



PART 1 - B FORGIVING OTHERS



Discipler's Guide



HELPING A DISCIPLE
FORGIVE



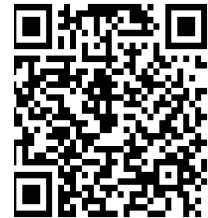
THE FORGIVENESS
PROCESS



THE STEPS OF FORGIVENESS



INDIVIDUAL



COUPLE



FORGIVENESS
CHECKLIST



EXPANDING A
FORGIVENESS LIST



You will be sinned against by others until the day they die – you need a way to deal with their sin.

Study B: Forgiving Others

"And when you stand praying, forgive, if you hold anything against anyone, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins."

John 14:15

Why: Reasons for the study

- People in crisis are often bitter and angry at someone and have a need to forgive.
- Disciples usually won't progress very far if they are harboring unforgiveness or bitterness in their heart.
- Even more mature Christians often have not been specific in forgiving and usually experience greater freedom in doing this exercise of obedience.

What: Principles to grasp

- God commands us to forgive; it is not an option.
- Forgiveness is a decision of the will and a commitment – not a process over time.
- The fruit of the commitment to forgive is being freed from bitterness and healed from the hurt, which is produced by the Holy Spirit in His timing.
- Suppression is Satan's counterfeit.
- There are warnings and consequences for not forgiving.
- The more specific we are in identifying the specific things to forgive, the more freedom is experienced from the bitterness and hurt.
- There is a body-life dynamic in forgiving with a witness that God often uses to bring greater freedom.

How: Path to a changed life

- Understand God doesn't excuse sinful responses to offenders' sins.
- Learn to forgive; to "act" on their commitment by upholding their 3-fold commitment and renewing their minds.
- Continue to forgive because they will be sinned against until the day they die!

Tips: Helpful ideas

- Be thorough in expanding their forgiveness list. Realize you may get resistance.
- Explain the *Positional vs. Fellowship Relationship* diagram.
- Explain when to use *1-5 Memory Outline vs. Renewing Your Mind Outline*.
To avoid confusion, assign *1-5 Memory Outline* after they have memorized *Renewing Your Mind Outline* and are practicing it.
- Have disciple memorize the five key words in *Renewing Your Mind Outline* for acting on their commitment to forgive, as well as other sinful thoughts.
- Note: If your disciple continues to refuse to prepare or pray through forgiveness lists, CTO may not be the best approach for them at this time. (See *Helping A Disciple Forgive Others* - online)

Tools and additional resources:

- For discipler: *Helping a Disciple Forgive Others; Expanding a Forgiveness List* (ctousa.org/resources/helping a disciple...)
- For disciple: *Forgiveness Checklist* to prepare for forgiving each person (ctousa.org/resources/checklists)
- *Serving Each Other Through Forgiveness and Reconciliation*, Tim Keller (gospelinlife.com)

Matt. 18:21-35

Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?"²² Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times."²³ Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants.²⁴ As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him.²⁵ Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.²⁶ The servant fell on his knees before him. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.'²⁷ The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.²⁸ But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii. He grabbed him and began to choke him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he demanded.²⁹ His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.'³⁰ But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt.³¹ When the other servants saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed and went and told their master everything that had happened.³² Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to.³³ Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?'³⁴ In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.³⁵ This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart."

God's Call to Obedience

FORGIVING OTHERS

B

“ See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.”

HEB. 12:15

- I. Forgiveness is:
 - A. “Dying to self” by releasing an offender from your bitterness, wrath and/or judgment which he may deserve
 - B. Giving the offender mercy as Christ gives you mercy, instead of the wrath you deserve
 - C. Changing your attitude toward the offender when you *realize* how great God’s love and forgiveness is toward you, an offender
- II. Forgiveness also is:
 - A. A decision of the will
 - B. Not based on your feelings
 - C. **A three-fold commitment to God and the offender:**
 1. “I will not bring up the transgression to the offender” (unless admonishment is needed).
 2. “I will not bring up the transgression to others” (by gossiping or “venting”).
 3. “I will not dwell on the transgression myself” (by having a pity-party).
- III. The forgiven must forgive. (Matt. 18:21-35)
- IV. God explains various aspects of His command to forgive.

- A. **When** do you forgive? (Mark 11:25) In prayer
- B. **Whom** do you forgive? (Mark 11:25) Anyone you have anything against
- C. **How** are you to forgive? (Eph. 4:30-32; Col. 3:12-14)
1. as Christ has forgiven you
 2. completely
 3. repeatedly for the same sins
- D. **What** are God's responses to your choices, to forgive or not to forgive? (Matt. 6:14,15)
1. God forgives you in a "fellowship relationship" to Him, when you forgive others. (Matt. 6:14)
 2. Your "positional relationship," in which you are forgiven for every past, present and future sin, remains unchanged. However, your fellowship with God is definitely hindered when you do not forgive. See *Positional/Fellowship* diagram for further explanation. (Matt. 6:15)
- E. **How** do you respond to an offender who seeks reconciliation? (Luke 17:3,4)
1. with daily forgiveness, repeated forgiveness, limitless forgiveness
 2. without judgment, because love "***believes all things.***" (1 Cor.13:7 NASB)
- V. It is necessary to forgive in the following situations:
- A. When someone seeks your forgiveness, make the commitment to forgive and grant forgiveness immediately. (Luke 17:3,4)
- B. When forgiveness has not been sought by the offender, in prayer say, "I forgive (name of offender) for (the specific offense)." (Mark 11:25)
- C. If there have been multiple offenses over an extended period of time, it is **highly** recommended that you pray, making the commitment to forgive in the presence of a witness. (Gal. 6:2)
1. Make an individual list for the person who sinned against you. (Over time you should forgive your parents, spouse, children and others who have sinned against you).

Mark 11:25

And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins."

Eph. 4:30-32

And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. ³²Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Col. 3:12-14

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. ¹³Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. ¹⁴And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Matt. 6:14-15

For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Luke 17:3-4

So watch yourselves. "If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him. ⁴If he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times comes back to you and says, 'I repent,' forgive him."

1 Cor. 13:7 (NASB)

It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Luke 17:3-4

So watch yourselves. If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him. ⁴If he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times comes back to you and says, 'I repent,' forgive him.

Mark 11:25

And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.

Gal. 6:2

Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

1 Cor. 13:5

It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.

John 8:31-32

To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. ³²Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

Is. 43:18-19

Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. ¹⁹See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland.

Phil. 3:13-14

Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, ¹⁴I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

Eph. 4:30

And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

Phil. 4:8-9

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable-- if anything is excellent or praiseworthy-- think about such things. ⁹Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me-- put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

Rom. 12:17-21

Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. ¹⁸If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. ¹⁹Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. ²⁰On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." ²¹Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Luke 6:22-38

Blessed are you when men hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man. ²³Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven. For that is how their fathers treated the prophets. ²⁴But woe to you who are rich, for you have already received your comfort. ²⁵Woe to you who are well fed now, for you will go hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you will mourn and weep. ²⁶Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for that is how their fathers treated the false prophets. ²⁷But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. ²⁹If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also. If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic. ³⁰Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. ³¹Do to others as you would have them do to you. ³²If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' love those who love them. ³³And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' lend to 'sinners,' expecting to be repaid in full. ³⁵But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. ³⁶Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. ³⁷Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. ³⁸Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

2. List **specific** ways that the person sinned against you or hurt you.
 - a. Include character traits that are sinful, such as being arrogant, petty, withdrawn, critical, controlling, selfish and superficial.
 - b. Include other sinful patterns, such as not loving you unconditionally, being an ungodly role model, not turning to God and His Word to solve problems.
 - c. Include *specific* events or incidents that were sins against you.
 - d. Include things that are not necessarily sin, such as irritating habits. Refer to the checklists on the website.
 3. Pray to forgive each specific offense individually, e.g., “I forgive my father for his drunkenness;” “I forgive my father for not encouraging me or praising my efforts.”
 4. Tear up your list so you do not keep a “record of wrongs.” (1 Cor. 13:5)
 5. Implement this process whenever you are having a difficult time forgiving an offender, after having made a commitment in private.
- VI. The commitment to forgive must *be acted upon* in order to be set free and remain free from bitterness. (John 8:31-32)
- A. Practice implementing the three-fold commitment to forgive on the first page of this lesson.
 - B. “Put off” dwelling on the past sins of others against you. (Is. 43:18,19; Phil. 3:13,14)
 - C. Act on the commitment to forgive by practicing the use of *Renewing Your Mind Outline* whenever resentment or self-pity returns. (Eph. 4:30; Phil. 4:8,9)
 - D. Act on the commitment to forgive by learning to love your enemies or offenders. (Rom. 12:17-21; Luke 6:22-38)
 - E. Forgive the offender again when the same offense is repeated.
- VII. Follow the outline below *at the time* you are facing a difficult situation with an offender.
- A. When an offender has lost control of his anger, is offending you or hurting you in some other way



POSITIONAL RELATIONSHIP

FELLOWSHIP RELATIONSHIP



The perfect Judge pours out the punishment of your sin on Jesus Christ.



You are justified by faith alone in Christ's finished work on the cross.



Justification is a legal term meaning to be declared innocent or just.

You are forgiven for every past, present and future sin. (Col 2:13b)

Your positional relationship with God is secure for eternity.



Your **positional relationship** as a Christian places you in fellowship with your heavenly Father.



BUT



Your **fellowship relationship** with God is hindered when you sin, i.e. when you do not forgive others. (Matt. 6:14, 15)



Your fellowship relationship with God is restored through confession / repentance.

Matthew 6:14-15

For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.¹⁵But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Colossians 2:13

When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins,

1 Cor. 10:13

No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.

Eph. 1:11

In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will.

1 Thess. 5:18

Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

Eph. 5:20

Always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Mark 11:25

And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.

John 14:15

If you love me, you will obey what I command.

Eph. 4:15

Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.

Heb. 10:17

Then he adds: "Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more."

- B. When someone ignores you or fails to do what you desire
- C. When faced with a difficult person, utilize this outline to help you *think* before responding, rather than to *react* sinfully in the tense/hurtful situation.

1-2-3-4-5 MEMORY OUTLINE

1 Corinthians 10:13

1. **Grab hold** of the truth that God has ordained this situation. (Eph. 1:11)

2. **Thank** God for this difficulty. (1 Thess. 5:18; Eph. 5:20)

3. **Forgive** the offender, not verbally, but in prayer. (Mark 11:25)

4. **Ask:** “How can I obey God in this situation?” (John 14:15)

5. **Ask:** “What is God trying to teach me?”



1-2-3-4-5
Outline



VIII. There are other points related to forgiving.

- A. Do not **verbally** grant forgiveness to another *until it is sought*, but you must forgive the offender in prayer.
- B. Forgive an offender *before* admonishing him, if rebuke is needed, so you can speak the truth in love. (Eph. 4:15)
- C. Discipline, in various forms, may be appropriate even though you have forgiven.
- D. Trust in the offender after forgiving him, may or may not be appropriate, depending on whether or not his character is trustworthy.
- E. Forgiveness *may* include forgetting.
 1. You may not forget if the offenses had a big impact on your life or the offenses occurred over a long duration.
 2. God says, “***I will... remember*** (bring to recall) ***their sins no more.***” (Heb. 8:12) God does not say He forgets, but He does not hold the sin against you or bring it up again. (Heb. 10:17)

You need to realize that you will be sinned against frequently in the course of your life because all people sin. Develop an awareness of signs, which indicate that you have not forgiven someone who offended you.



Warning
Signs

IX. There are ways to detect unforgiveness.

A. There are definite **warning signs** when you have not forgiven. One or more of the following may be manifested:

1. struggling with disobedience to God without gaining consistency in your spiritual growth
2. having a persistent anger problem, outward or inward
3. blaming others for your problems
4. being moody or frequently depressed
5. suppressing and “stuffing” feelings; minimizing or excusing others’ sins
6. being very superficial in relationships
7. withdrawing emotionally or physically from others
8. having negative, ungrateful attitudes toward God, situations and others
9. gossiping and/or “venting” to others about the offender(s)
10. sensing God’s presence is far from you; fellowship with God is hindered
11. dwelling on self-pity; feeling victimized
12. having difficulty forming and maintaining close, meaningful relationships
13. excusing your sinful **responses** toward others’ offenses
14. retreating into fantasy to cover the painful realities of others’ offenses

B. There may be several reasons for the above attitudes.

1. You have not attempted to forgive.
2. You do not know *how* to truly forgive.
3. You have made the commitment to forgive, but your forgiveness is incomplete.
 - a. There may be a need for someone to bear your burdens by being a witness to your prayer of forgiveness. (Gal. 6:2)

Gal. 6:2 Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

- b. You may have to be more specific and detailed about incidents and traits for which you are forgiving the offender.
- 4. You have truly forgiven, but you have other deep-rooted sins, such as fear of rejection, not accepting God's plan for your life, not trusting God, etc., which foster sinful attitudes.
- 5. You have not **acted** on your commitment to forgive.
 - a. You continue to dwell on the transgressions against you.
 - b. You do not practice renewing your mind.
- 6. You do not keep current by forgiving new or repeated offenses daily.

X. **Suppression** is Satan's counterfeit for forgiveness.

A. Signs of suppression

- 1. You deny and block emotional pain and/or bitterness. You may reach the point where you can no longer identify your sinful emotions.
- 2. You minimize, ignore, excuse and/or cover up the offender's sin.
- 3. You may believe you have forgiven because you do not *feel* angry, embittered or resentful. Instead, you have suppressed or "stuffed" your emotions.

B. Solution to suppression

- 1. Draw on Christ's resources and obey His command to forgive rather than resorting to your own sinful mental strategies for coping. Refer to the first and fourth boxes of *Four Approaches to a Problem* diagram in the *Introduction*.
- 2. List ways you were/are sinned against even though you have no responsive sinful feelings. Be willing to face emotional pain, which may surface when you write your list or when you make the commitment to forgive.



4 Approaches

XI. Anger and bitterness, even if suppressed, will control your life if you do not forgive. (Heb. 12:15)

A. God clearly lays out **consequences** in the Bible for sin of not forgiving.

Heb. 12:15 See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.

1. Your relationship with God will be hindered. (Matt. 6:14,15)
2. You grieve the Holy Spirit. (Eph. 4:30)
3. Your relationships with others will be defiled. (Heb. 12:15)
4. You will reap trouble. (Heb. 12:15)
5. You will be turned over to the torture or imprisonment of your own unforgiving spirit. (Matt. 18:34)

B. Whatever controls you is “lord” of your life. If anger controls you, the offender ultimately controls your emotions.

C. You may react sinfully toward

1. the offender.
2. those who remind you of the offender.
3. those who have no direct bearing on the situation. (Heb. 12:15)

D. You may take on the sinful characteristics of the offender.

E. Your refusal to forgive should cause you to examine your salvation. (Heb. 12:15a; 2 Cor. 13:5-8)

“NOT TO FORGIVE IS TO BE IMPRISONED BY THE PAST, BY OLD GRIEVANCES THAT DO NOT PERMIT LIFE TO PROCEED WITH NEW BUSINESS. NOT TO FORGIVE IS TO YIELD ONESELF TO ANOTHER’S CONTROL. IF ONE DOES NOT FORGIVE THEN ONE IS CONTROLLED BY THE OTHER’S INITIATIVES AND IS LOCKED INTO A SEQUENCE OF ACT AND RESPONSE, OF OUTRAGE AND REVENGE, TIT FOR TAT, ESCALATING ALWAYS. THE PRESENT IS ENDLESSLY OVERWHELMED AND DEVoured BY THE PAST. FORGIVENESS FREES THE FORGIVER. IT EXTRACTS THE FORGIVER FROM SOMEONE ELSE’S NIGHTMARE.”¹
TIME MAGAZINE ARTICLE, ‘I SPOKE...AS A BROTHER’

“Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.”
 HEB. 12:3,4

XII. Your commitment to forgive may or may not be followed by an immediate release of bitter feelings.

Matt. 6:14-15

For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Eph. 4:30

And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

Heb. 12:15

See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.

Matt. 18:34

In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.

Heb. 12:15

See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.

2 Cor. 13:5-8

Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you--unless, of course, you fail the test? ⁶And I trust that you will discover that we have not failed the test. ⁷Now we pray to God that you will not do anything wrong. Not that people will see that we have stood the test but that you will do what is right even though we may seem to have failed. ⁸For we cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth.

John 8:31-32

To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. ³²Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

Jas. 1:25

But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it--he will be blessed in what he does.

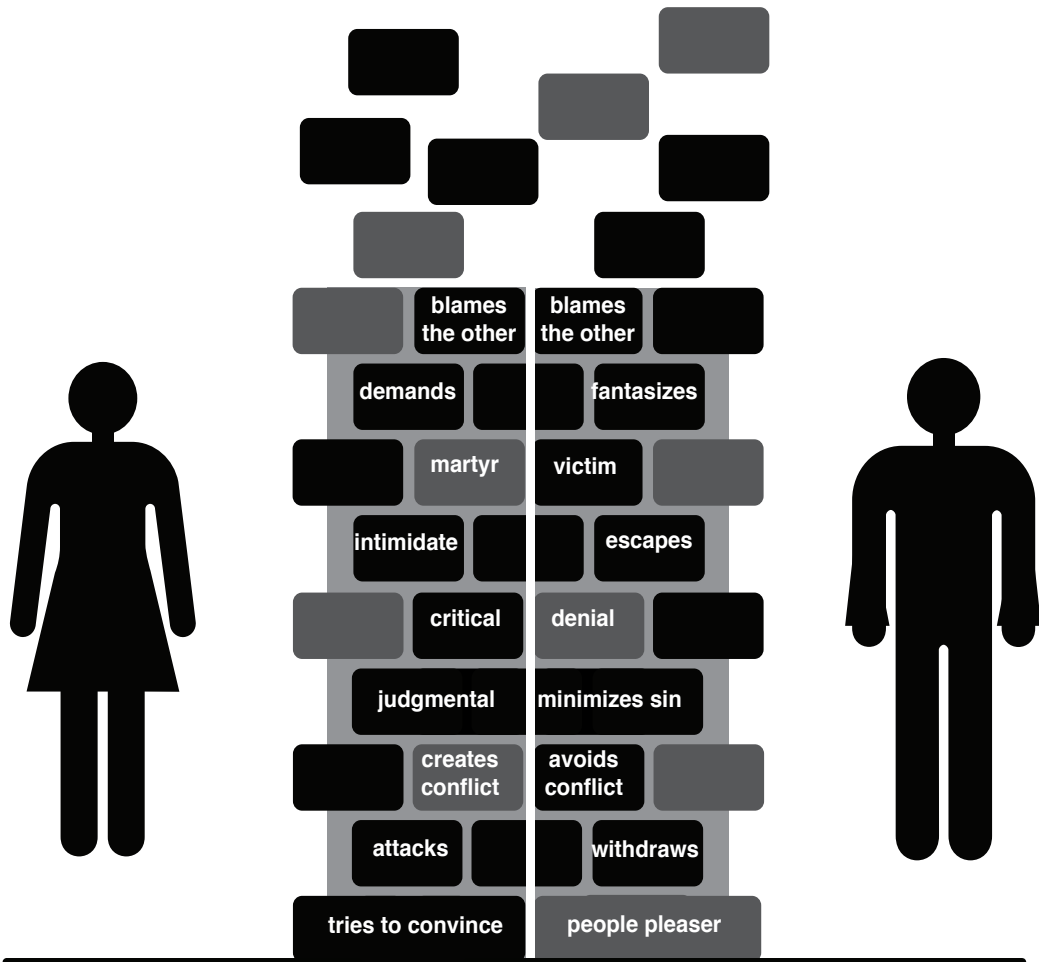
Gal. 6:9

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

- A. Your willingness to *act* on your commitment by renewing your mind will bring emotional freedom as the Holy Spirit works within you. (John 8:31,32; Jas. 1:25)
- B. Your sinful feelings will usually change to godly ones as you persevere in keeping God's commands. (Gal. 6:9)
- C. Your obedience, demonstrated by forgiving and by renewing your mind, will lead to:
1. sinful emotions no longer being present when the offender or offense comes to mind.
 2. sinful emotions no longer being present when you are in the offender's presence.
 3. your past no longer controlling your present or future.
 4. your demonstration of unconditional love toward the offender.
 5. ceasing to suppress, excuse or fantasize to avoid the feelings of anger.
 6. focusing on God, rather than on the offender and the offense.
 7. developing compassion for the offender.
 8. seeing how God has used the offender as a tool for your spiritual growth and perhaps, how He used the adversity to broaden your ministry.

Your great hope lies in not focusing on the degree of the problems you have suffered, but on the ability of the Holy Spirit to free you from the past, as you obey God's Word.

BUILDING THE RELATIONSHIP WALL



A DOUBLE-SIDED WALL IS BUILT ONE BRICK AT A TIME

- Everytime I sin against another person, I put a brick up on my side of the wall.
- Everytime someone sins against me, **he** puts a brick up on his side of the wall.
- Over time this double-side wall becomes too high, too wide and too thick to penetrate.
- I no longer know who is on the other side of the wall and I really don't care.

Over time bitterness and resentment create one solid wall



PART 1 - C RENEWING YOUR MIND



Discipler's Guide

