

Thanks In Advance 4 – From Bitter to Better: The Gratitude Gameplan

Chris Fluitt – November 23, 2025

Texts: Genesis 50:20; Genesis 37–50; Romans 8:28; Luke 23:34

Big Idea: Gratitude reframes the story. What was meant to break you, God can use to bless you.

Thanks in Advance BUMPER

Welcome to Redemption Church of Plano, Tx. We have people driving all over the Metroplex to serve and worship here. We also have people tuning via livestream from all over to receive the Word of God. My name is Chris Fluitt and I welcome you all.

Thanks In Advance Title

I want to start today with a question. Have you ever had someone do you wrong, and you thought to yourself, *I'm not getting over this.*

Maybe it was a betrayal.

Maybe it was someone who lied about you.

Maybe someone took advantage of your kindness.

Maybe you're sitting here today thinking of that person right now and your blood pressure just went up a little.

I've been there.

There have been moments in my life where bitterness felt justified and forgiveness felt impossible.

Moments where I thought, if I hold onto this anger, at least I'm holding onto something.

Because when you've been betrayed, something inside you wants to cling to the pain so you never forget it.

But here's what God has been teaching me: Bitterness keeps you in the pit.

Gratitude pulls you into your purpose.

From Bitter to Better: The Gratitude Gameplan

Today we're talking about how gratitude can take you from bitter to better.

And I need this message.

You need this message.

And someone you know desperately needs this message.

We all know what bitterness feels like.

Bitterness is like drinking poison and hoping the other person gets sick.

It doesn't just break relationships. It blocks blessings.

It clouds your judgment. It steals your sleep.

You replay the hurt over and over, like

Netflix asking,

"Are you still watching this terrible moment?"

Yes, bitterness, I am. And you keep pressing play.

We live in a culture that rehearses hurt more than gratitude.

We vent more than we thank.

We scroll through everyone else's highlight reel and feel resentful instead of grateful.

Before we move on, let me show you how real and widespread this issue is.

BITTER HEARTS & BROKEN HEALTH

- Johns Hopkins Medicine reports that chronic anger and resentment keep your body locked in fight or flight.
- This raises blood pressure, harms sleep, increases anxiety, and elevates the risk of heart disease.

- A national survey found that 62% of Americans say they need more forgiveness in their lives.

Bitterness is a widespread and growing problem.

Bitterness isn't just an emotion.

It's not just something that happened to me once.

Bitterness is a thief.

It steals peace, steals joy, and according to the research, it even steals physical health.

And here's the truth:

You can't move forward while staring backward.

You can't step into breakthrough while holding onto bitterness.

Something has to shift.

Something has to break.

And that brings us to one of the greatest turnaround stories in the entire Bible.

Let's talk about Joseph.

Who is Joseph? (Genesis 37-50)

- Lived around 1800 BC
- One of Jacob's 12 sons
- Known for his colorful robe
- Gifted with God-given dreams
- Favored by his father
- Hated by some of his brothers
- A key figure in the book of Genesis
- His life shows how God turns pain into purpose

If anyone had a reason to be bitter, it was him.

Joseph didn't just have a bad day.

He had years where everything went wrong. Betrayed by his brothers, thrown into a pit, sold into slavery, falsely accused, forgotten in prison.

One blow after another.

A whole chapter of life filled with hurt.

But through all of it, Scripture repeats one phrase:

“The Lord was with Joseph.”

Genesis 39:2, 21, 23

It doesn't say Joseph felt good.

It doesn't say the situation was fair.

It doesn't say the pain wasn't real.

It says God was with him.

Here's the revelation:

Bitterness says, “If God was with me, none of this would've happened.”

Gratitude says, “The only reason I survived what happened is because God was with me.”

When you're bitter, all you see is the pit.

When you're grateful, you see the God who never left you in it.

Joseph's story doesn't end in the pit.
God raises him up to the palace.
And one day, the same brothers who hurt
him stand in front of him needing help.
Joseph could have chosen revenge...
instead, he chose restoration.

He looks at them and says:

You intended to harm me, but God
intended it for good to accomplish what is
now being done, the saving of many lives.

Genesis 50:20

Said simply:

You meant evil.

God meant good.

You were trying to hurt me.

God was always trying to help me.

And this is where so many get it twisted.

God did not cause the betrayal.

God did not cause the tragedy.

God does not paint with the brush of sin.

The harm that happened in your life...

The drunk driver...

the abuser...

the betrayal...

the injustice...

That wasn't God doing something to you.

That was sin operating in a broken world.

God didn't write the hurt...

but God can rewrite the story.

What they meant to destroy you,

God can use to develop you.

And look at the good that came from

Joseph's pain:

- It saved others.
- It saved his family.
- It preserved the line that led to Jesus.

Your breakthrough isn't just about you.
God uses your healing to bless others
connected to you.

And Joseph's story points forward to
someone greater.

Another Son who was rejected by His own
people.

Another Son who was betrayed for silver.

Another Son who was falsely accused.

Another Son who was sentenced for crimes
He did not commit.

But just like Joseph:

What people meant for evil,
God used for good.

Joseph went to the pit.

Jesus went to the tomb.

Joseph was lifted up to the palace.

Jesus was raised to life in God's glory.

Joseph saved nations from hunger.

Jesus saves the world from sin.

Joseph forgave his brothers.

Jesus forgives us.

Joseph said,

“You meant it for evil, but God meant it for good.”

Jesus said,

“Father, forgive them.” (Luke 23:34)

And because of Jesus, your story can turn too.

Listen to me:

It does not matter who is trying to hurt you, what they are planning, what they are saying, or what the enemy is trying to use against you.

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

(Romans 8:28)

Jesus Christ can work all things for good!

If Joseph's God can redeem betrayal...

If Jesus can turn a cross into salvation...

Then He can take the worst thing happening in your life and work it for your good and the good of others.

Great story right? But what do we do with it?

How do we move from bitter to better?

Here is your Gratitude Game Plan.

The Gratitude Gameplan

1. Refuse to replay the hurt.

Every time you replay the moment, you relive the bitterness.

Gratitude disrupts the replay.

2. Reframe the story.

Reframing the story means seeing God in the story.

Yes, the bad thing happened... but somehow you found the strength to make it through.

Yes, the pain was real... but God put the right people in your life at the right time.

Yes, the season was dark... but God kept your mind, kept your heart, and kept you standing.

Reframing is choosing to remember that God was quietly helping you even when life was loudly hurting you.

3. Respond with charity and grace.

Joseph fed the very brothers who betrayed him.

Jesus prayed for those who crucified Him.

Gratitude frees you to bless what once broke you.

When you choose gratitude over bitterness, the same presence that was with Joseph will be with you.

Imagine finally letting go of the hurt that has been weighing you down.

Imagine your home becoming a place of grace instead of grudges.

Imagine your kids growing up where forgiveness is normal and love wins.

Imagine peace settling into your heart where bitterness used to live.

This is what happens when God takes you from bitter to better.

And it can start today.

Musicians

In just a moment, we will have a space of prayer and worship.

And today is special.

We're baptizing someone who we didn't even know two months ago.

He did not understand faith and the power of the gospel two months ago.

God is already writing a brand-new story in him...

and God can start a new story in you today.

From bitter to better.

And it starts by acting.

It starts by doing something.

You don't drift into breakthrough.

You step into it.

So today, here is Your Bitter to Better Plan.

YOUR BITTER TO BETTER PLAN

1. Name the hurt.

Don't be vague. Get specific.

Say it honestly to God.

"This is what happened. This is what hurt me."

Breakthrough begins with truth and confession.

2. Notice God in your Thanksgiving week.

You'll be around family, memories, people, and conversations.

Bring God into your holiday.

Look for where He is helping you, guiding you, strengthening you.

And the best way to bring God into a room is to forgive and show grace.

3. Thank God that He is with you in your story.

As we worship and pray, pause and thank Him.

Thank Him for His presence & help. Thank Him for rewriting your story right now.