



Judgments and Bitterness Towards the Lord

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Many of us have judged the Lord, and feel anger/bitterness/resentment towards him. For example, when I am connected to a certain wounded, angry child place in my heart, I say amazingly judgmental and angry things to the Lord: “You are stupid, negligent, incompetent and uncaring because you did not protect me on the playground, because you did not help me when I was stuck and couldn’t figure out how to read, because you let the bad people win and don’t take care of the helpless children, because you don’t take care of Your creation, etc.” As outrageous as it seems, when I am connected to this place I feel like God is a failure and that I am better than he is – I truly think I could do a better job if he would just let me be in charge. “If he would just let me be God, I could fix these situations that he seems unwilling or unmotivated to take care of.” I want discharge the energy of my bitterness by punishing him. At the very least, I want to make him suffer the pain and fear that his incompetence and negligence caused me to experience. Then I want him to acknowledge that I am right, to apologize (publicly), to fix the problem and make restitution, and then to promise that it will never happen again. If he can’t handle this, I want him to get out of the way so that somebody else can get the job done right.

My experience is that many of us have these outrageous thoughts and feelings, but are often afraid to admit them (even to ourselves). The good news is that God responds with grace, forgiveness, and healing when we bring these outrageous thoughts and feelings to him. (Trust me, I’ve done the experiment – no lightning bolts – just grace, forgiveness, and healing.)

Judgments and bitterness towards the Lord are sins, block the healing process, and certainly need to be confessed and released. Initially I thought I would just use the “regular” prayer for judgments and bitterness when dealing with judgments and bitterness towards the Lord. However, I found that it didn’t feel right to include the usual wording. For example, “I am willing to forgive and release *Your* sins against me” clearly implies that the Lord has sinned against me. The unique thing about this situation is that we know the “offender” is innocent – we know that the Lord is perfect, that he has not done anything wrong, and that he has not sinned against us. We know that we have been deceived in some way whenever we conclude that the Lord has done something wrong.¹ I initially tried using the “regular” judgments and bitterness prayer, modifying the words spontaneously each time I would use it, but found that I often got tangled in the process (especially if I was in an emotionally-loaded child ego state when trying to use the prayer). Hence, a sample prayer customized for confessing and releasing judgment and bitterness towards the Lord. I have been blessed through using this simple prayer, and pray that others will also find this sample prayer helpful.

I have seen the Lord come with many interesting and powerful interventions when people talk to

¹ Our experience is that whenever we conclude that the Lord has done something wrong, and/or have any kind of negative feelings towards the Lord, there is *always* toxic content from some old wound that is getting transferred onto the Lord and distorting our perception of his character and heart. The good news is that resolving the underlying trauma will resolve our distorted perceptions about the Lord. Supplementary chapter 35c in the draft version of *The Immanuel Approach: For Emotional Healing and for Life* provides examples and additional discussion. (Available as a free download from the Resources page of www.immanuelapproach.com.)

him directly about their anger, judgments, and bitterness toward him, and then go through this prayer asking for forgiveness, help, and truth. Some have seen Jesus on the cross, and report “He showed me that when I was being hurt, He was on the cross preparing the way for my healing.” A number of people have had a profound experience of being aware of Jesus in the traumatic memory, superimposed over their bodies, experiencing the trauma with them.²

To manage expectations, I should mention that people often have less dramatic experiences when they talk to the Lord about their anger and go through this prayer for releasing judgements and bitterness. For example, when I have talked to the Lord about my anger toward him and gone through this prayer, as part of my own healing journey, I have usually had much less dramatic experiences. Sometimes I have suddenly understood the situation differently, seeing how the Lord did not “wrong” me after all. At other times, no new insight has come, but the judgments and bitterness towards the Lord quietly resolved. But the most important point is that the Lord’s presence and response have felt satisfying, and my judgements and bitterness toward the Lord have resolved.³

Note: The Lord often tells people that he is sorry/sad about the trauma they experienced, but I have never seen him apologize or ask for forgiveness. At the end of a profound session, one of my clients reported, “Jesus was sad that I suffered so much pain, but He didn’t apologize for my life. He showed me how He used all the bad things in my life to shape me into the jewel He created me to be.” When the person receiving ministry reports that the Lord is apologizing and/or asking for forgiveness, I immediately suspect either a part of the person’s own mind trying to “help,” or demonic spirits trying to deceive.⁴

More than one location: Like “regular” bitterness, vows, and demonic infection, judgments and bitterness towards the Lord can be carried in a number of different locations. A person can carry judgments and bitterness towards the Lord about several different memories and/or issues, and sometimes the person will deal with these different memories and/or issues separately. Judgments and bitterness towards the Lord can also be carried separately by different internal parts.

When evaluating whether these prayers and commands have been effective, it is important to realize that resolving judgments and bitterness towards the Lord *associated with a specific*

² For additional examples of the Lord’s responses to people asking tough questions (for example, “Why did you allow my grandfather to rape me every Sunday morning before taking me to church?”) and expressing their anger toward him, see pages 55-58 in *An Introduction to the Immanuel Approach*. Also, if you try engaging directly with the Lord regarding your anger, judgements, and bitterness *on your own*, but do not get resolution that *feels fully satisfying*, I strongly encourage you to work with a facilitator. (All of the dramatically positive experiences that I am aware of have occurred in the context of Immanuel sessions with facilitators.) Finally, it’s important to *persist* with engaging directly with the Lord regarding your anger, judgements, and bitterness until you *are* fully satisfied with his presence and response.

³ Again, if you try this on your own and are *not* fully satisfied with the Lord’s presence and response, I strongly encourage you to work with a facilitator who can help you. And again, it’s important to *persist* with engaging directly with the Lord regarding your anger, judgements, and bitterness until you *are* fully satisfied with his presence and response.

⁴ As of 2025, in *one hundred percent* of the cases in which I have encountered this scenario, I have been able to verify that the “Jesus” who was apologizing and asking for forgiveness was indeed a counterfeit being produced by the recipient’s own mind or demonic spirits.

memory or issue, or carried by a specific dissociated part, is different than resolving judgments and bitterness towards the Lord *in all locations*. When checking to see whether the judgments and bitterness are gone it is important to check the *specific target* that has been addressed. Sometimes when the judgments and bitterness associated with a specific memory and/or carried by a specific internal part have been successfully resolved, but the person receiving ministry still carries judgments and bitterness in other locations, the person will experience significant improvement but will have the sense that there are still more judgments and bitterness “somewhere else.” They will say something like “The judgments and bitterness towards the Lord for letting my mother die are gone, but I can feel that there are still judgments and bitterness about...” At other times the person receiving ministry will feel completely free of judgments and bitterness towards the Lord at the end of the session, but then will later discover judgments and bitterness in other locations when these other memories, issues, or internal parts get triggered. See “General Introductory Comments Regarding Ministry Aids” for additional discussion regarding this point.

Strongholds, demonic spirits, and curses: My sense is that there are sometimes spiritual strongholds, demonic spirits, and curses that are connected to/associated with judgments and bitterness towards the Lord, and therefore lose their protection/anchor when the judgments and bitterness are resolved. In these situations it is easy and important to finish with commands to deal with the spiritual strongholds, demonic spirits, and curses that have just been exposed.

Common problems: The six problems briefly discussed below are commonly encountered when working to releasing judgments and bitterness toward the Lord. See “General Introductory Comments Regarding Ministry Aids” for additional discussion regarding each of these common blockages.⁵

1. ***Specific trauma getting triggered by the discussion of judgments and bitterness:*** For example, some people have memories of bringing a concern to a person in power, but then instead of acknowledging the validity of the concern the person in power turns the situation around and tells her that she is bad for bringing the concern. This kind of memory can sometimes get triggered when the recipient is expressing anger, judgements, and bitterness toward the Lord, but then the facilitator explains that this is problematic.
2. ***Guardian lies:*** We often find guardian lies hindering the release of judgment and bitterness towards the Lord. For example, “If I admit my anger is wrong, then I will be blamed for everything (just like with my Dad),” “I can’t let go of this, it’s the only card I have to make Him restore all the loses He allowed,” or “I can’t let go of this, it’s the only way I can punish the Lord for what He has done to me.”
3. ***Vows:*** Judgment and bitterness towards the Lord can be protected by vows, the most common being “There is no excuse — I will never forgive Him for letting _____ (my mother die, my father leave, my brother molest me, etc).”
4. ***Demonic interference:*** Any demonic spirits associated with judgments and bitterness towards the Lord will try to block the person and/or internal parts from participating in the prayer. As discussed in “Dealing with Demonic Interference/Opposition during the session...,” it is helpful to “focus the target” when dealing with demonic interference. When I

⁵ These same problems also frequently get in the way of dismantling other defenses and reactive sins, such as vows and self pity. Again, see the “General Introductory Comments Regarding Ministry Aids” essay for additional discussion.

am dealing with possible demonic interference hindering release of judgments and bitterness towards the Lord, I will address my commands to any demonic spirits associated with this judgment and bitterness toward the Lord.”

5. ***Avoidance of the whole truth:*** The person receiving ministry needs to truly “see” the wound before they can fully release judgment and bitterness associated with it. It will hinder release of judgment and bitterness towards the Lord if the person is still avoiding the whole truth about how badly they have been hurt.
6. ***Internal parts that do not participate:*** For complete resolution of the judgment and bitterness towards the Lord associated with a given memory or issue, any internal parts carrying the judgment and bitterness associated with the target memory or issue must be present, stay connected, and participate in the prayer.

It is ideal to identify and resolve these problems before going through the prayers and commands to address judgment and bitterness towards the Lord. If I am leading someone else through this process, I ask her if she is sure she is ready to release judgment and bitterness towards the Lord, and then check for any anger, sense of uncertainty, or lack of internal unity.⁶ This usually picks up guardian lies and lies being triggered by the discussion, and often picks up internal parts that aren’t ready to participate. See “General Introductory Comments Regarding Ministry Aids” for additional discussion regarding this point.

If it doesn’t work: My experience is that I still sometimes miss something, such as quiet vows and deeper traumatic memories that are carefully protected. The good news is that it is easy to tell when you miss something because the anger, judgments, and bitterness towards the Lord will still be there when you are done with the prayer. When this happens you can assume with a fairly high degree of confidence that one or more of the common problems just discussed is blocking the way. Ask the Lord “What do you want _____ (*name of the person receiving ministry*) to know about these judgments and bitterness towards You?” and then watch especially for the common problems discussed above. Return to the sample prayers and commands when the blocking problems have been addressed. The Lord will always free you from judgment and bitterness when the relevant traumatic memories are fully connected and all interference has been resolved.

Reduce or expand the reactive sin target words to facilitate connection: One of the most important goals for our sample prayers is to help the person receiving ministry to connect experientially/emotionally with the core concepts, and to stay connected throughout the prayer - to stay emotionally connected to the meaning of the prayer as they go through it. Use fewer target words if a longer list is hindering emotional connection by becoming distracting or confusing (for example, just “judgments and bitterness”). Include additional target words if doing so seems to help make and maintain experiential/emotional connection (for example, “judgments, condemnation, and self righteousness, bitterness, resentment, unforgiveness, and hatred”). The same principle applies to whether or not to include the reactive sin target words at each point in the prayer. See “General Introductory Comments...” for additional discussion.

Anger, judgements, and bitterness getting transferred onto the Lord (2025 addition):

⁶ If I am working with myself to resolve judgements, and bitterness toward the Lord, I ask myself if I am sure I am ready to release judgments and bitterness towards the Lord, and then check for any anger, sense of uncertainty, or lack of internal unity.

Anger, judgements, and bitterness toward the Lord are sometimes implicit memory being transferred onto the Lord from underlying trauma. For example, the gym teacher in my grade-school did not protect me from the bullies, and I had anger, judgement, and bitterness toward the gym teacher in these memories. Then, when someone bullied me in my adult life, it triggered the underlying memories, but I perceived God to be the one who should have protected me, and the anger, judgement, and bitterness toward the gym teacher in the underlying trauma came forward as implicit memory and was transferred onto the Lord.

The first really important point with respect to this phenomena is that it will be impossible to resolve anger, judgement, and bitterness toward the Lord if it is really coming from underlying memory about some other person that hurt us (in this example, the gym teacher who hurt me by failing to protect me). The second really important point is that the anger, judgement, and bitterness that is getting transferred onto the Lord will immediately, spontaneously resolve when the underlying trauma is identified and resolved. Returning to the gym teacher example: my anger, judgements, and bitterness toward the Lord for not protecting me from bullies spontaneously resolved when I resolved the corresponding toxic content from the underlying gym teacher memories.⁷

2025 note re changes: Much of this essay was written in 2001. So you may notice that some of the material feels subtly different from our more recent teaching. For example, our overall approach to ministry has become much more relational in the twenty-plus years since 2001. I have also developed the Immanuel Approach since 2001, and as the reader probably realizes, the Immanuel Approach places much more emphasis on helping the recipient to engage directly with the living, tangible, interactive presence of Jesus at every point in the process and regarding every issue, problem, question, and traumatic memory that comes up. Even so, the 2001 insights presented here and the prayer (below) can still be helpful for any who are working to dismantle judgments and bitterness toward the Lord.

⁷ For a much more thorough discussion of how toxic content from traumatic memories can get transferred onto the Lord, and of how we can resolve distorted perceptions regarding God's character and heart by resolving the underlying trauma, see supplementary chapter 35c in the draft version of *The Immanuel Approach: For Emotional Healing and for Life*. (Available as a free download from the Resources page of www.immanuelapproach.com.)

Sample Prayer for Releasing Judgments and Bitterness Towards the Lord

Never assume the person is ready to release judgments and bitterness towards the Lord. Always ask “Are you sure you are ready to release your judgments and bitterness towards the Lord?” If there is any sense of uncertainty or lack of internal unity, look for guardian lies, vows, and internal dissociated parts that are not ready to release the judgments and bitterness.

It is important for the person receiving ministry to understand how we use judgments and bitterness to protect ourselves from painful emotions, and to understand why it is important to release them. If she does not already understand these principles, it can be helpful for her to review the essay “Judgments and Bitterness as Clutter That Hinders Prayer for Emotional Healing.”

“Lord, I was deeply hurt when _____ (examples: “my mother died of cancer,” “my father abandoned us,” “my brother molested me.” Describe the details of the situation, including the helplessness and powerlessness – talk about it until it feels emotionally connected), and it feels like You have wronged me by _____ (examples: “not being with me in a way that I could perceive/receive,” “allowing these things to happen,” “not rescuing me”). I know it is deception to believe that You have wronged me, but it feels so true. I _____ (describe your judgments and bitterness. For example “I hate You and judge You for not protecting me. There is no excuse for your failure to protect me. I feel like I would take better care of my children if I were You, etc.” Talk about it until it feels emotionally connected).

“I acknowledge that I have these judgments and bitterness towards You as a way to protect myself from the painful emotions – especially from feelings of powerlessness and helplessness. I *do* want protection from situations where I am hurt, powerless, and helpless, but I don’t want this judgment, condemnation, self-righteousness and bitterness to hinder my relationship with You or my healing, and I am ready to release and renounce this attempt to use judgment and bitterness to protect myself. I ask for Your protection, and also for the discernment and grace to participate in Your plans for my care. I accept that You don’t guarantee that I will never be hurt, powerless, and helpless, and I ask You for the grace and strength to be faithful to You in whatever You choose to allow. Help me to stand straight in my honest pain when I am hurt, powerless, and helpless.

“I confess these judgments and bitterness towards You as sin. I ask Your forgiveness for these judgments and bitterness towards You. I renounce these judgments and bitterness towards you. I acknowledge that I cannot change my own heart and mind regarding these judgments and bitterness towards You, so I ask You to give me true repentance – I ask you to change my heart and my mind regarding these judgments and bitterness towards you. I cannot free myself, but I am willing to be freed. I cooperate with Your desire to free me by asking you to free me and by choosing to confess, renounce, and release these judgments and bitterness towards You.

“I specifically release and renounce using this judgment, condemnation, self-righteousness, and bitterness towards you to protect myself from painful emotions, especially powerlessness, and helplessness.

“Lord Jesus, I ask now that you would wash me with your blood, cleansing me and freeing me from all judgments and bitterness towards You.”

Go back to the memories being addressed and try to stir up the judgments and bitterness towards the Lord. Often they will already be gone. Look for Jesus’ presence, listen for His voice, try to

sense His presence. Watch, follow, listen to whatever he does/says. After a few moments, try to find the judgments and bitterness.

If the judgments and bitterness towards the Lord are not gone, ask the Lord “What do you want _____ (name) to know about these judgments and bitterness towards you?” and then watch especially for the common problems discussed above. Return to the sample prayer when the blocking problems have been addressed. The Lord will always remove judgments and bitterness when the relevant traumatic memories are fully connected and all hindrances have been resolved.

If you feel lead to do so, you can tear down spiritual strongholds (2 Cor. 10), deal with demonic spirits, and break curses:

“In the name of Jesus, we command that all spiritual strongholds connected to or associated with judgments and bitterness towards the Lord regarding _____ be torn down now.”

“In the name of Jesus, we command all demonic spirits connected to or associated with my judgments and bitterness towards the Lord to go immediately and directly to the feet of the true Lord Jesus Christ. You will go bound. You will not touch or harm anything or anyone on the way. You will never return and you will never send anything in your place. He will deal with you as He sees fit.”

“In the name of Jesus, we command that all curses in any way connected to or associated with my judgments and bitterness towards the Lord be broken, nullified, and rendered powerless.”