

Releasing Our Hurts & Forgiving Others

Session #2: Discipleship 201

Jesus said, *And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not bring us to the time of trial, but rescue us from the evil one. For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.* Matthew 6:12-15

Introduction: It is impossible to go through life without experiencing hurts, wounds, and disappointments. Our responses to these often lead to bitterness and un-forgiveness. As the people of God, we have been called to a higher walk. Jesus challenges us to love our enemies, even those who hate and plot evil against us. Forgiveness is never easy. However, God always gives us the ability to live according to His Word and example.

Why should we forgive?

1. We have been **FORGIVEN** first. *Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you.* Ephesians 4:32
2. We are **COMMANDED** by God
Then Peter came and said to him, "Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times. Matthew 18:21-22.
 - a. The number 7 represents **PERFECTION** (North, South, East, West, Earth, Sea, and the Heavens)
 - b. We are not to **COUNT** how many times we forgive.
3. Those who hold on to un-forgiveness will be held **ACCOUNTABLE**
Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?' And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. So my heavenly Father will also do to everyone of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart." Matthew 18:31-35

An unforgiving heart will **POISON** your life.

1. It produces **BITTERNESS**
See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springs up and causes trouble, and through it many become defiled. Hebrews 12:15

2. Bitterness is not **NATURAL**, but it is **NUTURED** through our:
 - a. Harboring **RESENTMENT**
 - b. Rehearsing our **HURTS**
 - c. Justifying our **UNFORGIVENESS**
 - d. **NEGATIVE** and judgmental thoughts

3. Bitterness will **DESTROY** your life. There are:
 - a. Physical **EFFECTS**
 - b. **SOCIAL**
 - c. **EMOTIONAL**
 - d. **SPIRITUAL** alienation

4. Bitterness poisons those **AROUND** us (cf. Hebrews 12:15). It takes a toll on our:
 - a. **CHILDREN**
 - b. **SPOUSE**
 - c. **FRIENDS**
 - d. We **DISPLACE** our anger, making them live in a poisonous environment.

5. Un-forgiveness allows **SATAN** access into our lives, upon which he will build a **STRONGHOLD** and control our lives.

How can we overcome an unforgiving spirit?

1. Time will **NEVER** heal our wounds. Only God can help us create something **CONSTRUCTIVE** out of anger. Rather than leading to bitterness, it can lead to healing.
- 2.
3. We need to **CONFESS** our unforgiving spirit to:
 - a. **GOD**
 - b. **THOSE** who have been harmed by our bitterness
 - c. those with whom we are **BITTER**
 - d.
3. We need to **ASK** for forgiveness....
NEVER use an apology as an opportunity to rehearse our **HURT**. It is not an appropriate time to convince another of their wrongness. Only God, through the Holy Spirit, can convict one of their need to repent.
4. Seek **HELP** from others
 - a. Have others pray **WITH** and for you.
 - b. Do something **CONSTRUCTIVE** with your anger

5. Fill your life with **GODLY** thoughts

Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Philippians 4:8

6. Pray for your **ENEMIES**

Not for God to change them, but for God to **BLESS** them and to change your **ATTITUDE** towards them:

Jesus said, "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?"
Matthew 5:43-46

7. Rehearse **FORGIVENESS**, not our hurts

Forgiveness is a process that is learned over time.