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### Exodus 13:17-18 (New Living Translation)

When Pharaoh finally let the people go, God did not lead them along the main road that runs through Philistine territory, even though that was the shortest route to the Promised Land. God said, "If the people are faced with a battle, they might change their minds and return to Egypt." So God led them in a roundabout way through the wilderness toward the Red Sea.

### Exodus 15:22-23 (New Living Translation)

Then Moses led the people of Israel away from the Red Sea, and they moved out into the desert of Shur. They traveled in this desert for three days without finding any water. When they came to the oasis of Marah, the water was too bitter to drink. So they called the place Marah (which means "bitter").

And this was the next test: bitterness

### Exodus 15:24-26 (New Living Translation)

Then the people complained and turned against Moses. "What are we going to drink?" they demanded. So Moses cried out to the Lord for help, and the Lord showed him a piece of wood. Moses threw it into the water, and this made the water good to drink. It was there at Marah [bitter] that the Lord set before them the following decree as a standard to test their faithfulness to him. He said, "If you will listen carefully to the voice of the Lord your God and do what is right in his sight, obeying his commands and keeping all his decrees, then I will not make you suffer any of the diseases I sent on the Egyptians; for I am the Lord who heals you."

### Proverbs 4:23 (New International Version)

Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.

"Anger is a short madness, but bitterness is anger that has been boiled, simmered, and then found so unpalatable that it has been thrown into the deep freeze of our unconscious psyches." -Elizabeth Spring

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### How to Recognize Bitterness

#### Hebrews 12:15 (The Passion Translation)

Watch over each other to make sure that no one misses the revelation of God's grace. And make sure no one lives with a root of bitterness sprouting within them which will only cause trouble and poison the hearts of many.

- ✓ Do I watch reruns?

Bitterness flourishes in the soil of justification

- ✓ What do I speak?

#### Luke 6:45 (New Living Translation)

What you say flows from what is in your heart.

#### Romans 3:14 (New Living Translation)

Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness.

- ✓ How do I feel?
- Higher blood pressure and heart rate
- Much more likely to die of heart disease and other illnesses
- Insomnia
- Back pain
- Chronic headaches
- Raises your stress baseline
- Lowers your immune system
- ✓ Is my clan bitter?

#### Deuteronomy 29:18 (New Living Translation)

I am making this covenant with you so that no one among you—no man, woman, clan, or tribe—will turn away from the Lord our God to worship these gods of other nations, and so that no root among you bears bitter and poisonous fruit.

**Exodus 15:27 (New Living Translation)**

*After leaving Marah, the Israelites traveled on to the oasis of Elim, where they found twelve springs and seventy palm trees. They camped there beside the water.*

**The Cure**

- ✓ Insert the cross

*...forgiveness alone enables you to let go of grievances, grudges, rancor and resentment. It's the single most potent antidote for the venomous desire for retributive justice poisoning your system. [Leon Seltzer, Psychology Today]*

- ✓ Move past it
- ✓ Embrace the joy

**Nehemiah 8:10b (New Living Translation)**

*Don't be dejected and sad, for the joy of the Lord is your strength!*