FOUNDATIONS OF FORGIVENESS
LESSON #3: “FORGIVING OTHERS” PT. II

Intro. Tonight we’re going to continue looking at our forgiveness of others.

1. Last week we talked about why forgiving others is so important and why God asks us to forgive
   - If we don’t forgive others we limit our own forgiveness
   - When we don’t forgive, it hurts us, imprisons us
   - NO ONE IS MADE BETTER BY A GRUDGE!
   - Forgiveness keeps the devil off our backs, Eph 4:27 “neither give place to the devil.”
   - Finally, unforgiveness grieves the Holy Spirit

quote In 1998 the John Templeton Foundation awarded research grants for the study of forgiveness to 29 scholars, and one of the primary discoveries of these studies was the person who gains the most from forgiveness is the person who does the forgiving.

I. WE CAN BE CONFUSED ABOUT WHAT FORGIVENESS IS

A. IN ORDER TO UNDERSTAND WHAT FORGIVENESS IS WE MUST KNOW WHAT IT ___________

   1. Forgiveness isn’t ________________ what they did
      a. Just because we forgive someone it doesn’t mean we’re approving of what they did

ex. When Jesus forgave the woman who was caught in the act of adultery, He wasn’t approving of what she did.

John 8:10-11 (NKJV)
10 When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, “Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?”
11 She said, “No one, Lord.” And Jesus said to her, “Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more.”

   b. Just because we forgive someone’s offense, it doesn’t imply an endorsement of what they did
   c. We can forgive what we don’t approve of because that’s the way God dealt with all of us

   2. Forgiveness isn’t ___________________________ what they did
a. We don’t try to make excuses for someone else’s sin or failure
b. Our forgiving others doesn’t mean we make excuses for their behavior
c. Forgiveness isn’t justifying sin

**Definition:** “To justify means to “make right or just.” The Oxford English Dictionary says it means “to show (a person or statement or act) to be right or just or reasonable.”

d. No one has the “right” to sin. There isn’t any “reasonable” explanation for it.

3. Forgiveness isn’t always about ____________________
   a. Forgiveness and reconciliation aren’t always the same thing
   b. Reconciliation requires the participation of two people
   c. The person we forgive may not want to see or talk to us
   d. *Not only that, we may not want to maintain a close relationship with the person we forgive*

4. Forgiveness isn’t __________________ what they did
   a. Oftentimes our denial is subconscious
   b. We can repress the feelings of violation others have committed against us, but that’s not necessarily forgiveness
   c. Denial isn’t very healthy either
   d. We’re not supposed to “turn a blind eye” to what others have done
   e. There’s a difference between not keeping a record of what others have done to us and pretending it didn’t happen

   • In 1Corinthians 13:5, Paul says, “Love keeps no record of wrongs.”
   
   **ex.** Paul is saying that “love doesn’t store a wrong,” or in other words it doesn’t go into our mental computer to use against them at another time.
   There’s a difference between not storing up the offenses someone has committed against us and simply pretending they don’t exist.
   WE CAN ONLY FORGIVE WHAT WE ACKNOWLEDGE.

5. Our forgiving others isn’t always about ____________________
   a. The reality is it isn’t always possible to forget
   b. There are some violations that go too deep to forget
   c. Forgiveness doesn’t erase our memories

   • It’s actually a demonstration of greater grace when we are fully aware of what others have done to us and we still choose to forgive
6. Forgiveness isn’t ______________________
   a. Even God lets us know He is hurt by our sins

Ezekiel 6:9 (NKJV) "Then those of you who escape will remember Me among the nations where they are carried captive, because I was crushed by their adulterous heart which has departed from Me, and by their eyes which play the harlot after their idols;…
   b. In this verse God lets His people know He was crushed by what they did
   c. We don’t have to make others feel horrible about how bad they made us feel, but neither do we have to pretend it didn’t hurt us

7. Forgiveness isn’t a ______________________
   a. This is a real concern to many believers

ex. "If I have really forgiven them, why haven’t all the negative feelings gone away?"
   b. We don’t always have control over what we feel at the moment
   c. We can make decisions that will, in time, lessen those feelings that come from the remembrance of the pain caused by offense
   d. Our decision is to forgive and pray blessing on them

Matthew 5:44-46 (NKJV)
44 But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,
45 that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

ex. Over a period of time as we forgive and pray blessing on them our feelings will change. We may never avoid any negative feeling or response to those memories but we don’t have to dwell on them or act on them.

- Forgiveness isn’t a feeling, it’s a choice

B. SOME OF THE THINGS FORGIVENESS ____________

1. Forgiveness is ______________________ of what someone has done and still forgiving them
   a. Again, forgiveness isn’t denying they did something that hurt us
b. It's recognizing what they did and still being willing to forgive

2. Forgiveness is choosing not to __________________________

Again, I Corinthians 13:5 love “keeps no record of wrongs”

Isaiah 58:9 (NKJV) Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; you shall cry, and He will say, 'Here I am.' "If you take away the yoke from your midst, the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness,

ex. A lot of marriages could be healed if both husband and wife would stop pointing the finger of blame.

   a. Love is a choice
   b. Totally forgiving others is a choice
   c. Loving others and forgiving others can be a hard choice
   d. It may not feel good at first but in time, it's a great feeling to forgive

3. Forgiveness is __________________________
   a. It's refusing to get even
   b. We hate the thought that someone will get away with what they've done to us
   c. It's important to remember, if we take vengeance in our own hands, we trespass on God's territory

Deuteronomy 32:35 (NKJV) Vengeance is Mine, and recompense; their foot shall slip in due time; for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things to come hasten upon them.'

   d. This verse is so important, it's repeated twice in the New Testament

Romans 12:19 (NKJV) Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord.

Hebrews 10:30 (NKJV) For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine; I will repay," says the Lord. And again, "The Lord will judge His people."

   e. God doesn't need our help to carry out vengeance

4. Forgiveness is __________________________
   a. This doesn’t mean never confiding with someone over a serious issue you’re having with someone else
b. If we need to talk with someone about an offense we need to remember a couple of things
   1. ask ourselves, “What is my motive for sharing this?”
      “Am I just gossiping or do I need help with this?”
   2. we need to find someone we can confide in who won’t talk about it to others

c. The truth is sometimes when we talk about what others have done to us, it isn’t for therapeutic reasons

d. We want others to know what happened to us so they will feel about the person the same way we do…badly

e. Forgiveness means not spreading around what others have done to us

5. Forgiveness is __________________________
   a. One of the best things we can do for ourselves is to be merciful to others

Matthew 5:7 (NKJV)  Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

   b. Mercy is not getting what we deserve
   c. So when we show mercy we’re not giving others what we feel they deserve
   d. Something important to remember when you feel like giving someone what they deserve…we reap what we sow

James 2:13 (NKJV)  For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

   e. If we don’t show mercy to others, we don’t receive mercy

Proverbs 11:17 (NKJV)  The merciful man does good for his own soul, but he who is cruel troubles his own flesh.

   6. Forgiveness is __________________________

Philippians 4:5 (NKJV)  Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand.

   a. The word used here as gentleness carries the idea of graciousness
   b. It implies showing an exceedingly rare act of grace
   c. Jesus was gracious

ex.  When the self righteous Pharisees brought the woman to him who was caught in the act of adultery, He was gracious.
John 8:7 & 10-11 (NKJV)
7 So when they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up and said to them, "He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first."
10 When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, "Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?"
11 She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said to her, "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more."

d. There was no question whether she had sinned but Jesus chose to be gracious

- Graciousness is withholding certain facts we know to be true, so we can leave the person’s reputation who wronged us intact
- It is shown by what we don’t say, even if what we could say would be true

7. Forgiveness is the ______________________
   a. Bitterness has been described as an excessive desire for vengeance that comes from deep resentment
   b. It is also one of the most dangerous things we can allow in our lives

Hebrews 12:15 (NKJV) looking diligently lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled;

c. If we’re going to make it in the Christian life, it’s because of grace
   d. Bitterness will short-circuit the flow of grace into our hearts

ques. How do we know if there isn’t any bitterness left in our hearts about others?
1. The very fact that we’re praying for them and releasing forgiveness shows we’re not completely controlled by bitterness
   2. When we don’t have any desire to get even or punish the offender

- Next week we’re going to talk about how we can know we’ve forgiven others

PRAYER AND CONFESSION:

Jesus, I chose to forgive, everyone who has offended me. I won’t keep a record of the wrongs done against me. Even though I’ve been mad, I forgive, and chose not to get even. I refuse to allow bitterness to have a root in my life. Thank You for the grace to forgive, in Your name, Jesus, Amen.
I. WE CAN BE CONFUSED ABOUT WHAT FORGIVENESS IS

A. IN ORDER TO UNDERSTAND WHAT FORGIVENESS IS WE MUST KNOW WHAT IT ISN’T

1. Forgiveness isn’t (approving) what they did
2. Forgiveness isn’t (excusing or justifying) what they did
3. Forgiveness isn’t always about (reconciliation)
4. Forgiveness isn’t (denying) what they did
5. Our forgiving others isn’t always about (forgetting)
6. Forgiveness isn’t (pretending we aren’t hurt)
7. Forgiveness isn’t a (feeling, it’s a choice)

B. SOME OF THE THINGS FORGIVENESS IS

1. Forgiveness is (being aware) of what someone has done and still forgiving them
2. Forgiveness is choosing not to (keep a record of wrongs)
3. Forgiveness is (refusing to punish)
4. Forgiveness is (not telling what they did)
5. Forgiveness is (being merciful)
6. Forgiveness is (being gracious)
7. Forgiveness is the (absence of bitterness)