

**HEALING THE PAST GOD'S WAY**  
**CHAPTER 13 TEACHING NOTES**  
**FORGIVING OTHERS**

**MEMORY VERSE:**

For if you forgive others their trespasses,  
your heavenly Father will also forgive you,  
but if you do not forgive others their trespasses,  
neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.  
Matthew 6:14 & 15

Build upon the teaching from the last lesson; focus on the blessing of forgiveness. For example, the blessing of receiving forgiveness from God is freedom, release from bondage, expressed love, restored relationship, etc. The blessing of forgiving others is the release from the bondage of their sin. In obeying God to forgive those who have sinned against me, I am releasing them from the debt that they owe me and I am no longer holding onto the weight and damage of their sin. In obeying God by forgiving others, I am expressing my confidence in God's justice. And in obeying God by forgiving others, I am living under the umbrella of God's protection, etc.

Remind them that by forgiving an individual – they are letting that individual off of their “hook” but that individual still has to deal with God in relation to that sin. Remember, when a person sins against us, their sin against God is even greater (it's His standard that is violated when a person sins). They may be off the hook with me (the one sinned against) but they still must repent before God in order to be covered by the blood (and grace) of Jesus and not pay eternally for their sin.

Finally, I always like to begin the lesson on forgiving others by doing a review of God's justice. When you are asking someone to trust God with their heartache, it's important for them to be reminded that we are protected by God's justice, defended by God's justice, comforted by God's justice, etc. Because God is just and does not ignore sin nor treat it lightly, I can give Him what I can not carry myself.

**FORGIVING OTHERS**

**GOD IS JUST** (Review the lesson on God's justice in chapter 7):

**GOD'S STANDARD:** Romans 3:9 – 20

our defense. . . **Romans 12:19 – 21**

our refuge. . . Deuteronomy 32:4

our comfort. . . **Psalm 37:5 – 9**

merciful. . .Luke 23:39 – 43

grace. . .Romans 8 & 9

perfect. . .Psalm 19:7 – 9

restorative. . .Romans 5:1 – 5

love. . .Matthew 5:17 – 20

protection. . .Exodus 14:14

faithful. . .Philippians 2:9 – 11

**therefore, we can forgive. . .**

if I won't forgive. . .

1. I am saying my standards are higher than God's
2. I am saying that Jesus' blood is not enough

Why God commands me to forgive:

1. It is an expression of gratitude for God's mercy and grace
2. Unforgiveness leads inevitably to bitterness. The focus is me.
3. I can not carry the weight of another person's sin just as I can't carry the weight of my sin.
4. Forgiveness yields change in me and in those I forgive.
5. Forgiving others reminds me of what Jesus did for me – gives me perspective
6. Reminds me of what is waiting for those who do not receive nor offer forgiveness – eternal damnation is such a high price – softens my heart to have Jesus' heart of compassion

Jesus was numbered with the transgressors so that you and I could be numbered with the redeemed. Though personally sinless, He was counted as a transgressor by both God and man. He got what He didn't deserve, namely, our sin; and we got what we didn't deserve, namely, His righteousness. "God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God." (2 Corinthians 5:21) Erwin Lutzer, *Cries from the Cross: A Journey into the Heart of Jesus*

## **HOW TO FORGIVE: A CRISIS AND A PROCESS:**

It is not necessary for the individual to ask to be forgiven for their sin(s) in order for me to choose to forgive. I choose to forgive as an offering of worship to God and as an act of obedience. Then, if the individual comes to me and asks to be forgiven, I've already done the hard work and can express God's grace to them through my obedience. Remember, we are called to be a minister of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5).

### **STEP ONE: THE VERTICAL**

I must give the sin against me up and give it over to God. Once given, I am not to bring it up again – if I bring it up again, I need to go back to the foot of the cross and lay it down again.

### **STEP TWO: THE INTERNAL**

After giving it up to God, I am not to bring it up to myself again. If this becomes a problem, remember that God helps us change the conversations in our head by putting off the lies (the sin is too big to be forgiven, etc.) and putting on the truth (the blood of Jesus covers every sin).

### **STEP THREE: THE HORIZONTAL**

Once given over to God, I must forgive the person and not bring it up to others or to the individual.

First, I must not bring it up to others. Unless the sin is a continuing sin by an individual who is a believer and it needs to be dealt (see Matthew 18), I am not to talk about what this person has done. If the individual is not a believer, then they are not under the authority of the Church and to talk about the sin is gossip.

Second, I must not bring it up to the one who has sinned or else I will be saying that I still hold them accountable for the sin.

## **REMEMBER: RESTORATION IS THE KEY**

### **STEP FOUR: THE PROCESS**

Repeat any step as necessary.

## **FORGIVENESS IS COSTLY – JUST ASK JESUS**

When man had done his worst, Jesus prayed, not for justice, but for mercy; He pleaded that His enemies would be exempt from the just consequences of their evil deeds. And He prayed, not after His wounds had healed, but while they were yet open. Words of forgiveness came from His lips when the nails were being driven into His body, when the pain was the fiercest, when the jolts of anguish were the sharpest; He prayed as the cross was lowered into the hole with a thud. It was then, when His nerves were yet the most tender, when the pain was the most unfathomable, He who was the victim of history's greatest crime prayed for the criminals. Erwin Lutzer, *Cries from the Cross: A Journey into the Heart of Jesus*