

## **BE KIND, COMPASSIONATE, AND FORGIVING – Part 2**

### **Ephesians 4:29-32**

*29 Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. 30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. 32 **Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.** (Ephesians 4:29-32 NIV)*

#### **Review of Part 1**

- **Be kind.**

Kindness focuses on **how people feel**. Caring, thoughtful, sensitive, concerned about how others feel. You notice how people feel, you care about how they feel, you do something about how they feel.

The Opposite of Kindness = Self-centeredness or **insensitivity**.

- **Be compassionate.** (KJV Tenderhearted)

Compassion focuses on people's **physical and material** needs.

Jesus saw the crowds helpless, like sheep without a shepherd and **was moved with compassion**.

- Jesus, moved with compassion – taught the people.
- Jesus, moved with compassion – fed the people by multiplying bread and fish.
- Jesus, moved with compassion – healed the sick and cast out demons.

**Compassion moves you. But the Word and the Spirit must guide you.**

**Compassion has a price tag.** It costs more than kindness. It costs Effort, Involvement, Inconvenience, Investment.

Danger of hard-heartedness (Opposite of Compassion). See needs, suffering, not moved by it. Not willing to do anything about it.

Danger of hard-heartedness towards our family members. We so easily become self-centered.

## Be Forgiving

### I. **Forgiveness focuses on how we deal with those who have caused us hurt and harm.**

A. Offenses will come. They are unavoidable. Those you love, trust, or respect most can hurt you most. Emotions will be stirred. The tendency to react will always be there. What can you do?

B. Typical "Christian" response to offenses and hurts:

- No, I'm not hurt. Why do you think that? The fact that I won't look him in the eye or that I tense up and grit my teeth every time I hear her voice has nothing to do with whether or not I'm hurt.
- Watching and waiting expectantly for the news that something really bad has happened to the offender. (If God is indeed JUST!)
- I'm outta here! "Gone in 60 Seconds!" "Disappeared without a trace" – lost in a spiritual Bermuda Triangle.

C. We are becoming a church of small groups. Small Groups mean closer relationships. Closer relationships mean more opportunities for offenses.

- Small Groups are made up of imperfect people. Our group was perfect until I joined. It's all been downhill from there!
- It is not possible for us to get as close as God intends without sometimes hurting and being hurt.
- Offending and being offended. Best intentions – it's going to happen.

D. What does the Bible say we should do when someone hurts us?

*12 Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. 14 For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins. (Matthew 6:12-15)*

*And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins." (Mark 11:25)*

*Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. (Colossians 3:13)*

***"forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."*** (Ephesians 4:32 NIV)

## II. **Forgiveness is total unconditional pardon to an offender, removing the guilt, and releasing the offender from judgment.**

- Difficult? No - Impossible!!! Only By Grace Through Faith.
- The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!" (Luke 17:5 NIV)
- What prompted the apostles to say this? Was it when Jesus said, "The works I do you will do also, and you'll do even greater works?" Was it when Jesus said, "You will be persecuted for your faith in Me?" Was it when Jesus said, "You feed them?"
- Actually, It was when Jesus said, "If your brother sins against you seven times in one day, forgive him!" **"Lord, increase our faith!"**

*3 "If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him. 4 If he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times comes back to you and says, 'I repent,' forgive him." 5 **The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!"*** (Luke 17:3-5 NIV)

## III. **The Dangerous Consequences of Unforgiveness.**

*But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins. (Matthew 6:15)*

- A. **Unforgiveness hinders our prayers, our spiritual growth, our ministry, and our relationship with God.** When we won't give forgiveness, we can't receive forgiveness! When we won't give forgiveness, we can't serve joyfully! When we won't give forgiveness, we're stuck!
- B. **Unforgiveness leads to broken relationships.** You can't relate with openness and honesty with people you haven't forgiven. It produces hypocrisy. It becomes difficult to develop close relationships with others, even those who haven't offended.
- C. **Unforgiveness leads to bitterness, a cancer of the soul.** Physical, spiritual, and emotional damage from unforgiveness. ANGER > RESENTMENT > BITTERNESS.

**Unforgiveness is like drinking poison  
and waiting for the other person to die.**

- D. **When we don't forgive** and release the offender from judgment, **we are in bondage**, unable to be free. We make ourselves judge, jury, and jailer. That's too much for anyone to handle.
  - We pronounce our own judgement on the offender. We demand God's punishment on the person. We demand that others join us in our crusade of punishment.
  - Holding the other person in bondage is a full time job. Release them and

you will be released. **Jailers are in jail too, you know!**

### **Three Irrefutable Laws of Unforgiveness:**

1. You are only hurting yourself when you do not totally forgive from the heart.
2. You are only hurting yourself when you do not totally forgive from the heart.
3. You are only hurting yourself when you do not totally forgive from the heart.

#### **IV. Forging: The Grace of Total Forgiveness.**

- A. Forgiveness is an act of faith. As in Ephesians 2:8-9 Salvation is "by grace through faith", so also is forgiveness. Faith First, Then Feeling!
- B. We can forgive because we have received forgiveness. The Grace of Forgiveness has come to us and we can pass it on.

*Freely you have received, freely give. (Matthew 10:8)*

- C. Forgiveness must be initiated in my heart, mind, and will without regard to the actions and attitudes of the offender.
- D. Forgiving and forgetting. Forgiving is an act of the will. Forgetting is a process involving time and God's grace. You may not forget the incident, but you can come to the place where you remember without emotion.
- E. The three steps of forgiveness:

1. Forgive the Wrong. The Will to forgive and the Act or Statement of Forgiveness. Feeling comes later!

*"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." (Luke 23:34 NIV)*

2. Remove the Guilt. "I don't want you to feel as miserable as I have felt while I've been hurt and angry."
3. Release the offender from Judgment. "May God Bless You."

*"Lord, do not hold this sin against them." (Acts 7:60 NIV)*

**Forgiveness = Freedom**  
**Unforgiveness = Bondage**

#### **V. Forgiveness Questions and Issues**

- **You mean I'm supposed to forgive everyone that offends or hurts me? I'll be nothing but a walking doormat!**

No, you'll be a walking example of the Grace of God and one of the few people in Bend who are truly free.

*44 But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,  
45 that you may be sons of your Father in heaven...* (Matthew 5:44-45 NIV)

- **You mean I'm supposed to pretend they didn't do or say what they did or said? You mean I'm supposed to pretend that I wasn't hurt and angry.. that what they did had no effect on me? You mean I'm supposed to excuse what they did?**

NO! I mean acknowledge the wrong, the hurt, the offense and then forgive them, and release them and be free from the prison of unforgiveness!

*"Lord, do not hold this sin against them."* (Acts 7:60 NIV)

*"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."* (Luke 23:34 NIV)

- **What if I don't feel like forgiving?**

Anger, resentment – these are feelings. Forgiveness is a work of grace, forgiving is an act of faith.

- **How often do I have to forgive? (Luke 17:3, Matt 18:21-22)**

How often do you need forgiveness?

*Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?" 22 Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times. (Matthew 18:21-22)*

- **What if they don't repent and ask forgiveness? Doesn't the Bible say they are supposed to ask me for forgiveness?**

That is not the deciding factor. We must offer forgiveness whether they elect to receive it or not. If you wait until they come to you to repent, you are placing yourself under their control.

- **Do I have to go to everyone who has ever hurt me and say "I forgive you?"**

You only need to deal with situations that you have a problem with. If you've forgiven and forgotten, forget it!

- **What if they don't know they've hurt me?**

Rule of thumb: "If they don't know, don't go!" Make certain you've dealt with the issue in your own heart and expressed forgiveness in the presence of God.

- **What if I know they'll become defensive, deny it, or attack me?**

You may just be setting yourself up for more hurt. If you go expecting Teddy Bear hugs and sweetness, you may get self-justification and counter accusation. In such a case, deal with it in your heart, purpose to forgive in your will, and express forgiveness with your mouth.

- **But what about the offender? Don't they need to be taught a lesson? Shouldn't I make sure they pay for the offense so they won't do it again?**

It's God's business to "teach them a lesson" or to bring judgment for the offense. It's your privilege to forgive.

- **Should I write a letter? Send an email?**

Face to Face is best, a phone call is a poor substitute, it's downhill from there. My advice is "Don't write it, say it!" If you can't say it now (what if the person has died?) deal with it within yourself. Then if the opportunity presents itself and the need is there, say it.

- **When I am face to face with the person who has hurt me, what should I do or say?**

First, forgive them in your heart. Forgive them from your heart. Forgive them in your mind. Speak the words of forgiveness aloud. Be specific, be brief, don't get into accusations and counter charges.

- Tell them how you have felt.
- Tell them what happened to make you feel that way. Don't interpret their motive or intent, only recount the act and how you felt.
- Tell them you forgive them and tell them why.
- Respond, don't react to what comes next.
- Leave the results in God's hands.

### **Prayer and Response:**

- Give the opportunity to acknowledge specific areas of unforgiveness against people, against God.
- Give the opportunity to pray a prayer expressing complete forgiveness to the offender.
- Challenge them to take the appropriate action upon leaving the service today.