



Say it in a sentence: Hard hearts harbor hurt. Forgiving hearts find freedom.

There are no enduring relationships without forgiveness. Every lasting relationship will require many acts of forgiveness for minor offenses and several acts of forgiveness for major offenses.

1. Repent of the hurt coming through you. (v15-20)

Read the following verses: Proverbs 15:12, Proverbs 15:31-32, Proverbs 19:20.

Have you communicated through words or attitude that you welcome the loving confrontation of your spouse or friends?

How did you respond the last time your spouse, friend, or enemy confronted you with a sin?

Do you have people in your life who love you enough to lovingly confront you?

Read Ephesians 5:33. When husbands are sinned against they feel disrespected. When wives are sinned against they feel unloved. Husbands have a sinful tendency to respond in unloving ways when they feel disrespected. Wives have a sinful tendency to respond in disrespectful ways when they feel unloved.

Husbands: How can you lovingly confront your wife when you feel disrespected?

Wives: How can you lovingly confront your husband when you feel unloved?

Read Proverbs 19:11. Overlooking or covering your spouse's faults is the first way to resolve conflict. How can you tell the difference between sins that need confrontation and annoyances that need to be mercifully overlooked?

Your small group is the perfect setting to go the second and third steps of confrontation mentioned in Matthew 18:15-17. It is an uncommon community of believers helping each other in their sanctification. How often does your group get below the surface to a level of transparency, vulnerability, and accountability? Are you willing to receive the loving confrontation of others in your group for the purpose of growing in your relationship with God and your spouse? If so, tell those in your group right now that you welcome their involvement in your fight with sin.

Read Matthew 18:19. How often do you and your spouse agree together in prayer and see God answer in miraculous ways? Is conflict, distance, or busyness preventing you from coming together in prayer?

2. Forgive the hurt coming to you. (v.21-35)

Describe the last time when you felt what the servant must have felt when he was called to settle his account with the king with no means of payment? What did it feel like? What did it motivate you to do?

How does a healthy sense of your sinfulness, indebtedness and inability before God serve as a foundation for forgiving others? What happens when you lose this sense of unworthiness?





SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

Describe the last time when you were overwhelmed with the depth and richness of God's complete pardon of your sin?

Discuss this statement: If you can't get over what someone has done to you, it is evident that you have gotten over what Jesus has done for you.

Using this criteria, is your marriage marked by forgiveness?

- I will not dwell on the hurt.
- I will not use the hurt as leverage to hurt back.
- I will not speak of the hurt to others in slanderous ways.
- I will not allow the hurt to stop my pursuit of oneness with my spouse.
- Has bitterness been your tormentor?
- Make a list of people you have not decisively forgiven. Take this list to the Lord and release them from what you think they owe you.
- Matthew 18:35 implies God will withhold a sense of forgiveness from the one who refuses to forgive. Do you live with lingering doubts about your salvation? Consider how your lack of forgiveness may be contributing to your lack of assurance of God's forgiveness.

Additional Scripture:

Ephesians 4:31-32
Colossians 3:12-15
Romans 12:14-19

