


Workbook,
Leader's
Guide and
Study Guide

FREE YOURSELF TO LOVE

The Liberating Power of Forgiveness by Jackie Kendall

Free Yourself to Love Bible Study

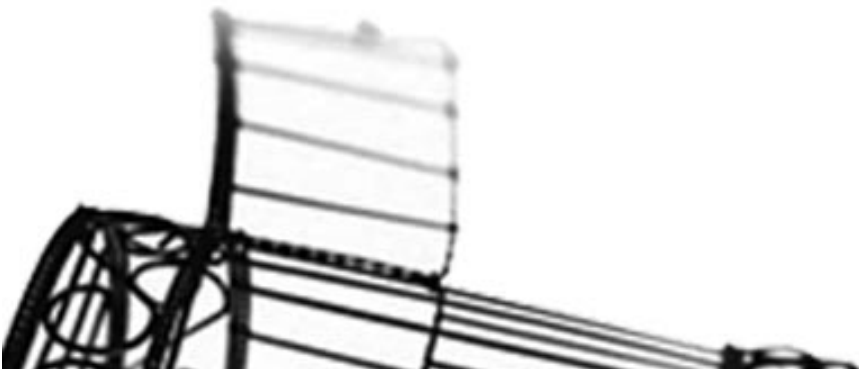




THE LIBERATING POWER OF FORGIVENESS

Free Yourself to Love Bible Study

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The Free Yourself to Love Bible Study

A Letter for Group
Leaders, Teachers
and Facilitators

The most significant thing I have learned as a Christian is the need to be a great forgiver.

As Christians, we have been forgiven so much, but we are the cheapest forgivers around. We should be the best, leading the world by example! In our Christian walk, we learn to walk by faith, not by sight; well, I'm proposing that we forgive by faith and not by sight. This book will lead you through six reasons (excuses, really; they're never reasons when you consider the cost of Calvary) why Christians don't forgive when, in fact, we should be the kings and queens of forgiveness.

This study guide was birthed from my preparation for a class I taught on my new book: *Free Yourself to Love: The Liberating Power of Forgiveness*. To prepare for this class, I decided to comb through every sentence of each chapter to find the nuggets that I couldn't bear for someone to miss from the chapter. Each week the class received copies of "Jackie's must have nuggets." The class I taught was composed of men and women—each week we went through these must-have nuggets, and one of the participants described them as "cliff notes" for *Free Yourself to Love*. When the class ended, I realized that my "cliff notes" and quotes would help others who would like to work through my book on forgiveness. So I combined the class notes with the questions at the end of each chapter of the book. These notes, quotes, and discussion questions can be used in various venues: Bible study, Book clubs, SS Class, or home study groups.

Also available with these "cliff notes" from the book are DVD clips (each less than 5 minutes each; there are 8 clips for the study—not every chapter has a clip) of my teaching various aspects of the forgiveness message. These clips are available on this site to download—free of charge! The outlines are also free for downloading for your group.

To get the most out of a *Free Yourself to Love* study, I suggest that each participant have a personal copy of the book. As a leader, you can notify the participant to not only purchase the book but also go www.freeyourselftolove.com and download the outlines for the study.



I C O N K E Y	
	Question/Discuss
	Read The Bible
	Read FYTL
	Watch the Video

One Additional Suggestion: Look for the Icons that accompany the text. Each Icon will help direct you and the group through the Bible Study. For example, if you follow the Icons in the beginning of the Chapter 7 Outline:

Watch video segment #5 - The DVD Icon points out which video segment accompanies this Bible Study session.

“Revenge is our desire for justice, our desire to make offenders pay for their relational crimes against us.” p. 114 - The Glasses Icon directs you to quotes in the *Free Yourself to Love* book. Please note that each quote has a page number with it. These page numbers will help people find the particular quote you are reading and guide them to the questions that follow the various quotes. When you read this quote, you can mention that it is on p. 114 of *Free Yourself to Love*, and the participant will scan his or her copy of the outline, and find p. 114 and the corresponding quote.

Rom. 12:9; Deut. 32:35; Rev. 6:9-11; Prov. 24:29 - **The Bible Icon shows which Bible Verses are referenced if you wish to use them for reading or study.**

[Q] *Can you think of a situation where revenge harmed you more than the one it was intended for? Is revenge a dangerous boomerang?* - The [Q] Icon gives Questions for self reflection and group discussion.

Any questions that you may have as the leader/facilitator can be sent to Jackie@jackiekendall.com. A reply will come as quickly as possible.

One closing thought (please read to the group): We are most like Jesus, not when we are perfect, but when we are forgiving.

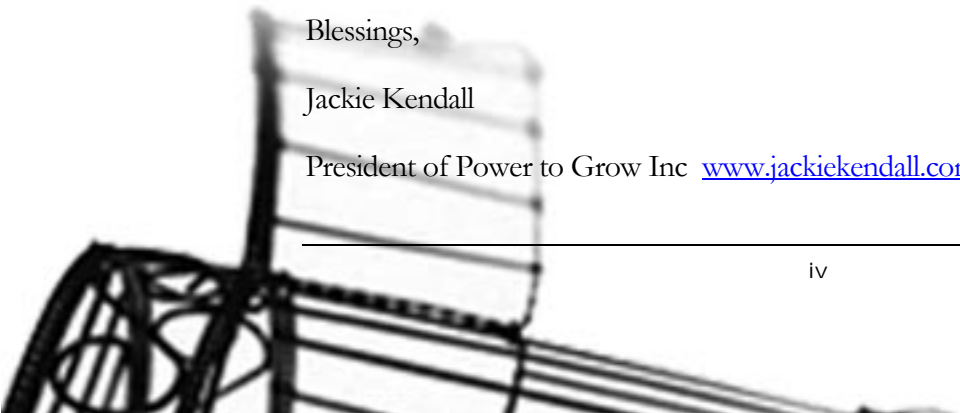
Fasten your seat-belt; you are getting ready for an incomparable freedom ride. Free yourself to love—such liberation is only possible through forgiveness. The best is yet to come—heroic forgiveness!

Thank you for wanting to help spread this liberating message to our spiritual siblings across our nation.

Blessings,

Jackie Kendall



President of Power to Grow Inc www.jackiekendall.com





Counterfeit Forgiveness

Free Yourself to Love: Introduction and Chapter 1

Counterfeit Forgiveness Keeps Us Hostage to Yesterday

I C O N K E Y	
	Question/Discuss
	Read The Bible
	Read FYTL
	Watch the Video

 No DVD Clip With This Lesson - Open with everyone taking the “Rate Your Forgiveness” Test at the end of this chapter.

 **Fish & Chips and God’s Gi-Normous Mercy** - Read FYTL quotes on pp. xii, xiii of the Introduction.

[Q] *When considering God’s gi-normous mercy—look at your test score—would you rate yourself a good forgiver?*

 **Over-reached by Satan—Poser/Bluffing.** pp. 3-5



II Corinthians 2:10, 11

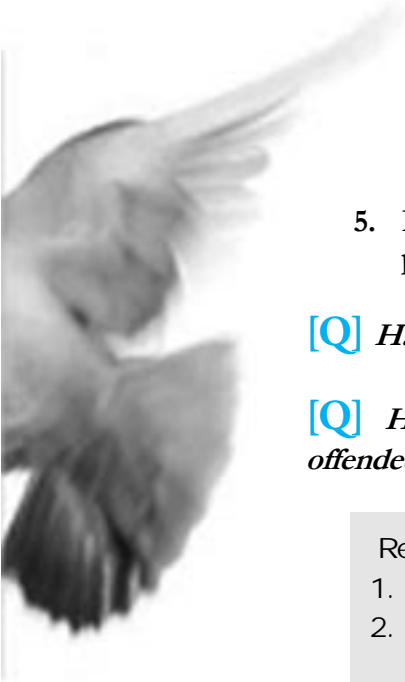
[Q] *How often have you considered Satan’s impact on your own struggle to forgive?*

 **Forms of Counterfeit Forgiveness**

1. Stoic Numbness. “What irritates me exposes me!” pp. 8-11
2. Minimization pp.12,13; “Trash Apologies.” p.13
3. Psychoanalyzing the Offender. pp.14-16
4. Holding One’s Breath Emotionally; Desolate Tamar. pp. 16-19



II Sam. 13:20




5. Being an Overachiever; “Good Works Piled Over Heart Wound.”
pp.19-21

[Q] *Have you used any of these counterfeit forms of forgiveness in the past?*

[Q] *Have you been guilty of giving “trash apologies?” Have you been offended by “trash apologies?”*

Read the following and examine this list

1. Mistakes were made. (Rather than “I made a mistake.”)
2. To the degree you were offended. (Rather than “To the degree I offended you.”)
3. If I did anything wrong . . . (“If,” as opposed to “I did something wrong.”)
4. You can’t expect me to be perfect.
5. If I’ve hurt anybody, I’m sorry. (Again, “If” as opposed to “I’ve hurt you, and I’m sorry.”)
6. I’m sorry you are mad. (But I am not responsible for your being mad.)

 **Offend Not Thyself through Denial of Offense. pp.21, 22**

Being Offended is Inevitable, Staying Offended IS MY CHOICE!

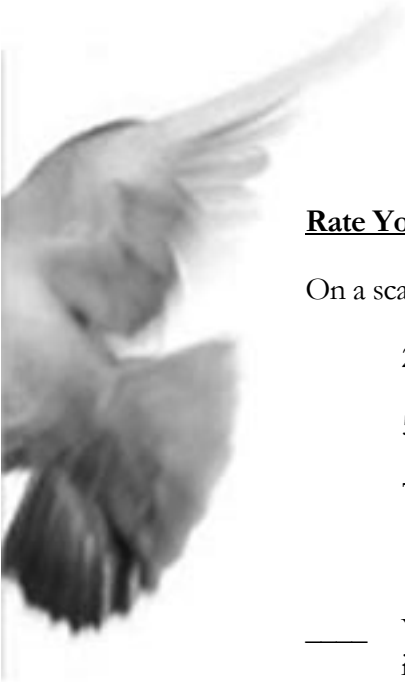


“Jesus said, ‘But I say to you who hear . . . Love your enemies . . . bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.’” (Luke 6:27, 28)



“Jesus said, ‘And whenever you stand praying, FORGIVE, if you have ANYTHING against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you . . .’” (Mark 11:25)





Rate Your Forgiveness Test

On a scale of 0–100, rate your forgiveness in the following situations:

25–50: It hurts to think about it, but you can disconnect fairly quickly.

51–75: The memory of the incident lingers most of the day.

76–90: You are enraged when you think of the event.

91–100: You hope the person burns in hell.

- Your parent said something to you that angers you each time you recall the incident.
- Someone you trusted owes you money.
- Someone you trusted took unfair advantage of you.
- Someone else got the raise or job you deserved.
- Someone told a lie about you.
- You can't forgive your spouse or significant other for . . .
- Your child or good friend totally disappointed you.
- You were treated badly in childhood.
- Someone you love cheated on you.
- You can't forgive yourself for . . .
- Total

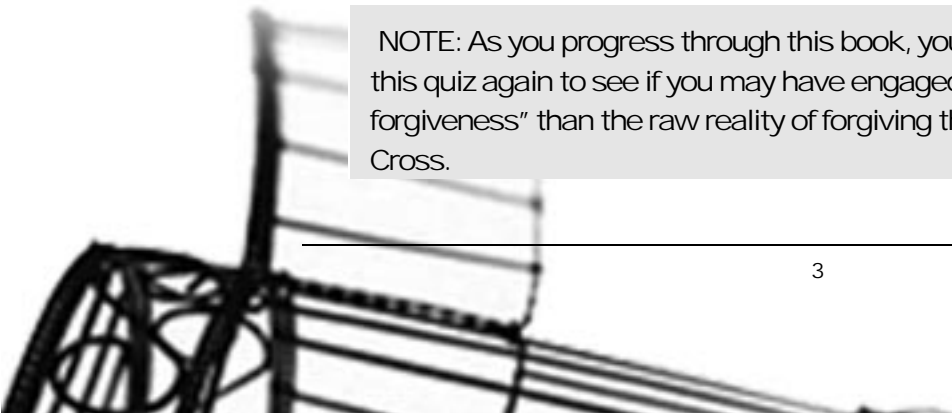
Scoring:

Under 315 = Occasionally you may need to work on forgiveness.

Between 315–450 = You have some significant forgiveness issues.

Anything over 450 is an indication of major unforgiveness.


NOTE: As you progress through this book, you may want to look at this quiz again to see if you may have engaged in more "counterfeit forgiveness" than the raw reality of forgiving that cost Jesus the Cross.




Held Hostage By Shame

Free Yourself to
Love: Chapter 2


ICON KEY


 Question/Discuss

 Read The Bible


 Read FYTL


 Watch the Video


 No DVD Clip With This Lesson - Open the study by reading *Seven Life-Changing Syllables: "ABBA, I belong to You"* an excerpt from *"The Furious Longing of God"* by Brennan Manning (see excerpt below ***)


 "Shame is a vague, undefined heaviness that presses on our spirit, dampens our gratitude for the goodness of life, and slackens the free flow of joy." (Lewis Smedes) p. 44


 Shame is the by-product of moving raw feelings underground. p. 26

 Shame assaults one's self-esteem—hidden behind "happy depression." pp. 26,28

 *Are you surprised by the suggestion that shame develops when hurt is hidden? If so, share what you thought produced shame in a heart.*

 *"Wounds that are hidden only erode self-esteem through the screaming message of dishonoring shame." Do you suspect you have hidden wounds? If so, what will you do about them?*

 Muddy footprints of the past, walking all over the present—via shame. p. 27

 Rush to Forgive: skips a step and buries shame. pp. 29, 30



Ps. 34:5




[Q] *“Shame allows the past to trample the present with muddy footprints.” Has this happened to you or someone you love? Describe the situation.*


 Time Doesn't Heal All Wounds: must amend grievance story. p. 33

[Q] *Have you assumed that time heals all wounds? What do you think about the fermentation of a wound that is hidden? Do you have any long-fermenting hurts? Have you shared them with anyone yet?*


 Stuff pain and shame—it morphs into even more pain through **POOR CHOICES!** p. 34

 “Give sorrow words; the grief that does not speak whispers the o’refraught heart and bids it break.” (Shakespeare) p. 34

[Q] *Discuss how a rush to forgive denies the hurt experienced. Have you ever seen this happen? What was the result in the person who rushed to forgive?*

 Forgiveness: a Layered Process: Jackie’s Personal Story, 1973, 1996, 2006. pp. 34, 35

[Q] *How is the layered process of forgiveness similar to the process of grief?*

 Honeymoon Warning About Potential Bitterness: can strangle a marriage. p. 36




Hebrews 12:15

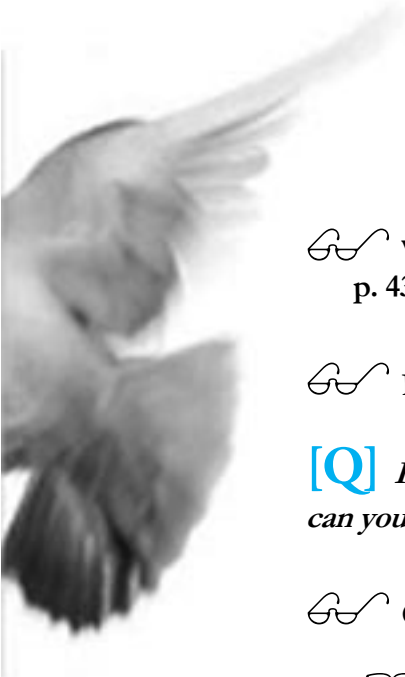
 Don't Pledge to the Sorority/Fraternity of Bitterness. p. 37

 Unforgiveness causes tunnel vision—a quarterback’s story. pp. 38, 39



Memories can drench us in SHAME. We must drench our hearts in the Word (Ps. 119:42)

 Shame is described as a “hemorrhage of the soul.” p. 42



🕒 Whatever we don't resolve in our hearts, we reproduce in our children.
p. 43

🕒 Prostitute attends a covered-dish dinner at the Pastor's house. p. 45

[Q] *Have you experienced the freedom of saying good-bye to shame? If so, can you share a little of the context?*

🕒 Grenade of truth against enemy outpost of shame. p.46

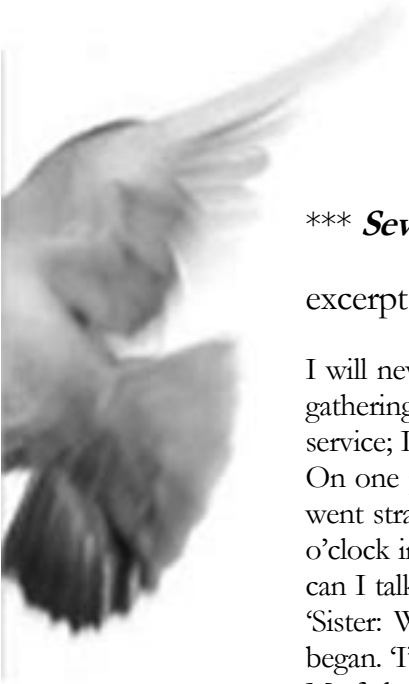


Isa. 54:4; 61:7

🕒 A.W. Tozer's quote. pg. 46

🕒 "The greatest danger in the spiritual life is not success...its self-rejection." p.48





*** *Seven Life-Changing Syllables: “ABBA, I belong to You”*

excerpt from *“The Furious Longing of God”* by Brennan Manning

I will never forget a retreat experience years ago in the Midwest. It was a rather large gathering, about 7,000 people. An invitation for healing prayer followed each night’s service; I would go into a side room and meet with those who felt compelled to come. On one particular night, the line extended well beyond midnight and after finishing, I went straight to bed, not even taking my clothes off I was so exhausted. About three o’clock in the morning, I heard a rap on the door and a squeaky little voice: ‘Brennan, can I talk to you?’ I opened the door to find a 78 year old nun. And she began to cry. ‘Sister: What can I do for you?’ We found two chairs in the hallway and her story began. ‘I’ve never told anyone this in my entire life. It started when I was five years old. My father would crawl into my bed with no clothes on. He would touch me there; he said it’s what our family doctor said we should do. When I was nine, my father took my virginity. By the time I was twelve, I knew of every kind of sexual perversion you read about in dirty books. Brennan, do you have any idea how dirty I feel? I’ve lived with so much hatred of my father and hatred of myself that I would only go to Communion when my absence would be conspicuous.’ In the next few minutes, I prayed with her for healing. Then I asked her if she would find a quiet place every morning for the next thirty days, sit down in a chair, close her eyes, upturn her palms, and pray this one phrase over and over:

ABBA, I belong to You.

It’s a prayer of exactly seven syllables, the number that corresponds perfectly to the rhythm of our breathing. As you inhale—ABBA. As you exhale—I belong to you.




Through her tears she agreed...One of the most moving and poetic follow-up letters I’ve ever received came from this sister. In it she described the inner healing of her heart, a complete forgiveness of her father, and an inner peace she’d never known in her 78 years. She concluded her letter with these words: “A year ago, I would’ve signed this letter with my real name in religious life—Sister Mary Genevieve. But from now on,

I’m Daddy’s little girl.



Authentic Forgiveness

Free Yourself to
Love: Chapter 3

ICON KEY	
	Question/Discuss
	Read The Bible
	Read FYTL
	Watch the Video




Download and Watch DVD Clip # 1 With This Lesson




First remarks made to disciples by Risen Lord: peace, receive Holy Spirit and forgive. All these made forever possible because of His death on the cross. p. 53





John. 20:21-23

 **The Power of the Holy Spirit is vital for the superhuman power to forgive. p.53**

[Q] *Do you find yourself doubting that Jesus truly understands the depth of your suffering? If yes, explain.*

 **Seven letter word: FORGIVE...on behalf of the Cross, I can forgive. p. 54**

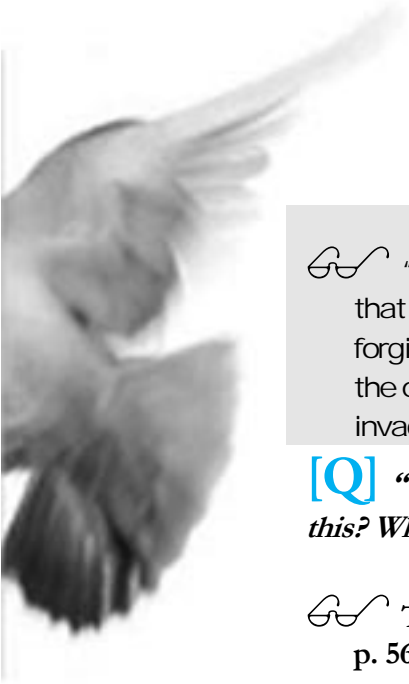
 **"Open your eyes and look into the face of the One who understands the depth of your suffering." (Looking at the crucified Savior—Julian of Norwich) p.54**

 **Jesus suffering to forgive us...only one option for forgiven ones—to forgive. p. 55**

[Q] *Do you see yourself as a good forgiver? Why or why not? How can you become a better forgiver?*



Eph. 4:32



☞ “One cannot ultimately understand forgiveness until we recognize that we were once enemies [Rom.5:10] who were invited into the forgiving embrace of the eternal Triune God, through the open arms of the crucified Christ.” (Miroslav Volf, daughter raped and murdered by invading army) p. 55

[Q] *“The heart of emotional health is the ability to forgive.” Do you believe this? Why? Have you ever seen it in action?*

☞ **The Art of Forgiving:** developed skill combined with God’s creativity. p. 56

☞ **Offenses: Marginal and Mortal.** p. 57

Illustrations: Marginal: neighbor’s barking dogs - Mortal: date rape

☞ **Offense (Gr. *proskomma*):** “to stub on, trip up, dash.” p. 57

[Q] *Discuss the difference between “marginal” and “mortal” offenses. Do you think the difference is always clear? Share a marginal offense you have forgiven recently. Then, if you will, share a mortal offense that you are still struggling to forgive.*

☞ Note: People can define their hurts in many different ways: one person sees sarcasm as mortal, whereas another sees it as marginal. KEY: both need forgiveness! p. 57, 58

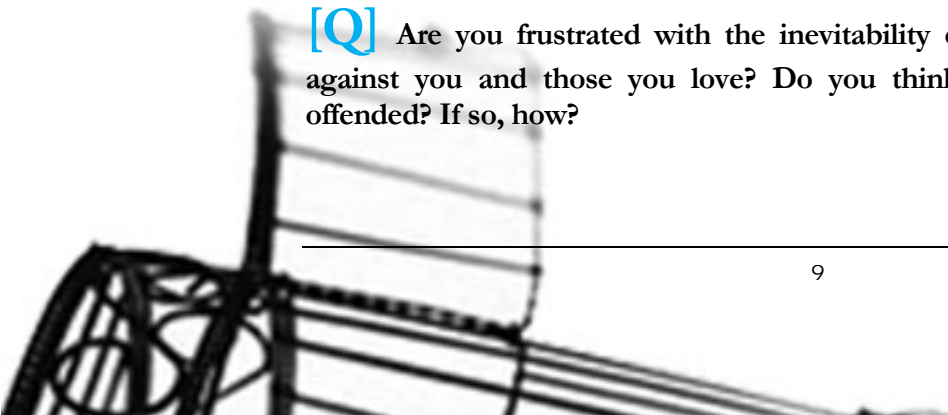
☞ **Marginal offenses** are still emotional storms that break a few tree branches in our internal landscape. p.58

☞ **Being offended is inevitable; but staying offended is my choice.** p.58





Matt. 18:7

[Q] Are you frustrated with the inevitability of offenses being committed against you and those you love? Do you think a person can avoid being offended? If so, how?







 Forgiveness is Always a Gift: we receive forgiveness by Faith and we give forgiveness by Faith. **WHAT IS A KEY COMPONENT?** p.59

 God gives us the gift of grace so that we can give the gift of forgiveness.



James 4:6

 Who is not a candidate for this gift of forgiving grace? **THE PROUD!** It is only for the humble. p. 59, 60

 To forgive is to gain God’s confidence; “lifting up the head” (Hebrew meaning of forgive). p. 61



Gen.50:17

[Q] When you’ve been offended, have you avoided people? What effect did this have?

[Q] Has someone come to mind that you may need to forgive? Has more than one person come to mind when considering “marginal” as well as “mortal” offenses?

[Q] When I was going through the “Hit List/Hurt List” on the DVD clip—did someone come to mind? (Write their initials here and pray for the willingness to begin the journey of forgiving freely)

 Hit List/Hurt List (from DVD Clip)

List of Possible Offenses against You or Those You Love

Rejection

Injustice

Humiliation

Belittling (critical parent, etc.)

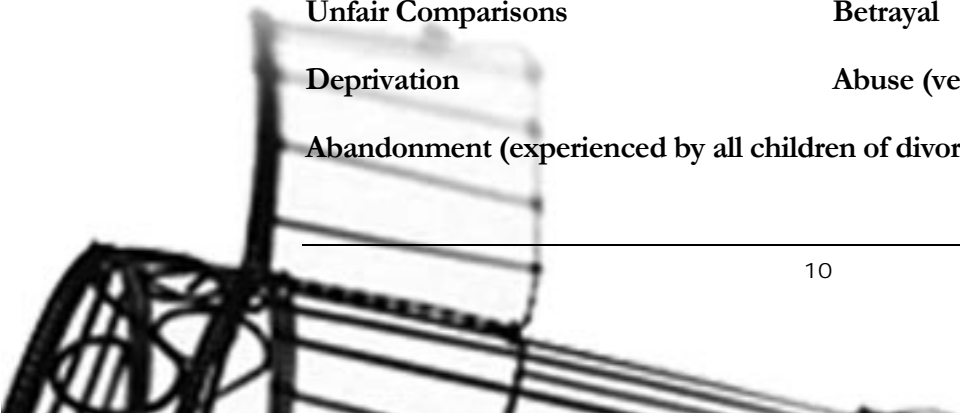
Unfair Comparisons

Betrayal

Deprivation

Abuse (verbal, physical, sexual)


Abandonment (experienced by all children of divorce)



Held Hostage by the Size of the Offense

Free Yourself to Love: Chapter 4

ICON KEY

 Question/Discuss

 Read The Bible

 Read FYTL

 Watch the Video



Download and Watch DVD Clip # 2 With This Lesson



A Common Excuse for not forgiving—the Offense Was Too Great. pp. 63, 64



Geske story. pp. 63,64



The only unforgivable sin is the one I won't forgive. p. 64



What do you think about Susanne Geske's forgiving response to the murderous mutilation of her husband by three young men? Does her story inspire you somehow?



Passage that confronts this excuse (6 billion \$ debt). pp. 65-67



Matt. 18:23-35



Are you distressed when you see an “unforgiving” Christian? (Matt. 18:31) p. 65




Servant forgiven great debt, could not forgive marginal debt. p. 66



Matt. 18:30



God distressed with our unforgiving heart—described as “wicked.”



“I don’t want to be on the wrong side of the Master’s anger.” p. 67




Matt.18:32, 33

Note: We call what was done to us—wicked; but we never imagine calling our unforgiveness wicked.



Matt. 18:34, 35

[Q] Describe an offense you find “unforgivable.” Does God agree that it is “unforgivable?” How do you know?

 Forgiveness is a gift you give not only the offender but also yourself.
p.68

Forgive—Greek--*Apoluno*: free fully, relieve, dismiss, let die, divorce, loose, set at liberty. p.68



Luke 6:37

[Q] The Greek word translated “forgiveness” means “free fully, relieve, dismiss, let die, pardon, divorce, loose, and set at liberty.” Which of these definitions best describes the way you forgive?

 The Flushing Brigade. pp. 69, 70

Activity: Write on T.P. the initials of those you may need to forgive and flush it tonight!

 Behind the excuse of unforgiveness is a serious “lack of faith.” p. 70



Rom. 14:23

[Q] Have you ever considered that struggling with forgiving someone is not only a sin issue but a faith issue?

 Forgiveness requires obedience that is fueled by faith. p. 70



 Are you “*Sallah*”? Are you ready to forgive? p. 70



Ps. 86:5

Activity: write the initials of those you need to forgive...initials only!


 How does one Grow in Faith? (Amplified in chap. 11) p. 71



Rom. 10:17; Ps. 19:11

 Whoever I refuse to forgive is controlling me right now—Read: story of Dr. Seamands. pp. 71, 72

 Forgiveness and Reconciliation are not the same. pp. 72, 73

 “I can forgive people who have never repented by letting go and no longer being preoccupied with their offense and lack of repentance. Reconciliation involves their repentance—and that is a God-sized event!” Spiritually MYOB! p. 73



I Pet.4:15


[Q] *Discuss the difference between forgiveness and reconciliation. Did you see them as synonymous before reading this chapter?*



Held Hostage by Assaulting Memories

Read Free Yourself
to Love: Chapter 5

ICON KEY

 Question/Discuss

 Read The Bible

 Read FYTL

 Watch the Video



Download and Watch DVD Clip #3 With This Lesson




Matt. 26:37, 38 - Gethsemane of Forgiveness: price tag of forgiveness is anxiety.



Can I Forgive What I Can't Forget? Illus. computer vs. brain. p. 76

[Q] *Discuss how memories keep one a victim of past offenses.*

 *How does a person move past assaulting memories? pp. 76, 77*

 *Painful memories are not a sign of unforgiveness but a sign of the need for the "490" principle. pp. 78, 79*



"Master, how many times do I forgive a brother or sister who hurts me? Seven? Jesus replied, "Seven! Hardly! Try seventy times seven" (Matt. 18:21-22 The Message).

[Q] *Has a recent memory flooded you with fresh hurt? What triggered it?*

[Q] *Is this the first time you considered Jesus' message in the context of forgiving the same offense again and again? How liberating to you is the prospect of the 490 Principle?*



🔗 No one can hurt you worse than someone who knows you. p. 79

🔗 Numerical halo illustration of the “490 Principle.” p. 80

🔗 Dreams, flashbacks—parallel the intensity of the trauma. pp. 80, 81

[Q] *Can you share an intense memory and how you might apply the 490 Principle in relation to it?*

🔗 Trauma Triggers—the emotions connected to the event. p. 81

[Q] *Is it liberating to you that memories are part of the healing process? Why or why not? If liberating, explain in your own words how freeing it is.*

🔗 Neurobiology of “healing trauma” validates the “490 Principle.” p. 82
(1st century principle; 21st century scientific validation)

[Q] *What did you think about the neurobiology of the healing of your brain through memories and forgiveness?*

🔗 Welcome Memories and Flashbacks as Emotional gifts. p. 83

[Q] *Can you share an intense memory and how you might apply the 490 Principle in relation to it?*

🔗 Irony: The 490 Principle was given to the very apostle who would have to live the rest of his life dealing with the memory of denying three times the precious Lord he so loved!” p. 84



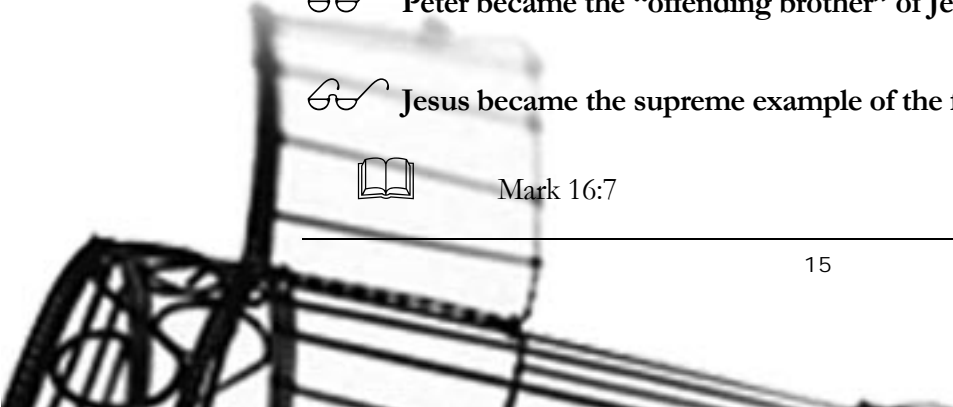
Matt. 26:69-75

🔗 Peter became the “offending brother” of Jesus! p. 84

🔗 Jesus became the supreme example of the forgiving brother. p. 84



Mark 16:7





[Q] *“Sometimes things that God lets happen to us are so horrible that the intensity of the event will make repetitive memories inevitable, so a person will be forgiving the same offense again and again.” Can you see this idea’s application in your own experience?*

☞ Triggered memory from unexpected stimuli. p. 85

☞ Overreacting to a very simple incident—disproportionate response—CSI (Christ’s Search of Interior)—buried hurt! pp. 85, 86.

Note: Overreacting can often be traced to buried hurt.

☞ When a memory or flashback intrudes on your day...ask yourself, “Have I already forgiven this person and released this event?”p. 86

[Q] *Are you ready to welcome memories as emotional gifts? Why or why not?*

☞ Are you being ruled by what is buried? p. 86


☞ Don’t let Memories Drag you back into rage. p. 86




Held Hostage by Repeated Offense

Free Yourself to
Love: Chapter 6

ICON KEY

 Question/Discuss


 Read The Bible


 Read FYTL

 Watch the Video



Download and Watch DVD Clip #4 With This Lesson


 **Are you a CPA of the offenses committed against you? Do you have an offense ledger? This offense ledger is a mental “grudge book.” p. 89**


 **Entries in your grudge book are a violation of I Cor. 13:5... “Love keeps NO RECORD of wrongs.” Record: mind occupied with calculating. p. 90**



I Cor. 13:5

[Q] *Do you keep a mental photo album with pictures of people you are holding grudges against? Or have you been a CPA of a particular person’s offenses against you? Who is in your album or ledger? How have you kept track of others’ offenses?*


 **Warning: it is critical to differentiate between forgiving repeated offense and enduring an abusive situation. p. 91**

 **Our children display our victory or our grudges. (Manasseh/Ephraim) pp. 92, 94.**



Gen. 41:50-52



 Generational Inheritance—guess who is reading your grudge book?
p. 93




Lev. 19:18

[Q] *Did you know that your children mirror your grudges?*


 What Nourishes a Grudge? **PRIDE: I deserve better than this.** p. 94

“Ninety-five percent of the things that people do to offend us were not even intended.” (Joyce Meyers) **IMPACT vs. INTENT** (examine the difference)

 “...we all offend in many ways.” p. 98




James 3:2 KJV


 Victimization is like branding. Too often one’s grievance story becomes one’s only identity. p. 99

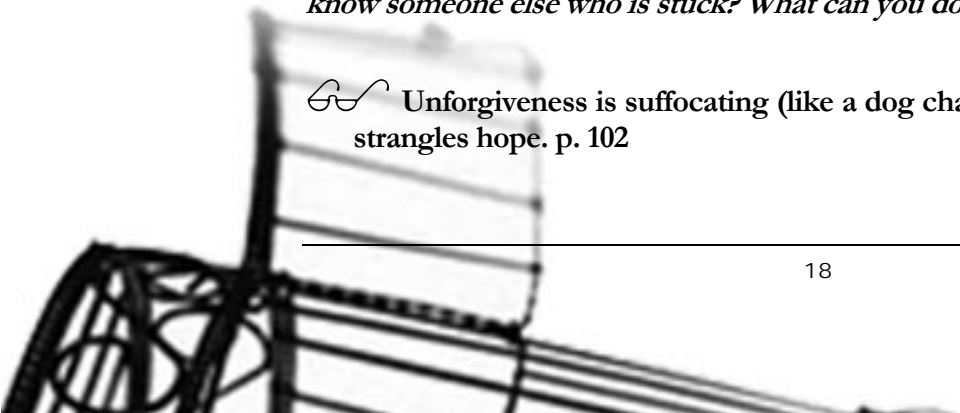
[Q] *Do you know someone whose only identity is that of being a victim? Do you know someone who defends his or her right to have extensive grudge book entries? Describe his or her personality. Do you enjoy being around him or her?*

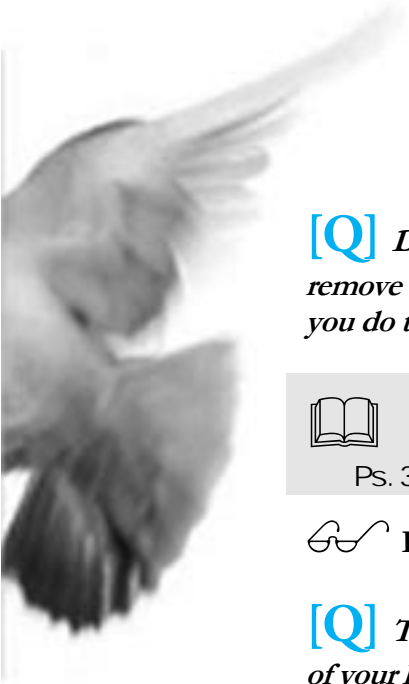
[Q] *Define the difference between a grievance story that encourages others to forgive in contrast to the grievance story that glorifies victimization.*

 Diary of Why: continually rehearsing the offense in search of WHY something happened—closed to the prospect of forgiving, letting go. p. 100

[Q] *Have you found yourself stuck in the Diary of Why this year? Do you know someone else who is stuck? What can you do to get free?*

 Unforgiveness is suffocating (like a dog chain around your neck!) and it strangles hope. p. 102





[Q] *Did this chapter encourage you to start forgiving an offender so you can remove the suffocating dog chain from around your neck? How and when will you do this?*





"You have made my life no longer than the width of my hand..."

Ps. 39:5


 Focusing on your offender uses up your mere 3 inches of life. p. 105


[Q] *Trace your hand on the back of these notes...and notice the mere length of your life in inches!*

 Victim's Blind Spot: "Anytime you allow one event or season of life to define you, your life, for all intents and purposes, is over. It stops at that event." p. 106

 Do not join the VES (Victim Entitlement Society)—victims are stuck in the past...sacrificing the present. p. 107

[Q] *Have you been a member of the VES (Victim Entitlement Society)?*

 "Boasting is the response of pride to success. SELF-PITY [a victim's native tongue] is the response of pride to suffering." (John Piper) p. 108

 A bold letter to an Adult Victim—self-pity is the arch-enemy of trust. p. 109


[Q] *Reread the letter to the adult victim. Do you think it is fair or too harsh? Does it speak to you?*




Held Hostage by Revenge Fantasies

Free Yourself to Love: Chapter 7

ICON KEY

 Question/Discuss

 Read The Bible

 Read FYTL

 Watch the Video



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Revenge is our desire for justice, our desire to make offenders pay for their relational crimes against us. p. 114



Rom. 12:9; Deut. 32:35; Rev. 6:9-11; Prov. 24:29



Revenge is a dangerous boomerang that eventually harms the one who perpetrates the vengeful behavior. p. 116



Prov. 13:21 NLT



Can you think of a situation where revenge harmed you more than the one it was intended for? Is revenge a dangerous boomerang?



Exposing creative revenge—leave room for God’s wrath (illus: one of Jackie’s angriest moments) pp. 116-118



Rom. 12:19-21; Luke 6:28




Think about the creative forms of revenge people commonly use: gossip, slander, sarcasm, headaches. When have you seen a loved one use one of these forms? When have you used one?



 **Revenge is often about Ancient Hostility. p. 120**



Ez. 25:12-16

 **My desire to harm my offender, actually grieves the Holy Spirit. p.120**



Eph.4:30, 31

 **Nurse a Grudge, Cause a Beheading. p. 121**




Mark 6:19, 20

 **Popular Forms of Revenge: gossip, slander, “Scar-casm.” p. 123**



Prov. 11:13; 20:19

 **A mother’s cruel revenge: Ernest Hemingway’s story. p. 124**

 **Revenge is ugly graffiti all over the grace of God...in the beginning—
grace. p. 124**

[Q] *Does making the offender “pay a little” seem fair to you? Do you make people “squirm” and only then consider forgiving them?*

[Q] *What emotional battles have you engaged in this year that were fueled by revenge?*

[Q] *Is it hard for you even to consider the presence of malice in your heart toward other people? Why?*

 **Forgiveness is the Best Revenge: God will make it up to you, with blessings in proportion to former misery. p. 126**



Isaiah 40:10; 61:7; Ps. 90:15 NLT



 God Has Not Forgotten What the Offender Did. His timing is perfect—
“wait a little longer.” p. 127



Rev. 6:9-11

[Q] *Have you ever been impatient with God’s avenging your heartbreak? How did you handle it (or how are you handling it)?*


 Refuse to Join the Vigilante Gang—vengeance offers short-lived satisfaction but a long-term staggering burden. p. 131



1 Sam. 25:14-31


 Abigail (The Father’s Joy) blocked a gang of vigilantes even when married to a FOOL. pp. 132-133


[Q] *Have you ever seen an Abigail at work? What did she do? How can you be an Abigail in a conflict you’re aware of?*

 Frisk one’s thoughts for seemingly innocent forms of revenge, “Do not gloat when your enemy falls...” pp. 136-137



Prov. 24:17; Job 31:29-30

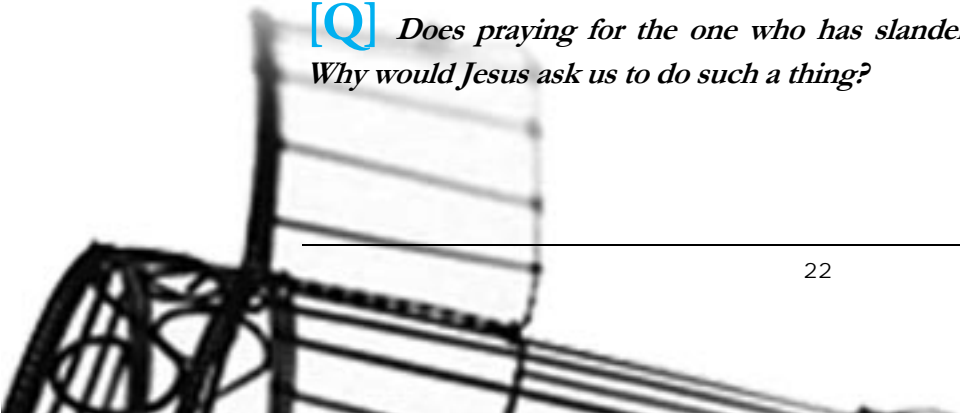
 Forgiveness Rather than Revenge in a Siberian Concentration Camp—must read! pp. 137-38

 We all have a “Saul” in our lives—only forgiveness will allow us to respond properly. Forgiving freely will produce better souls in us! p. 138



1Sam. 24:5,6,17


[Q] *Does praying for the one who has slandered you seem preposterous? Why would Jesus ask us to do such a thing?*




Held Hostage by the Incubation of Anger

Free Yourself to Love: Chapter 8

ICON KEY

 Question/Discuss

 Read The Bible

 Read FYTL

 Watch the Video




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One of the primary reasons many of us don't forgive is that we're too angry. p. 140

 Great quote by Frederick Buechner, "Of the Seven Deadly Sins, anger..." p. 141


 *Do you carefully validate your facts before blasting someone? Give an example.*

 *Do you frequently check for the possibility of displaced anger (ie. you're angry at your boss, so you kick your dog)? How can you begin to check for this regularly and make it a habit?*

 Key passage on anger: note devil's foothold defined. pp. 141-142

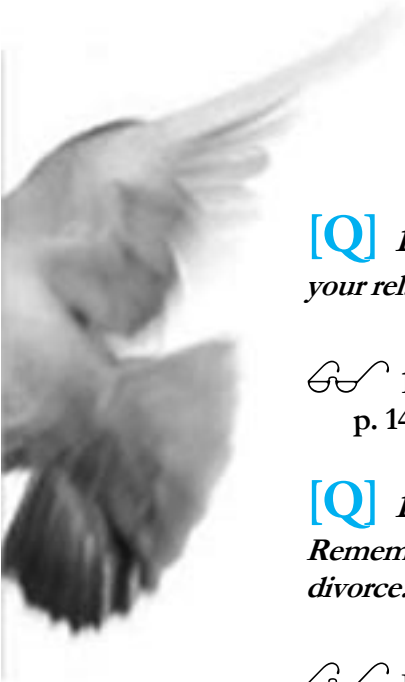


Eph. 4:26, 27


 Anger—an emotion—moves into "sin" when a time limit is lacking. p. 143




Eph. 4:26




[Q] *Do you freely confess when your anger results in sin—when it harms your relationship with another? Why or why not?*

 Danger of Anger After Sunset: go to bed angry, wake up less in love.
p. 143

[Q] *Do you procrastinate when dealing with anger? How do you do this? Remember, anger not dealt with, after many sunsets, results in emotional divorce.*

 Unforgiveness often be camouflaged behind anger. List of camouflages.
pp. 145-46


 Swallowed anger—susceptibility to serious illnesses (i.e. heart disease).
p. 146

[Q] *Can you remember any speeches you regret? Words spoken in anger are words always regretted. Describe one of these speeches.*


 Prov. 10:19

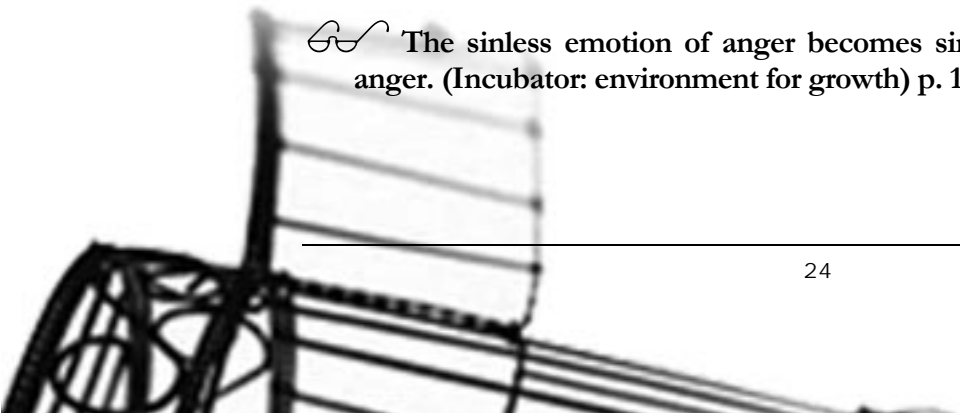
[Q] *Do you tend to withdraw into silence when angry with someone? What would be a healthier response to your anger?*

 Prov. 22:24, 25 - Is your soul ensnared by associating with angry people?

 Observation: many Christians are in denial of the anger in their hearts.
p. 147


[Q] *Are you comfortable with telling God how angry you are? Tell Him something that angered you today.*

 The sinless emotion of anger becomes sin through the incubation of anger. (Incubator: environment for growth) p. 147,148






[Q] *Do you often dredge up past issues during present-tense anger? Remember to keep short accounts.*

 Environment for growth of anger: grudge books, revenge fantasies, pride, self-pity, anger with no time limit and denial of anger existing. p. 148

[Q] *Can you express your expectations honestly without sulking? Give an example of doing this.*

 Examine the connection between anger and lack of faith: trusting God with disappointment helps the anger begin to subside. p. 148,149




Ps. 4:4, 5

 PhD Insight on Anger—Owning One’s Anger Towards God. (read story) p. 150,151



“Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.”
James 1:19, 20

 Argumentative statements are stimulated by unaddressed anger. p. 151



Matt. 12:34

 Lashing out, angry words indicate an “ailing (sick) heart.” p. 152

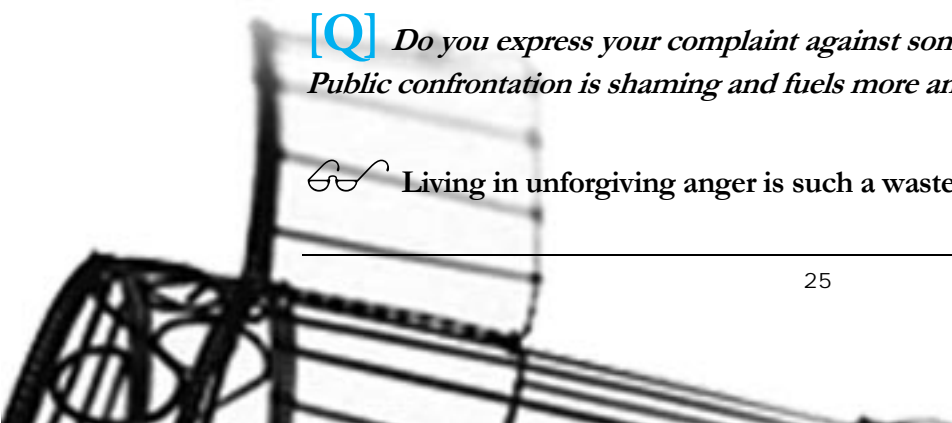


Job 16:3

[Q] *Can you express your hurt/complaint in a calm tone of voice? Why or why not?*

[Q] *Do you express your complaint against someone to him or her privately? Public confrontation is shaming and fuels more anger.*

 Living in unforgiving anger is such a waste of life. p. 153





[Q] *Do you value maintaining relationships more than winning arguments? How do you know this is true?*

 Four stages of Learning to Forgive (Stanford Forgiveness Project).
pp. 153, 154

 Amos 1:10, 11 - The Abortion of Love in Any Relationship—"anger aborts love, forgiveness aborts anger."

[Q] *When you are angry, do you resist resorting to threats? Is this part of your parenting technique? If you are tempted to make threats, how can you begin to change this habit?*


Note: Anyone struggling with the incubation of anger would benefit from going through each question on pages 156, 157 and journaling your response.




Forgiveness Tool of Praying Blessings on the Offender

Free Yourself to
Love: Chapter 9

ICON KEY

 Question/Discuss

 Read The Bible

 Read FYTIL

 Watch the Video



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Excuses that once bound us become the very material for tools that liberate us. p.161



“I am sorry.” Waiting for these words can keep a person in prison. p. 162



So many people stuck in unforgiveness—waiting for “three words.” p. 163



Jesus forgave His offenders who had not remotely acknowledged their need to say ‘I’m sorry.’ p. 164



Luke 23:34




When we refuse to forgive, we are simply giving in to the temptation of unforgiveness and vengeance. p. 165



Before reading this chapter, had you decided that you couldn’t forgive until you heard “I am sorry?” Have you changed your mind?




“[Jesus] was aware that forgiving his enemies was a proactive defense against any temptation to become embittered toward them. . . . We’re watching a Savior who is protecting Himself against the temptation of hatred and



resentment.” Do you think that’s why Jesus forgave the Roman soldiers? Why or why not?


 Gordon MacDonald’s quote on Jesus resisting temptation on the cross. p. 165

 Forgiveness tool of praying blessings on offender: Jesus displays on cross. p. 165

 Job demonstrated this tool of praying blessings on offenders. p. 166

 Job 42:7, 8


 Praying blessings on one’s offender fortifies my choice to forgive. pp. 166, 167


 Empowerment of forgiving: utterly characteristic of our Lord is to ask the victim to stand in the most powerful place of forgiveness when he offers a prayer on behalf of the offender. The victim actually becomes the vessel of forgiveness. p.168

 Job 42:8, 9

[Q] *Read Job 42:7–10. Have you ever prayed blessings on your offender(s)? If so, what happened?*

[Q] *“What was done to us will be healed by what was done for us.” What does this statement mean to you?*

 “The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is an attribute of the strong.” p.168.

 How do you know what to pray for the offender? pp. 169-170

[Q] *Are you offended by the suggestion of praying a blessing on your offender?*



🔗 Bonus Gift for the Aggressive Forgiver—embedded bonus. pp. 171,172



Job 42:10, 12

🔗 Irony: We are blessed most when we release a blessing on our offender. p. 173

🔗 We can actually risk blocking blessings on my own life. p. 173



I Pet. 3:9

[Q] *Read Job 42:10 and describe the embedded blessing within the forgiveness tool of praying blessings on one's offender(s). Is this a new concept for you? Have you ever seen it happen?*

🔗 Your body language is a “sandwich sign” of your unforgiving heart. p. 174, 175

[Q] *Were you surprised by the fact that your body and your silence are sure displays of your heart's condition of unforgiveness? Have you ever noticed resentment in someone else's countenance?*

🔗 Praying blessings on annoying people, illus. of Mother Teresa. p. 177

[Q] *Examine Proverbs 25:21–22 and list the blessings we can hinder when we don't forgive.*

🔗 Paul's glorious example of forgiveness. p. 179



I Cor. 4:12,13 NLT


🔗 Forgiveness tool of praying blessings on offender is not a magic incantation. p. 181




Forgiveness Tool of Exposing Unrealistic Expectations

Free Yourself to
Love Chapter 10

ICON KEY


 Question/Discuss


 Read The Bible


 Read FYTL

 Watch the Video


 Download and Watch DVD Clip With This Lesson


 **I used to assume that a person's propensity to offense flowed from a wounded heart. p.183**


 **Unrealistic expectations of life, family, love, career, and purpose can all be subtle preparation for offense. p. 183**


 Ps. 39:7; 73:25

 **Expectations actually exacerbate our vulnerability to offense. p. 183**

 **Our level of frustration with people's offenses is directly proportionate to our expectations of their behavior. p. 184**

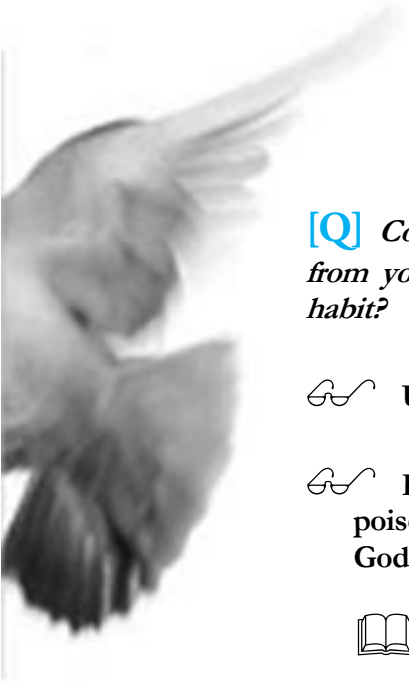
 Ps. 119:74,81

 **Life provides predictable trouble; but God provides vouchers of grace. p. 184**

 James 4:6

 "Expectations are premeditated resentment." (Job 5:2 NLT) p. 185

 **When have you connected resentment to an unmet expectation?**



[Q] *Consider how many offenses you have experienced this year that arose from your expectations of a loved one. How can you begin to change this habit?*

🔗 Unforgiveness is like drinking poison and hoping the rat dies. p. 185

🔗 If my expectations are linked to premeditated resentment, then I am poisoning myself when I don't immediately commit those expectations to God. p. 185



Ps. 62:5;119:147

🔗 Consider the extravagant waste of allowing resentment and bitterness to grieve the Holy Spirit. p.185



Eph. 4:30, 31

🔗 Expectations are our subtle attempt to control God and manipulate mystery. p. 186



Ps. 39:7

🔗 The principle of "If the Lord wills..." is an aid to reign in unrealistic expectations. p. 186



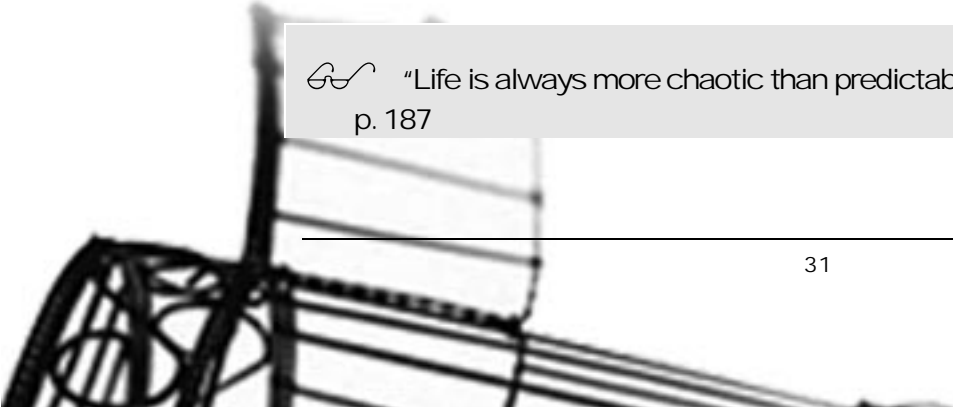
James 4:13-16

🔗 I want a "Ten" but I keep Getting a "Five." Read: 5 vs. 10 theory. pp. 186, 187

🔗 Holidays and Premeditated Resentment; face the reality of potential offense. p. 187

[Q] *Do you tend to expect a ten world? Are you shocked when it's usually a five? Share an example. How can you begin to modify your expectations?*

🔗 "Life is always more chaotic than predictable." (Oswald Chambers) p. 187





👁️ Unrealistic expectations will put a strain on one's marriage, like the happiness fantasy—spouse assigned your happiness quota. pp. 188,189

👁️ Evaluating unrealistic expectations will require sustenance—the food of angels—manna. Manna is defined as “What is this?” p. 190



Ps. 78:24-25 NLT; Deut. 8:3

👁️ When chaos escalates, pause and remember your daily allotment of “manna”—“what is this!” Maybe your manna today is to forgive your spouse or child who is not living up to your expectations! p. 190

[Q] *Have you ever conceived of heavenly manna as a reward for overcoming trials?*

👁️ One person can take you from happiness to rage—because of expectations. Story of Mordecai and Haman. pp. 191-92



Esther 5:9-13

👁️ Our expectations can actually blind us to the efforts being made by a loved one. Read the long quote. p. 193

[Q] *Can you think of one person you can count on to ruin your day? How does he or she do this? How can you change so that you're not offended as often?*

👁️ Teen suicide is increasing in our wealthy nation. Deadly me-centric living is a fatal noose of expectations. p. 194

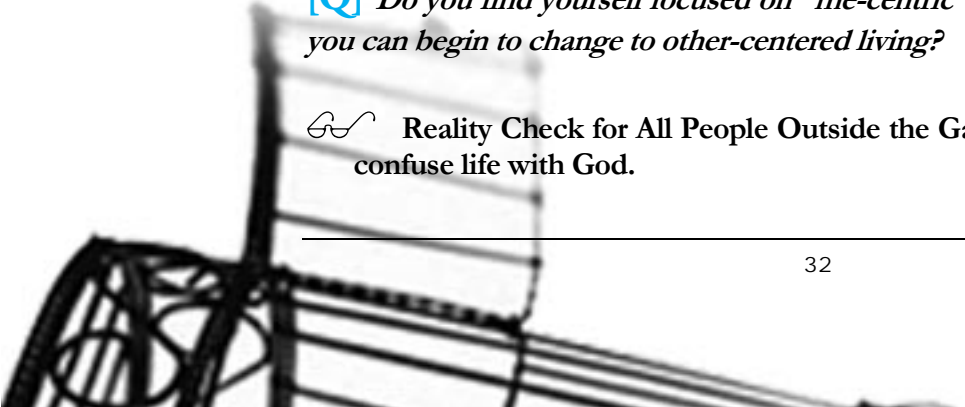
👁️ Forgiveness is so other-centered...that the me-centric person is unlikely to have the faith or even the desire to forgive. p. 194



Jer. 45:5

[Q] *Do you find yourself focused on “me-centric” living? What are three ways you can begin to change to other-centered living?*

👁️ Reality Check for All People Outside the Garden: life is unfair but don't confuse life with God.





👁️ Illustration about the little girl getting on school bus. p. 195

📖 Ecc. 9:11

👁️ **Unrealistic expectations are modified by acknowledging the limited day pass we have here on earth. p. 196**

📖 Ps. 90:10 NLT

👁️ **Living on this planet with six billion sinners guarantees the daily inevitability of being offended—don't waste a day stuck in unforgiveness. p. 196**

👁️ **The issue of needing to forgive someone will no longer exist when we no longer exist. p. 197**

👁️ How do you know that you are living with unrealistic expectations of your loved ones? ANSWER: You are surprised when you have to forgive again! p. 197. Ponder: Does God have to forgive you again and again?

📖 Luke 17:3-5; I John 1:9

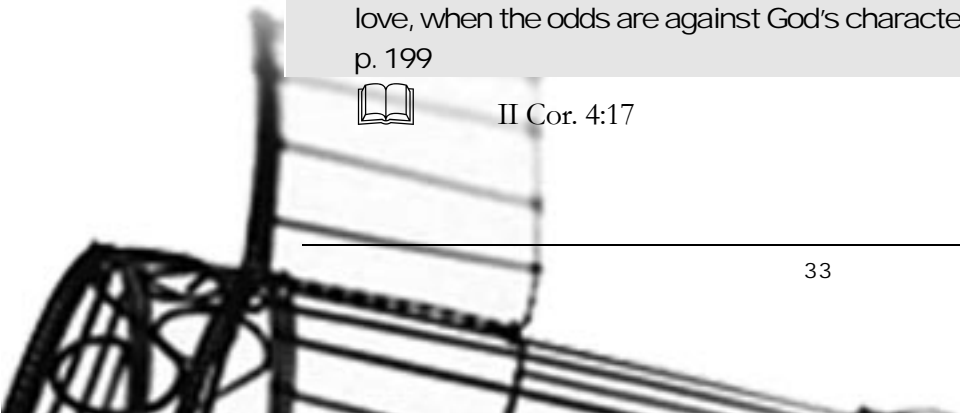
[Q] *Are you angered when a loved one offends you again? Why is anger an unreasonable response for the Christian?*

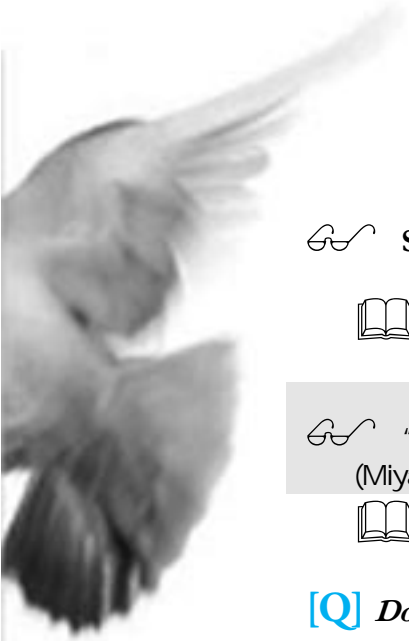
👁️ **One final warning: unrealistic expectations allow one to put **CONDITIONS** on forgiveness—I will forgive if _____ when _____ after _____, etc. p. 198**

👁️ **Resist Resentment Towards God Because of Unrealistic Expectations. Resist the thought that your faith would immunize you against suffering. p. 199**

👁️ "Extraordinary things happen for the person who hangs on to God's love, when the odds are against God's character." (Oswald Chambers) p. 199

📖 II Cor. 4:17






 **Suffering is a great instructor for those growing in faith. p. 200**



II Cor. 6:4-7; Zech. 13:9

 "We must embrace pain and burn it as fuel for our journey."
(Miyazawa) p. 201



Rom. 8:18; Isa. 48:10

[Q] *Does asking you to forgive still feel like the sting of a scorpion? If so, why?*

[Q] *Do you react to offense like a turkey or an eagle?*







Forgiveness Tool of Growing Faith

Free Yourself to Love Chapter 11

ICON KEY


 Question/Discuss


 Read The Bible


 Read FYTL


 Watch the Video


 No DVD Clip With This Lesson

 **Forgiveness is inextricably linked to one's faith. p. 205**


 **If you are still struggling to let go of your unforgiveness, this struggle can be traced to the faith content of your heart. p. 205**


 **“By faith” I can look at an incident with realistic expectation and then move into the prayer of blessing on the offender. p. 205**

 ***What past heart wounds need the hope and healing of God's Word?***


 **Peace for the mind that is anchored with steadfast trust. p. 206**

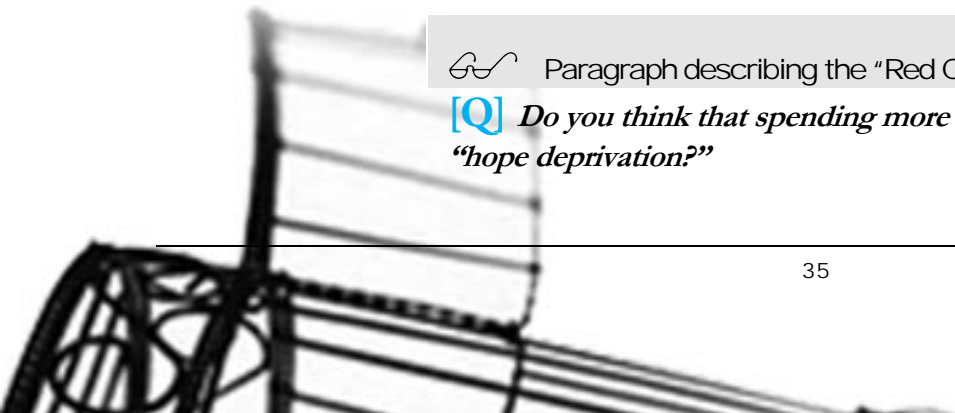
 Isaiah 26:3;40:11

 **Heart wounds are not healed instantaneously. The length of time required for healing is in proportion to the depth of the offense. p. 207**

 Deut. 33:12; Ps. 30:11

 Paragraph describing the “Red Circle of Trust Project.” pp. 207-208

 ***Do you think that spending more time learning God's Word will help with “hope deprivation?”***





👁️ Too many people want to heal a deep heart wound with an “emergency room” relationship with God.” p. 208

👁️ Time spent in God’s Word is one of the ways God chips away at some of the hardness in my heart. p. 208



Hebrews 4:12

👁️ It is too dangerous to consider looking into a painful past and dealing with the need to forgive without the fortification of a **GROWING FAITH** in Jesus. p. 209

👁️ Bitter and cynical Christians develop when people’s pain exceeds their faith. p. 209

[Q] *Has your faith been outrun by pain in your life?*

👁️ My many heart wounds have required me to become a valedictorian of God’s Word; otherwise, believe me, I would be the biggest cynic! p. 210



Ps.119:18, 24

👁️ Spending time in God’s Word allows us to rewrite our autobiography in a context of hope—amending our forgiveness story. p. 210



Psalms 119:92; Job 23:10, 12

[Q] *Do you have a daily Bible-reading habit established in your life? If not, what has prevented its development?*

👁️ Out of Something Painful, Something Beautiful Grew. Read the story and examine Manasseh and Ephraim. pp. 211, 212

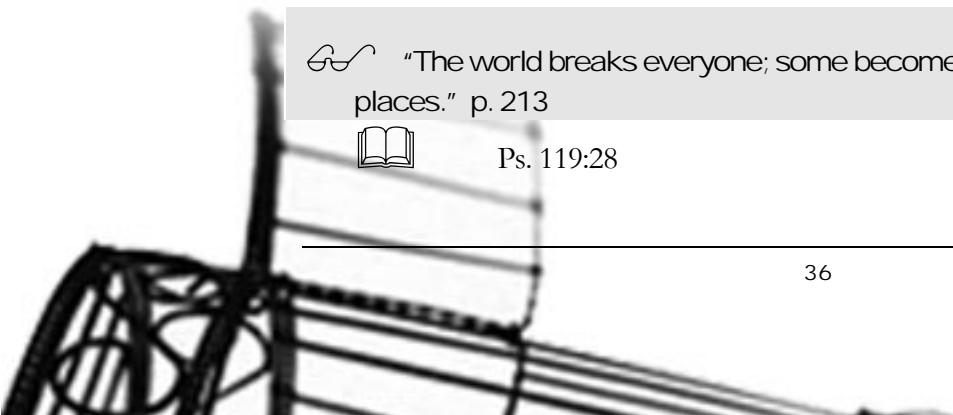


Gen.41:51, 52; 48:14, 17


👁️ “The world breaks everyone; some become strong in the broken places.” p. 213



Ps. 119:28





 **Knowing how to trust and forgive permits one to face the unimaginable. Read the story about a “New Pledge of Allegiance.” pp. 213,214**




Mk.5:41; Lk. 4:18; Ps. 34:18

[Q] *Is it still a stretch for you to accept the Ephraim message: out of something painful, something beautiful grew?*

 **Framing one’s life in God’s sovereignty allows us to be grateful for our scars. p. 215**




Ps. 119:50, 52, 67, 71

 **“The pain I have endured has made me who I am. And the more gratitude I find in my heart for the pain I have suffered, even unjustly, the more my life seems to matter.” (Dr. Leslie Parrott) p. 215**




Ps. 119:92, 93


 **A cynic is transformed. God showed her that no matter what her circumstances in life, she did not have to let her life dwindle away. p. 216**



Jer. 29:4-6


[Q] *Are you still stuck in relation to forgiving a particular person and a specific offense? Revisit Jeremiah 29:4–5 and ponder the possibility of letting life dwindle away in your “stuck” condition.*

 **Optimism Flows from Confidence in God’s Sovereignty (Papa’s Control). Faith that allows one to cease asking “WHY” and start asking, “WHAT do you want me to learn from this Papa?” p. 217**

 **Patience flows from an Addiction to Hope. p. 218**

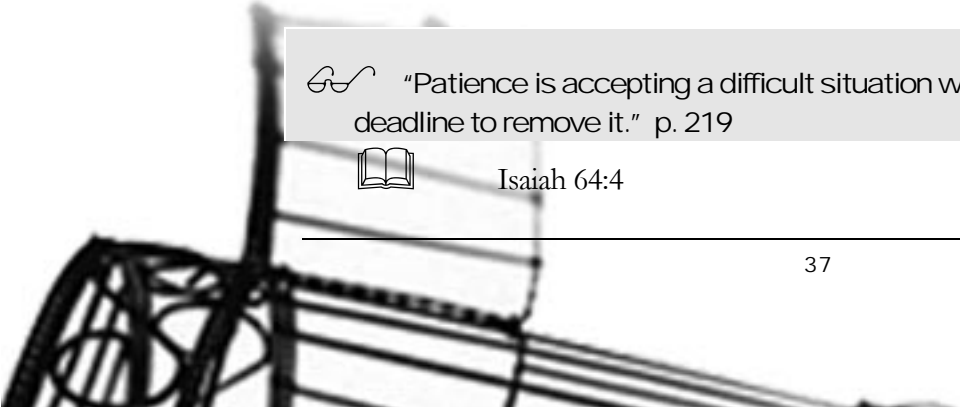


Rom. 5:2-5

 **“Patience is accepting a difficult situation without giving God a deadline to remove it.” p. 219**





Isaiah 64:4






 Sophia's powerful story of forgiveness. p. 219-220

 "The ability to find meaning and hope in suffering offers a powerful secret to mental health and survival." p. 221

 Ps. 119:154,156,159

 **Close with reading the advice from Mother Teresa to hurting marriages, troubled teens and struggling single parents. pp. 223-224**

 **God Stoops Down. Share an example of this in your life this year! p. 225**

