

War of the WORDS

*Week 3 – The Need for Forgiveness ~ freeing myself from destructive words
September 24, 2006*

God and Forgiveness - ***O Lord, You are so good, so ready to forgive, so full of unfailing love for all who ask for your help. Psalm 86 verse 5 (88)***

What is forgiveness? What does it look like? - ***Where is another God like you, who pardons the guilt of the remnant, overlooking the sins of his special people? You will not stay angry with your people forever, because you delight in showing unfailing love. Once again you will have compassion on us. You will trample our sins under your feet and throw them into the depths of the ocean! Micah chapter 7 verses 18-19 (708)***

- God chooses to pardon us!
- God chooses not to stay angry with us!
- God chooses to show us mercy
- God chooses to have compassion on us
- God chooses to do away with the memory of our sins

Forgiveness does not mean that...

- the person who hurt you deserves to be forgiven
- what the person did wasn't wrong & hurtful
- you forget the hurt
- the person who hurt you shouldn't face consequences for their actions
- Simply stated, forgiveness means that I give up my right to hurt back

When I forgive, what does it look like in my life?

- I choose not to talk against the person, in a sinful way, to anyone
- I choose to find the right person to talk to
- I choose not to bring up the offense to the person repeatedly
- I choose not to play the "hurt tape" in my head

Aren't I being a phony if I forgive someone & yet I'm unable to forget the hurt?

Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged.

1 Corinthians chapter 13 verses 4 & 5 (878)

Forgive & Forget??

- God DOESN'T ask me to forget or to pretend that I've forgotten!
- God DOES ask me not to bring up or keep a record of my past hurts
- God DOES ask me to be willfully obedient in this, He doesn't ask me to be phony!
- The greater the hurt & impact in my life, the longer & harder the forgiveness process

Do I have to forgive someone who isn't sorry?

They nailed Jesus to the cross.... Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing." Luke chapter 23 verses 33 & 34 (807)

- My ability to forgive is not dependent on the situation, the people, or the degree of the hurt
- My ability to forgive is solely dependant on me...my attitude, my heart, my desire to obey God

Doesn't ongoing forgiveness on my part just set me up to be a "doormat?"

Don't be misled - you cannot mock the justice of God. You will always harvest what you plant.

Galatians chapter 6 verse 7 (894)

- Forgiveness does not abolish the need for discipline, wisdom, or discernment
- Forgiveness is not intended to do away with consequences or boundaries
- God uses consequences & boundaries to teach, to grow & to bring about life change

Forgiving vs. Rescuing

- Broken trust is a consequence of sin
- By God's design, trust is not supposed to be easily restored
- A sure sign of genuine repentance is the offender's humility shown in his/her willingness to take the time to rebuild broken trust
- ***So humble yourselves under the mighty power of God, and at the right time he will lift you up in honor. 1 Peter chapter 5 verse 6 (937)***

How do I deal with someone who refuses to forgive me?

- Accept the reality of what is--you can't go back in time and undo the wrong
- Ask God for forgiveness
- Seek forgiveness from the person you offended
- Remember that your forgiveness comes from God, not the person you offended
- When you are with the other person, act normally, as if you've already received their forgiveness...& LET IT GO!

How do I forgive myself...for what I did to myself, for the hurt I caused others?

- Ask forgiveness of God and the person you offended--then let it go
- Realize that even after receiving forgiveness from God & others, regret is normal & healthy
- Regret, when given to God, will produce humility, compassion, thanks for God's blessing of forgiveness, & a determination on my part not to commit the same sin again

So why should I forgive?

1. Because God is a God of forgiveness--Jesus died on the cross so we could be forgiven, so we could forgive!
"...and forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us" Jesus, in the Lord's prayer - Matthew chapter 6 verse 12 (737)
2. The Big Picture - Forgiveness is all about MY freedom, it's a gift I give myself!
The emotions of unforgiveness--anger, hate, bitterness & depression--are a mental & emotional prison that ruin my relationships & destroy my life!

Now what??

1. I know I need to do this, but I don't want to: pray that God changes your heart, then start working thru the process
2. I want to do this, but I don't have a clue where / how to begin: start at the beginning of the notes page and work forward, pray & ask God for wisdom & courage, tell someone what you're doing
3. I've tried this in the past & it didn't work: pray & ask God for patience because this is a process, not a once-&-done deal
4. I've done this and I've seen God work & heal thru this: pray & ask God to use you in the lives of others who are struggling with this

This study is based on book War of Words, by Paul David Tripp. Next week we continue with the topic "Saying Something Different ~ how to speak positive words"