

NAME: _____

IDENTIFYING RATIONALIZATIONS

As you struggle with forgiveness, do you find yourself dwelling on any of these statements to justify your hesitance?

- The offense is too big to forgive
- Time will heal it on its own
- I'm waiting until they say they're sorry
- They don't deserve to be forgiven
- I can't forgive what I can't forget
- I can forgive but I can never forget what they did to me
- If I forgive them, they're off the hook
- If I forgive them, they'll just do it again

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CONFRONTING RATIONALIZATIONS

“Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.” – *Colossians 3:13*

WHAT WE LEARNED LAST WEEK:

- We must extend the forgiveness we’ve received.
 - We always have to forgive everyone for everything every time.
 - The Crisis of Forgiveness: Forgiveness is a decision to release another person from the obligation that resulted when they injured you,
 - The Process of Forgiveness: Refusal to bring it up to you, others, or myself.
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1. “THE OFFENSE IS TOO BIG TO FORGIVE”

Isaiah 53:3-7 - He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem. Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.

Luke 23:34a - Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.”

- Jesus suffered PHYSICALLY, EMOTIONALLY, AND SPIRITUALLY.
 - Jesus suffered BECAUSE OF US.
 - Jesus FORGAVE US.
 - Holding on to an offense only HURTS YOU.
 - The bigger the offense, the more DAMAGE you suffer.
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2. “TIME WILL HEAL IT ON ITS OWN”

Ephesians 4:26-27 - “In your anger do not sin”: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold.

- We must forgive IMMEDIATELY.
- TUMORS grow over time.
- The LONGER you wait, the HARDER it is.
- Waiting gives the devil POWER in your life.

3. “I’M WAITING UNTIL THEY SAY THEY’RE SORRY”

Luke 6:27-31 “But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn to them the other also. If someone takes your coat, do not withhold your shirt from them. Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have them do to you.

- FORGIVENESS is between you and God;
RECONCILIATION is between you and the offender.
- What if they NEVER SAY SORRY?
- Don’t let their sin make you SIN.

4. “THEY DON’T DESERVE TO BE FORGIVEN”

Romans 5:6, 8 - You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 12:17-18; 21 - Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

- You didn’t DESERVE God’s FORGIVENESS.
- It’s not about they DESERVE; it’s about what you DESERVE.

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5. “I CAN’T FORGIVE WHAT I CAN’T FORGET”

Jeremiah 31:34 - No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, ‘Know the Lord,’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,” declares the Lord.

“For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.”

Psalms 103:12 - as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.

- You can’t FORGET what you don’t FORGIVE.
- When you keep BRINGING it up, it keeps COMING up.
- Forgiveness is a DECISION.

6. “I CAN FORGIVE BUT I CAN NEVER FORGET WHAT THEY DID TO ME”

Hebrews 10:17 - Then he adds: “Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more.”

2 Corinthians 10:5 - We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

- Forgiveness is a commitment to STOP REMEMBERING.
- You must RENEW YOUR MIND.

7. “IF I FORGIVE THEM, THEY’RE OFF THE HOOK”

Romans 12:19 - Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” says the Lord.

- Don’t be a DEBT COLLECTOR.
- Remember the GOLDEN RULE.
- SURRENDER them to God.

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8. “IF I FORGIVE THEM, THEY’LL JUST DO IT AGAIN”

Luke 17:3-4 - So watch yourselves. If your brother or sister sins against you, rebuke them; and if they repent, forgive them. Even if they sin against you seven times in a day and seven times come back to you saying ‘I repent,’ you must forgive them.

- It’s harder to forgive TWO offenses than ONE.
- Stop looking for a LOOPHOLE.
- Remember that forgiveness is between YOU and GOD.
- Trust GOD more than YOURSELF or THEM.