In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them]are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, 2 as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior."*

I do not know if Francis of Assisi, who coined the phrase "Speak the Gospel and if necessary use words" had 1 Peter 3 in his mind when he said it. He very well could have. But it's important for people to understand, whether with Francis' quote or Peter's Scripture that we do not take their words out of context with the rest of their teachings and the Scriptures. They are not saying people can come to a saving relationship only by non-Christians watching Christians live holy lives and that words are unnecessary. The Gospel, or Good News, is a message of words that must be spoken in order for someone to know how what it is and how to respond to be saved. Watching leads no one to Christ.

Listen to God tell us the Gospel comes through words in Romans 10:14-15 *"How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? 15 How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, "HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GOOD NEWS OF GOOD THINGS!"*

So, even for the wives to whom Peter is writing, he is not telling them to not verbally share the Gospel. Their husbands have to be told the Good News in order to be saved.

On the other hand, both Peter and Francis are highlighting the importance of holy living that should accompany a Christian's deliverance of the verbal Gospel of Jesus Christ. If someone shares the Gospel but lives an unholy life, it creates unnecessary obstacles to the listener to hear the Gospel because they are bothered by the hypocrisy of the Christian. The power of a Christian both living the Gospel and sharing it is amazing! Let's ask God today for the Spirit's help to do both with those we love who are still lost.