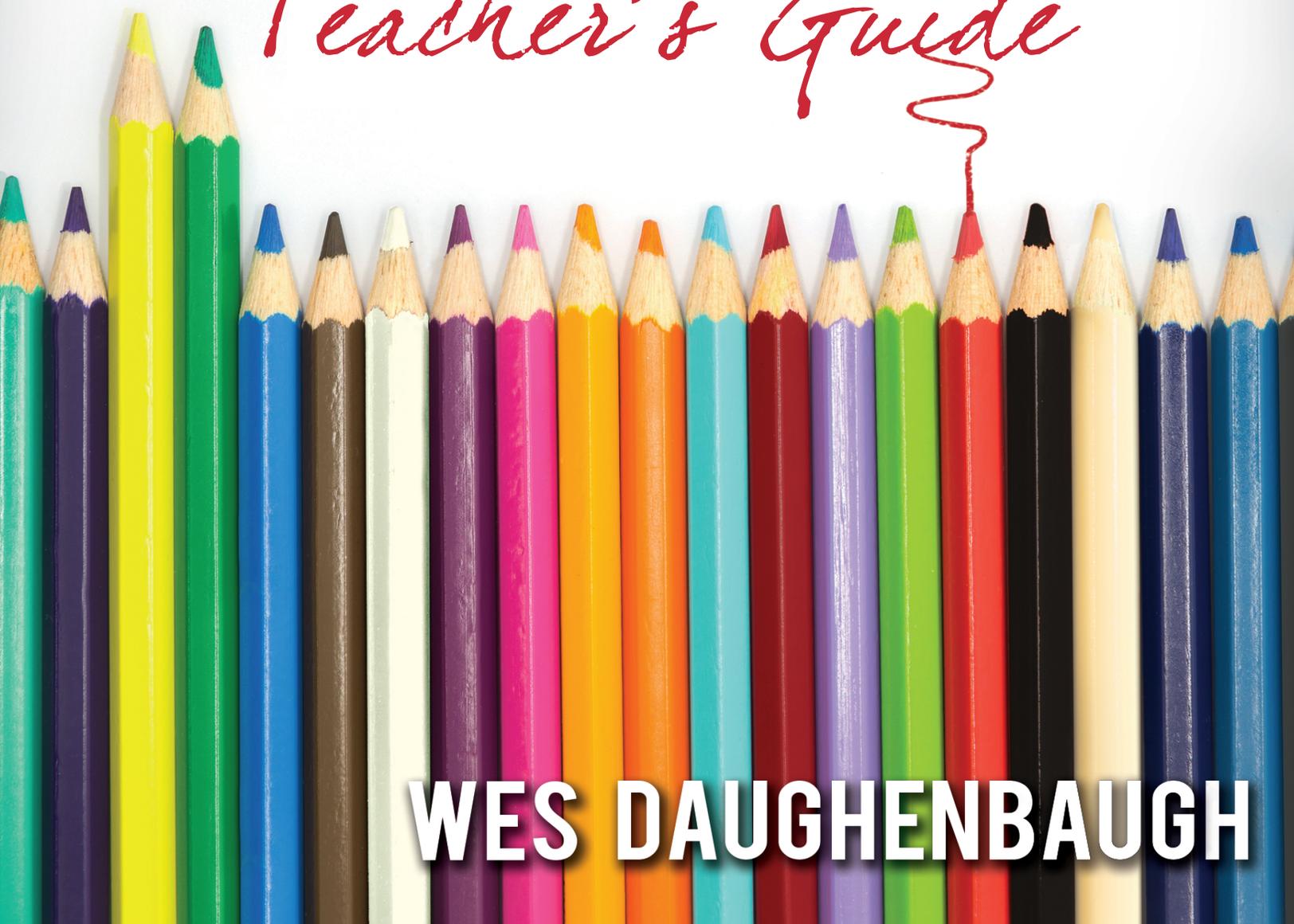


21 *ways to* FORGIVE

Teacher's Guide



WES DAUGHENBAUGH

TEACHER'S GUIDE

A special word from the author to teachers:

How to increase your teaching anointing:

I was 18 and on my way to Bible College. We were driving down the Columbia River Gorge and I was reading the Bible as my dad drove. I read Proverbs 1:23 NASB "Turn to my reproof, Behold, I will pour out my spirit on you; I will make my words known to you." I thought, "That would fix everything that is wrong with me!" In my heart I made this vow to God, "Dear Lord, I make a covenant with you on the Columbia River. I vow to turn at your rebuke. If you'll take the time to rebuke me, I'll always turn at your correction. As often as you look down from heaven and see the Columbia River, remember that I will turn at your rebuke."

That vow is the very root of my teaching anointing. It is also a key for you. If you want to be an anointed teacher, you must be teachable. By vowing to be teachable I later became an anointed teacher of God's word. Anyone can make such a vow, but few do. You can. Just be sincere.

As a teacher, you must be humble. No matter how good a book or teaching is, if a prideful person teaches it, it will be distorted. Pride can't do anything right.

Credibility and authenticity come from applying the word of God to our daily lives. Absorb these teachings and practice them. Be honest with your class about your own struggles. We "practice our anointing" as we live God's word in the laboratory of daily living. Make it your practice to fill every day with little deeds of kindness.

Remember, show respect to your students. They will have testimonies and insights. In a class or small group there should be discussion and you should let your students both ask questions and give comments. Encourage this, so that you and I (via video) don't do all the talking.

I encourage you to fill in the student worksheets for yourself and thoroughly absorb these teachings. Then pray for God to use you. Many will be set free from bondages to bitterness, hatred, sadness and unforgiveness.

How fast should you teach though these truths?

Please use the DVD of me teaching. It is 77 minutes long, and is divided into 31 short chapters, which includes the introduction. You can stop it and restart it easily. Just how long to play the DVD in each class will depend upon you and how much discussion you bring out of your students and how much extra study you take them into.

Every teacher is different. Some go through the book and DVD quickly. Others take a lot longer as they lead in discussion and prayer. I'm not telling you how fast to go. The following lessons will give you some ideas about possible questions as you lead discussion, prayer and any additional study.

Feel free to make your own lesson plans using as much material here as you wish. You may duplicate any and all of the student study guide chapters and give them as handouts to your students. I suggest having them purchase their own study guide for \$1 from my website www.EncouragementExpert.com. When I teach this in person I go through the entire book in one hour. But that is without any discussion or questions. You can go through this material in two sessions, six sessions, or a full quarter of the year, (thirteen weeks).

Some questions are open ended. You and your students can come up with lots of good answers. So not every question here will have a written answer.

Please do the student worksheets first and then check them against the answers in this teacher's guide. Then use what impresses you the most in your class. A good teacher takes time to prepare. May God use you to truly help your students.

• **IF TEACHING IN ONE SESSION:**

Play the entire DVD and have prayer with people at the end.

• **IF TEACHING IN TWO SESSIONS:**

Class OneIntroduction through Part 2, Chapter 6.

Class Two.....Part 2, Chapters 7-21 and the Conclusion.

• **IF TEACHING IS SIX WEEKS:** *this is suggestion only.*

Class One Introduction through Part 1, Chapter 6.

Class Two..... Part 1, Chapter 7 through Part 2, Chapter 3.

Class Three Part 2, Chapters 4-8.

Class Four..... Part 2, Chapters 9-13.

Class Five Part 2, Chapters 14-18.

Class Six Part 2, Chapters 19-21 and the Conclusion

• **IF TEACHING IN THIRTEEN WEEKS, (A FULL QUARTER):** *this is suggestion only.*

Class OneIntroduction through Part 1, Chapters 1-3.

Class Two.....Part 1, Chapters 4-6.

Class Three.....Part 1, Chapters 7-9.

Class Four.....Part 2, Introduction through Chapter 3.

Class FivePart 2, Chapters 4-6.

Class SixPart 2, Chapters 7-9.

Class SevenPart 2, Chapters10-12.

Class Eight.....Part 2, Chapters13-14.

Class Nine.....Part 2, Chapters15-16.

Class TenPart 2, Chapters 17-18.

Class ElevenPart 2, Chapters19-20.

Class TwelvePart 2, Chapter 21.

Class Thirteen.....Conclusion.

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*While this material is copywriten, the author gives permission to churches to print off the student study guide lesson plans to handout without extra charge. **Lessons must not be resold.***

Note:It would be easier if students downloaded their own study guides for \$1 at www.EncouragementExpert.com and printed them out at home so that if they miss a lesson, they will still have what would have been handed out in class.

Introduction

The reason we can be forgiven by God: we receive the free gift of eternal life for believing that Jesus is God in human form, and that he died for our sins and rose from the dead.

If there are students in your class that are not yet “believers” you will want to emphasize the deity of Jesus, for it is through faith in his deity that we receive salvation by grace.

Supporting scriptures: John 3:16, Eph. 2:8-9, Titus 3:5, Rom. 10:9-10

Read Col. 2:9

i.1: How much of God’s fullness lives in Jesus? **All the fullness of Deity.**

Read John 1:12

i.2: What does God give to those who receive Jesus Christ? **Power to become Christ-like.**

Read John 3:16

i.3: To believe in Jesus means that you believe Jesus is both fully man and fully _____. **God.**

Read 1 John 1:8-9

i.4: What does God want you to do in regard to your sins?

You do the confessing of sin and God will do the _____. **Forgiving!**

i.5: If you do your part what two things does God promise to do? **Forgive you and cleanse you from all unrighteousness.**

Repentance means that we tell God that we are sorry for our sins and **do not want** to live in them. We tell God **what we do want**. *“I want to belong to you. I want your fellowship. I want you to change me into your image. I want you to keep me forever.”*

The major law of deliverance is this: *What you want can have you. What you don’t want cannot keep you.* Telling God what you don’t want is repenting. Telling God what you do want is to hunger and thirst for righteousness. **(See Matt. 5:6).**

If we want a certain sin, the spirit behind the sin has a legal right to oppress us. If we want Jesus and a Christ-like life the Holy Spirit gets a legal right to bless us.

Read Matt. 5:6

i.6: What will God do for those who hunger and thirst for righteousness? **He will fill them.**

Reflection: *establish Salvation for each student.*

- Have you *asked* God to forgive you for your sins and have you put your faith in Jesus Christ?
- Have you *received* forgiveness of your sins through Jesus Christ?

Reflection: *“Forgiving Yourself”*

The author says, “I tell people that rather than ‘forgiving yourself’ you should celebrate your forgiveness in Christ. I believe that forgiving yourself is a never-ending process that keeps bringing up your sin and reminding you of it.”

Read Matt. 6:12.

i.7: What does Jesus compare sin to? **A debt!**

i.8: If a millionaire completely paid off your financial debt and someone came along and said, “Now you have to pay your debt,” how would you answer that person? **You’d tell them the debt was already paid and no longer existed.**

As a teacher you must emphasize this: In the same way, once your sins are forgiven—there is no record of them in heaven. The debt has been paid by Christ. When the devil says, “Now you have to forgive yourself” it is a tricky way to add condemnation and sadness to your life. You never could pay your debt of sin yourself.

i.9: If you were in a million dollars in debt could you borrow money from yourself to pay your debt? **Of course not.**

Reflection:

- Do you understand why “forgiving yourself” is a thought from the devil to bring back condemnation for sins that are already forgiven by God?

i.10: Why is celebrating your forgiveness in Christ so much better and sensible than trying to forgive yourself? **It frees you from condemnation and releases you from thinking about past sins and failures. It puts the focus on God and his love and goodness.**

Reflection:

- Why not celebrate your forgiveness in Christ right now?

Part 1, Chapter 1

Read Matt. 18:21-35.

1-1.1: What does God do with your debt of sin when you ask his forgiveness through Christ? **He cancels the debt.**

1-1.2: What will God do with your debt of sin if you stubbornly refuse to forgive someone else? **He will reinstate your debt of sin.**

Special Note: This is the most controversial teaching in the book. Many “Christians” do not believe that salvation can be lost. They will say, “If you have to forgive someone then you are going back to salvation by works.” Actually, the opposite is true. The man who would not forgive his fellow servant’s debt had to WORK OFF his own debt after the King reinstated it. If we refuse to extend grace to others we are choosing to go back to working for salvation—an impossible task that leads to eternal imprisonment.

1-1.3: If the man could not pay his debt outside of prison how would he be able to pay it off from inside a prison? **He couldn’t.**

1-1.4 a: Besides being in prison, the unforgiving servant was going to be what? **Tortured.**
b: For how long? **Forever, apparently, since he could never pay the debt.**

1-1.5: Does Jesus teach that forgiving others is optional or an absolute must? **An absolute must.**

Special Note: The unforgiving servant was not just peeved at his fellow servant. He wasn't just disappointed. He was very angry and had him thrown into prison. We aren't going to lose our own forgiveness over just being a little peeved at someone. It would take a willful refusal to forgive.

1-1.6: If you don't forgive from your heart what will happen to your soul when you die physically? **You'd be given over to the torturers and imprisoned forever.**

Reflection:

- Is anyone worth going to hell over?

1-1.7: We should never say, "I'll never forgive that person." Why is a statement like that so very dangerous? **We would be condemning ourselves to God's judgment.**

Reflection:

- Can you see why the author believes this that is the most motivating reason to forgive?
- Do you agree?

Part 1, Chapter 2

Read Eph. 4:26-27

1-2.1: How long does it take to give the devil a foothold in your life? **Less than one day.**

1-2.2: Refusing to forgive gives the devil a legal right to do what to you? **Oppress you.**

1-2.3: If people are relying on anti-depressants but continue to let the sun go down on their anger and continue to give the devil a foothold, can they ever experience real peace of mind? **No.**

Special Note: The author believes that the nation as a whole has turned away from God's ways of having peace of mind and substituted pills, which have many negative side effects. We cannot say that anti-depressants are not necessary in some cases, but we can say that God's words and ways are always applicable and always work best without negative side affects.

Reflection:

- Do you think that the society as a whole has turned away from God's ways of having peace of mind and turned to chemical substitutes?
- So you think there might be an over-reliance on drugs, even among Christians?

Fact: The Greek word for "foothold" actually means "a place of legal standing from which to exercise authority." When we let the sun go down on our wrath, we are giving the devil a place to stand in our life, a place from which to exercise influence.

Read John 10:10

1-2.4: What three things will the devil try to do to us if we give him a “foothold” or a legal place to stand? **He will try to steal from us, destroy our health and families, and kill us.**

Part 1, Chapter 3

Read 2 Cor. 2:10-11

1-3.1: We forgive so that Satan will not _____ us. **Outwit**

1-3.2: Why would getting you not to forgive another person be, perhaps, the devil’s favorite scheme to destroy you? **Offenses against us are common and right responses are needed. Unforgiveness can grow unnoticed, because it’s of the heart. If you move into unforgiveness it immediately gives the devil a legal right to oppress you. Another reason would be that there are so many different ways to make people angry.**

Part 1, Chapter 4

Read Mark 11:22-26

1-4.1: Jesus links faith and answered prayer with what? **With forgiveness.**

The author says, “If you get rid of your internal problems God will help turn your external problems into blessings and miracles. If you don’t get rid of your internal problems your external problems will pound you to pieces.”

1-4.2: Can you think of stories in scripture that support what the author is saying? **There are many, but King Saul versus David would be an easy one to see this principle in.**

Additional Study: Ask your students to do a little extra study and read 1 Sam. 18:6-15, 1 Sam. 22:9-22 and 1 Sam. 28:3-24. I would not take time to read all this in class. You should be able to refer to the story and shorten it if they have read it before coming to class.

Refer to 1 Sam. 18:6-15, 1 Sam. 22:9-22 and 1 Sam. 28:3-24

1-4.3: What were the “internal problems” that King Saul lived with in the later part of his life? **He was envious, jealous, self-promoting, wanted the glory, became a mass murderer, lied to others, slandered and persecuted the innocent and consulted a witch.**

Read 1 Sam. 31:1-10

1-4.4: How did external problems pound King Saul to pieces? **He was wounded in battle, committed suicide, had his head cut off and his body fastened to the wall of a heathen temple.**

Additional Study: Read 1 Sam. 30

1-4.5: What was one of the biggest external problems that David faced before he became king in Hebron? **Amalekite raiders kidnapped his family, burned his home, and stole all his possessions—and those of his men, too.**

Read 1 Sam. 30: 16-20, 1 Sam. 30:26-27 and 2 Sam. 2

1-4.6: God turned David's big problem into blessings and miracles. What were some of the blessings? ***He recovered everything plus all the plunder the Amalekites had taken from other places so that he was greatly enriched. This gave him resources to send gifts to the elders of Judah from the "plunder of the Lord's enemies." They made him king shortly afterward.***

Reflection:

- Do you want to be a man or woman of great faith?
- *If so, you'll have to be a great forgiver.*

1-4.7: Put into your own words why forgiveness and faith must go together. ***Forgiveness gets rid of internal problems so that faith can turn external problems into blessings and miracles.***

Part 1, Chapter 5

Read Heb. 12:15.

1-5.1: Why can one person's bitterness defile many? ***Many can pick up the offense and become bitter, too. One bitter person might end up hurting many people.***

The author says, "If you don't conquer bitterness you will spread it."

1-5.2: Why is this true? ***Bitterness is like an air-borne virus that can infect others. You are infectious if you are bitter.***

Reflection:

- Can you give any example of stories you have heard of or personal experiences where you or others picked up an offense after they heard how someone else was treated?

Part 1 Chapter 6

Read Job 5:2, Prov. 14:30, and Prov. 17:22

1-6.1: Negative emotions do what to the body? ***Negative emotions slay and kill people. They dry up the bones—promoting ill health.***

1-6.2: What is the difference between being killed and being slain? ***Being slain could happen quicker and being killed could take a little longer. Negative emotions are working to put you in the grave, and the stronger they are, the faster they will work to your destruction.***

1-6.3: What do positive emotions do for the body? ***A heart at peace gives life to the body. A merry heart does good like a medicine. They promote good health.***

1-6.4: Why is having peaceful and loving thoughts and emotions more important than eating healthy food? ***Consider the ancient Israelites who ate Manna, the food of angels, but most died prematurely in the dessert because of unbelief, anger, complaining, jealousy and the like. (See Num. 14)***

Reflection:

Health conscious people should consider having healthy emotions as even more important than exercise, healthy food and the best supplements.

- Do you think most people are aware of what negative emotions are doing to their health?
- Have you made having peaceful, loving and joyful emotions your number one health principle?

Read James 5:16

1-6.5: Why is it a good idea to help people get victory over negative emotions before praying for their physical healing? ***It's the biblical order to get rid of spiritual problems first before getting answers to physical problems.***

Reflection:

- Do most Christians ask for prayer for healing without admitting that they are struggling with sins of hatred, jealousy, bitterness, unforgiveness, envy and the like?
- Do you think more people would be physically healed if we followed the order of James 5:16?
- Do any of your students have medical information they would like to share such as how anger constricts arteries?
- Do you know any other medical information that shows how negative emotions do bad things to our bodies?

Part 1, Chapter 7

Read John 17:22-23

1-7.1: God loves you as much as he loves who? ***Jesus.***

1-7.2: What is the “glory” that Jesus gives to his followers? ***Intimate oneness with the Father.***

Read Ps. 16:11 and John 17:3

1-7.3: Why is this intimacy with God, this “glory” the ultimate gift? ***The creator is more wonderful than anything created.***

Read Matt. 22:37-39 and Matt. 25:31-46.

1-7.4: The way you treat others is the way you are treating who? ***God.***

Reflection:

- Why does unforgiveness break our fellowship with God?
- Why does unforgiveness break our fellowship with people?

“Bitter, unforgiving people end up lonely and isolated.”

- Do you agree or disagree with this statement. Why?
- Would you give away your “glory” (intimate oneness with God and the joy and peace that comes with that) just to hold onto an offense?
- Which would you rather hold onto—your glory or a grudge?

Part 1, Chapter 8

Read Mark 6:19

1-8.1: A “grudge” is a desire to _____. **Hurt or kill someone.**

Reflection:

- How does a person “nurture” a grudge?

1-8.2: A full grown grudge will do what? **Something violent.**

Read James 1:14-15.

1-8.3: Full grown sin gives birth to what? **Death**

Reflection:

Herodias nursed a grudge against John the Baptist and eventually had him killed. If you nurse a grudge you could do something violent to another person, but that would also give birth to death in you.

- Are you “nursing” a grudge against someone?
- Why would it be better to starve your grudge instead of nurse it?
- How would you “starve” a grudge?
- How many of you will decide right now to starve your grudge instead of nurse it?
(Ask for a show of hands. A prayer might be in order here.)

Part 1, Chapter 9

Activity:

- Write out Coach John Wooden’s definition of success, found at the top of page 18 in *21 Ways to Forgive*.
- Now, write out the definition of success given by Jesus Christ in his high priestly prayer. **(See John 17:4) “I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do.”**

1-9.1: How are these definitions of success similar? **Both relate to having peace of mind because of having given it your best effort.**

1-9.2: How are they different? **Jesus defines success as having brought glory to God by completing the work God gives you to do, not just doing your best to fulfill your own dreams. John Wooden talks about the peace that comes from self-satisfaction. Jesus is talking about satisfying the Father—by working with the right motive—to bring glory to God, and by completing the work God gives you to do, the work you were created to do.**

Read Ps. 119:165

1-9.3: How does peace of mind compare with trophies, awards, prizes, riches, and worldly honors? **Peace of mind is superior, of infinitely more value, and cannot be purchased with money. It is beyond price. It keeps you from stumbling in sin and keeps you from being offended—giving you emotional tranquility, which is a great health benefit.**

1-9.4: If peace of mind is a main measure of success, then why would anyone want to meditate on things that trouble the heart and mind and dwell on those things? ***People who dwell on the negative have a false measure of success (an example of a false definition of success is found in Luke 12:15).***

Reflection:

- Would you like the Holy Spirit to help you become a true success in life?
- *This would be a good time to lead the class in prayer.*

PART 2

Introduction

Reflection:

If you were going to construct a house, you could not get the job done with only one tool.

- Quickly name some tools you would need to construct a house. *See if the class can list at least 21 different tools.*
- If you practice the tools and techniques of forgiveness you can avoid what? *Bitterness, rage, anger, irritability, unforgiveness, self-pity, sadness and a victim mentality. You can also avoid many illnesses, mental and physical.*

ii.3: What is the difference between forgiveness and trust? ***Forgiveness is freely given. Trust must be earned.***

Make sure your class understands that this little book doesn't answer all questions about trust, reconciliation, and justice. The focus is on forgiveness. When you forgive someone that does not reinstate trust. Trust is earned.

ii.4: Can a person forgive someone and still not trust that person? ***Of course!***

ii.5: Can a person forgive and still long for justice? ***Of course!***

Part 2, Chapter 1

Read Prov. 19:11 and Prov. 20:3

2-1.1: It is to one's glory to do what with an offense? ***Overlook it.***

2-1.2: What is one reason an entire culture can lose its glory? ***The culture gets offense oriented, so that it's fashionable to get easily offended. When almost everyone makes it a practice to be easily offended the culture has lost the glory of its wisdom.***

2-1.3: Why should we be different than our culture? ***Because we are supposed to be wise with God's wisdom.***

2-1.4: What does the author mean by “keep your spiritual dignity”? ***It's a choice to lose your temper and utter harsh and angry words.***

2-1.5: Can anyone take away your spiritual dignity? ***No. Christ was stripped of his clothing but no one could take away his spiritual dignity.***

2-1.6: The fool thinks he is defending his honor when in fact he is _____ it. ***Losing it.***

Activity:

- Have the class study the illustration on page 24 of *21 Ways to Forgive*, of a burning ember going into an open can of water versus an open can of gasoline.

2-1.7: Why is saying, “She makes me so mad,” or “He makes me so mad,” or “They make me so mad” actually a form of self-deception? ***You choose to get mad. No one makes you get angry.***

Read Prov. 13:10

2-1.8: If you are filled with pride you'll have a lot of what? ***Contention or strife.***

Read Prov. 19:11 and John 4:14

2-1.9: People who are very hard to offend are filled with what? ***Living Water, defined as Christ-like character qualities such as patience and wisdom.***

Reflection: Agree or disagree?

- Our reaction to offenses demonstrates to everyone what we are filled with.

Additional Study: Read Judg. 12:1-6.

The pride of the men of Ephraim was easily offended and resulted in 42,000 of them being killed, which would never have happened if they had not been so full of pride and arrogance.

Reflection:

- What are you filled with?
- What do you want to be filled with?

Activity:

- Have the students share a list of godly virtues they'd like to be filled with.
- Then lead the class in prayer that God will fill them with virtues such as wisdom, patience, self-control, love, kindness, etc.
- Can you give a short definition for each? (The author has a personal list of over 120 that he prays for.) *This collection of virtues can grow to become one of your prized possessions, something you use to check up on your spiritual progress and growth. This should be done in a separate notebook, computer page, or document.*

Reflection:

- What does our nation resemble—an open can of water or an open can of gasoline?

Part 2, Chapter 2

Read Prov. 17:14

2-2.1: What does it mean to “breach a dam”? **Bore a hole in it, or break it open so that it collapses.**

Reflection:

Something very bad can happen when someone starts a quarrel. We would say, “They started it,” but actually, a quarrel is started when the second party does something mean back to the first party. Again, a quarrel is started only when the second person reacts in anger to the first person’s offensive words or actions.

- Do you see how it could be an act of self-deception to say, “Well, he started it!”

2-2.2: Better to not start a quarrel because a quarrel might _____. **Escalate, get bigger, become life threatening, get out of hand.)**

Reflection:

- Have you ever started a quarrel instead of dropping the matter? Examples?
- Have you ever just overlooked a matter instead of starting a quarrel? Examples?

2-2.3: If you overlook an offense then you won’t have to _____. **Forgive it.**

Part 2, Chapter 3

Read 1 Pet. 3:9

2-3.1: If you repay cursing with a blessing you’ll inherit a what? **A blessing.**

Activity: Read 1 Cor. 4:12-13.

- Take out the “we” and write in your name. *Example: Mary works hard with her own hands. When Mary is cursed, Mary blesses. When Mary is persecuted, Mary endures it; When Mary is slandered, Mary answers kindly.*
- When you word those verses with your name inserted, does it sound like the truth or a complete lie or some of both?

2-3.2: If it sounds like a lie, what does that mean? **If we don’t react this way it just means we are immature Christians and haven’t grown up in Christ very much.**

Activity:

- Have everyone say “Amen” or “Oh me!” (Smile!)

Read Heb. 7:7

2-3.3: Who is the greater person—the one who gives the blessing or the one who receives the blessing? **The one who gives the blessing.**

Read Prov. 26:2

2-3.4: If you bless the person who curses you what will happen to their curse? Will it be effective? ***Their curse will stick in your shield of blessing. It will be a totally ineffective curse.***

Refer again to Prov. 26:2

2-3.5: When you bless the person who curses you that proves what? ***It proves that the curse on you was undeserved and delivers you from it.***

A BRIEF REVIEW

The first three ways to forgive are actually ways to avoid having to forgive in the first place. Review these first three ways and write them briefly:

1. "Overlook it."
2. "Drop the matter."
3. "Use the shield of blessing."

- Of the three, which one are you best at?
- Which one are you not very good at yet?
- *Agree or Disagree?* God can help us all become very good at these techniques but he will not do anything for the person who doesn't care. They'll be left on their own.

Read James 4:6 and 1 Pet. 5:5

2-3.6: What kind of people are going to receive help and empowerment from God? ***God gives grace to the humble. A good definition of grace is "the activated power of God."***

Part 2, Chapter 4

Read Col. 3:13

2-4.1: When God forgives he does what? ***Forgets it.***

2-4.2: If you forgive as God forgives that means that you will do what? ***Forget about it.***

2-4.3: If you keep bringing up the past in arguments to make a point or to make a person feel shameful, what does that say about you? ***It means you aren't forgiving in the same way God forgives.***

Read 1 Cor. 13:5

2-4.4: Love keeps no record of what? ***Wrongs.***

2-4.5: When we are faced with handling today's family conflict we must avoid what? ***We must avoid bringing things up that we forgave in the past.***

Some additional insights about the slime bag of the past:

- The author has noted, since writing the book, that you don't have to reach into the slime bag of the past to ruin today. You just have to carry it around on your shoulder.
- Even if you don't mention the past in an argument, if you are thinking about it, you'll be ruining your today because it's so heavy to carry around.
- The slime of the past, if rubbed on today, will certainly ruin today. But since writing

the book, the author has noted that this kind of slime is also *explosive*! It is not only dirty and messy and ugly, but can actually **explode** so violently that it also ruins **tomorrow**!

Reflection:

- Have you ever heard about some terrorist bomb maker who accidentally blew themselves up while making a bomb?
- *Agree or disagree:* Carrying around the “slime bag of the past” is like carrying around a bag of explosive material that could ruin not only today, but all your tomorrows!

Read James 3:6

2-4.6: When the fire of the tongue comes in contact with the explosive slime of the past what could happen? ***It could destroy the whole course of your life—all your tomorrows, not just today!***

Reflection:

- Do most people keep a record of wrongs, that is, do most people keep the slime bag of the past close by so that they can reach into it during arguments?
- What is your estimate of the percentage of Christians who are actually carrying around the slime bag of the past like a heavy burden on their backs?

Read Phil. 3:13-14

2-4.7: What was one reason the Apostle Paul could live such a victorious overcoming life in spite of all the mean things people did to him? ***He practiced forgetting what was behind and focused on the future glory of being with God in total intimacy forever.***

Read Eph. 4:26

Reflection:

- Have you ever washed a well-used chalkboard?
- Is a dirty chalk board ready for use tomorrow?

2-4.8: If our mind is like a mental chalkboard and we forget the past, would it help us concentrate on today so that we're more mentally sharp? ***Of course!***

Reflection:

In the DVD of *21 Ways to Forgive* the author gives an illustration of a woman who finds that her husband messed up the bathroom. He describes two ways she could handle that: first, by bringing up the past and second, by just dealing with today's little offense.

- Which response reminds you most of your typical response to similar irritations?

Activity:

It would be a good idea to lead the class in some kind of response to God where we tell him that we don't want to keep using the slime bag of the past, and we don't want to carry it around, and we don't want to blow ourselves and our families up with it. Lead them into asking for God's help and humbly admitting that we all *desperately* need his help in this area.

Part 2, Chapter 5

Read Eph. 4:29

2-5.1: Why is verbal hostility a fertilizer for the thistle of bitterness? ***It makes bitterness grow.***

Reflection:

If you make a person feel shameful they'll be looking down at themselves and thinking how bad they are. They won't be able to look up and see how good you are.

2-5.2: Which would you rather:

a. Make them see how bad they are?

b. Help them see how good you are?

Read John 8:3-11.

2-5.3: After this encounter with Jesus, do you suppose this woman was thinking how bad she was or how good Jesus was? ***She was thinking how good Jesus was.***

Reflection:

- Are you in the habit of using condemning words?

Refer again to Eph. 4:29

2-5.4: What does the Bible say that you should do with those condemning words? ***Keep them from being spoken. Don't let them out of your mouth.***

2-5.5: You should replace condemning words with what kind of words? ***Only words that build up and benefit the hearer.***

Read James 1:26

2-5.6: If you continue to speak mean condemning words to others what are you doing to yourself? ***You are deceiving yourself.***

2-5.7: Would it be easier for Satan to deceive a person who is already self-deceived? ***Yes. It's the reason so many Christians are easily deceived. They have been deceiving themselves first.***

Part 2, Chapter 6

Read Matt. 6:12

2-6.1: Why is forgiving like canceling a debt? ***Both are a decision of the will.***

Reflection:

- Have you ever forgiven someone who owed you money but wouldn't pay it?
- The motto of Nike sports equipment is "Just do it."
- Could that apply to forgiving?
- Is forgiving something you have done or something you need to still do?

Part 2, Chapter 7

Jesus suffered the greatest injustice of all time because he was so good and yet was treated so badly.

2-7.1: Why will your story of injustice never top his story of injustice? ***Because Jesus had been more pure and righteous than anyone and had also done more miraculous good deeds than anyone yet was treated as a blasphemer and criminal.***

Reflection:

In spite of suffering the greatest injustice of all time Jesus was not filled with rage, but instead felt love for the people who rejected, mistreated and murdered him.

- Have any of you suffered a really huge injustice?
- Were you filled with rage at that person or persons who treated you unjustly or were you, like Jesus, filled with love for them?

Read Luke 23:24

2-7.2: What was Jesus' prayer as he suffered such great injustice? ***He asked the father to forgive them because they didn't know what they were doing.***

2-7.3: Why is it necessary to detoxify a spider bite or a snakebite? ***The bite will keep getting worse until it is detoxified.***

2-7.4: Why is it likewise necessary to detoxify rage? ***Rage will poison our lives just like venom.***

Reflection:

- Have you ever felt rage dissipate by praying this prayer of Jesus, "*Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.*" ?
- When it's small to medium—***you forgive it.***
- If it's a ***huge*** offense or injustice, ask the Father to forgive it.

Activity:

- Write out the prayer of Jesus in Luke 23:34.
- Write out the prayer of Stephen in Acts 7:60.
- Write out the prayer of Moses in Exod. 32:31-32.

2-7.5 : What is the similarity between the situations that Jesus, Stephen and Moses found themselves in? ***A great injustice was involved, a very great sin.***

Read Phil. 3:10

2-7.6: How might you be like Jesus in his death? ***You could die free of bitterness and unforgiveness.***

Reflection:

- Do you desire to die free of bitterness and unforgiveness like Jesus?
- Then let's pray and ask for his help.
- Lead the class in appropriate prayer.

Part 2, Chapter 8

Read Mark 11:25-26

2-8.1: Can you forgive someone even if they are not asking for forgiveness? **Yes.**

Read Luke 17:3

2-8.2: Is it easier to forgive someone who is asking for forgiveness compared to someone who is not asking for forgiveness? **Much easier.**

2-8.3: Is it usual and normal for people to actually ask for forgiveness? **No! It's very rare.**

Reflection:

- What percent of those who have wronged you in life have ever come back and asked for forgiveness? (It will be interesting to see what your students say.)

2-8.4: Are the birds of life coming back to wipe bitterness off of your face? **No, birds don't ever come back and wipe it off. Most people are like the birds and only a few come back to ask forgiveness.**

Reflection:

- Have you been waiting for a "bird" to make things right?
- Are you holding on to bitterness until they apologize?

2-8.5: If you are bitter, how will it show? **On your face.**

Activity:

- Have the class think of someone they need to forgive. Instruct them to take their left hand and "wipe the bird stuff off your nose and say, "I forgive that person."
- Do this again. Think of a second person. Take your right hand, pass it over your nose as if wiping bird stuff off and say, "I forgive that person, too."

2-8.6: Unless you forget about what you just wiped off your nose it will become what in your hand? **Self-pity as you "hold on to it."**

Reflection:

- Do you relate to the author who was corrected by God for holding on to what he wiped off his nose?
- Are you holding onto self-pity in your hand?

2-8.7: What must we do with what we are holding onto so that we can work for God with both hands? **We must let go of memories that make us feel sorry for ourselves.**

Activity:

- Have the class dust their hands together and say, "I'm going to forget about it."

Read 1 Tim. 2:8

2-8.8: Holy hands aren't holding onto what? **Self Pity**

Activity:

- Have the class lift their hands to God and praise the Lord for a minute or two.

Part 2, Chapter 9

Read 2 Cor. 11:24-25

2-9.1: What reasons did Paul have to feel sorry for himself? ***He had been whipped, beaten and stoned.***

Read Rom. 9:1-4

2-9.2: How did Paul overcome a victim mentality? ***He felt sorry for them, not himself.***

Point to ponder: God does not require anyone to live in an abusive, violent environment. Paul had some distance between himself and the Jewish people who had rejected Jesus, the ones who had whipped and beaten and stoned him.

2-9.3: You may need to feel sorry for certain people from a what? ***Distance.***

Read Mal. 2:16 in the RSV translation

For I hate divorce, says the Lord the God of Israel, and covering one's garment with violence, says the Lord of hosts.

Note to Teacher: The author believes that this verse is saying that God hates divorce but also hates things that cause divorce, like domestic violence. God hates it when a man treats his wife with violence. Because different translations word this differently, you will need to point this out.

2-9.4: God hates what? ***Divorce***

2-9.5: What does God also hate? ***Domestic violence that often causes divorce.***

2-9.6: No matter what kind of abuse you've suffered you must do what to be more than a conqueror? ***Choose***

2-9.7: A "victim mentality" is a choice to wallow in what? ***Self Pity***

Read Rom. 8:37 in the ESV translation

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

Reflection:

- If you have been victimized in some way, do you feel like you are still a victim or have you moved on to being more than a conqueror?

2-9.8 a: We must get our minds on who _____ us... ***loves***

b: ...instead of on who _____ us. ***hates***

Activity:

- Lead the class in asking for God's help to move on past victimization and onto victory in Christ.

Part 2, Chapter 10

Read Acts 7:60 in the ESV translation

And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

Point to emphasize: When you forgive God does not waste your pain. Rather, he invests.

Read Acts 7:54-60, Acts 8:1-3, and Acts 9:1-2

2-10.1: How do we know that Saul of Tarsus was the focal point of the guilt in stoning of Stephen?

He's the one who sanctioned it, as a Sanhedrin member. He's the one who went out breathing slaughter. He's the one who had the most zeal to persecute them, even going to foreign cities to arrest them.

Read Acts 9:1-9 in the KJV or NKJV translations

When Jesus appeared to Saul he said "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads."

Modern translations leave out "It is hard for you to kick against the goads." But this is a very insightful phrase. Jesus was saying, "You are persecuting me, but it is hard on you!" Ox goads were sharp sticks attached to a plow so that if the ox kicked backwards it would experience pain and learn not to do that. Explain this to the class but don't get into a big argument over translations. If that comes up, explain that the assignment of this class is not to figure out which translation is best. Then move away from any controversy about that.

2-10.2: Did God strike Saul with a lightening bolt of judgment or a lightening bolt of mercy?

A lightening bolt of mercy.

2-10.3: Did Jesus speak harshly to Saul? **No**

Read Acts 9:3-4

2-10.4: What did Jesus first say to Saul? ***"Why do you persecute me?" In the KJV or NKJV "Why do you persecute me? It's hard for you to kick against the goads."***

2-10.5: When someone treats you badly, who are they really mistreating? **Jesus.**

2-10.6: Do Jesus' words to Saul sound harsh and angry or tender and merciful? ***Tender and merciful.***

Reflection:

- Have you ever wished that God would strike someone with a bolt of judgment and wipe them out?

- If God could use your pain and your prayer for their forgiveness as a legal right to strike them with mercy and turn them into something wonderful, in the same way that he struck Saul and turned him into an apostle, would you like that?

Activity:

- Have the class worship God and act as if they are reaching up to heaven to deposit their pain in the bank of heaven.
- Ask them to tell God that if possible, they would prefer the person or people who caused them such pain would be struck with mercy instead of judgment.
- Have the class tell God that they'd like a dividend on the deposit of their pain in the Bank of Heaven.

Read Rom. 12:19 in the NIV translation

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.

2-10.7: We must not take what? **Revenge**

2-10.8: We must leave room for what? **Leave room for God's wrath, that is, allow God to make the decision whether to strike them with justice or mercy.**

Activity:

- If you have been greatly wronged, tell God that you would prefer that he strike your persecutor with mercy rather than judgment.
- Also tell God that since he knows all hearts, you would understand if he chooses to avenge you with justice.

2-10.9: Why would it be better for us to pray that God will use our pain as a justification to strike our persecutor with mercy instead of justice? **We might get an apostle out of the deal instead of a grease spot or pool of blood.**

Emphasize to the class this important point: Stephen is very happy that Saul was struck with mercy because of the millions that have come to Christ through his life and writings. But Stephen's prayer and Jesus' prayer on the cross "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do," keep us from bitterness and unforgiveness.

Reflection:

- Are there other scriptures that prove that God will not waste our pain when we forgive?

Read Ps. 56:8 in the NLT translation

You keep track of all my sorrows. You have collected all my tears in your bottle. You have recorded each one in your book.

2-10.10: What does God do with our sorrows? **He keeps track of them all.**

2-10.11: What does God do with our tears? **He keeps them all in a bottle, as a treasure.**

2-10.12: How many tears of ours does God keep track of? **Each and every tear!**

Read Acts 12:1-2, and Acts 12:20-23

2-10.13: King Herod ordered the execution of who? ***He orderd the execution of James, the brother of John, one of the three “inner circle” disciples who were with Jesus on the Mountain of Transfiguration.***

2-10.14: Did God strike King Herod with mercy? ***No!***

2-10.15: What did God strike King Herod with? ***A bolt of Divine justice.***

Read or refer to Matt. 25:31-46

2-10.16: The way that people treat you is the way they are treating who? ***Jesus***

Part 2, Chapter 11

Reflection:

- What are some of the main reasons, in your opinion, that so many people live in sadness?
- Do you agree with the author that one of the main reasons for sadness is a focus that says, “Look what they did to me?”

2-11.1: Why is it impossible for anyone to pull you out of the Cistern of Sadness? ***Only you can change your focus in life from what others did to you to what you can do for others.***

Read Eph. 6:12

2-11.2: Who is your real enemy? ***The devil and his demons.***

2-11.3: Who is not your real enemy? ***Anyone with flesh and blood.***

2-11.4: Is your real enemy ever going to be good? ***No!***

Read 1 John 3:8 and Amos 5:15

2-11.5: Why should we counter attack our real enemy? ***We should be motivated with Christ’s motivation. We should hate what is evil, and love what is good.***

2-11.6: What was one of the main reasons Jesus came to earth? ***From 1 John 3:8, to destroy the works of the devil.***

Read 1 Pet. 5:7-9

2-11.7: Who are we to resist? ***The devil.***

Read Rom. 12:9

2-11.8: Is all hatred wrong? ***No, we are to hate what is evil.***

Read 2 Chron. 19:2

2-11.9: Is all love good? ***Love that helps the wicked do wickedness is a bad thing.***

Read Matt. 16:19

2-11.10: Why is it unscriptural to bind Satan and fallen angels that dwell in the second heaven, that is, the atmosphere above the Earth? ***Jesus said we should bind or loose things on earth and God would do the binding or losing in the heavenlies.***

2-11.11: Why is helping people such a good way to fight the devil? ***It doesn't give the devil any attention. It doesn't get your focus on the devil.***

Activity:

- Have the class repeat this: "Who can I love? Who can I serve? Who can I bless? Who can I encourage?"

2-11.12: Why is this "focus" so life changing and helpful? ***It gets your focus off of yourself and onto others. Helping others creates joy.***

Read Acts 20:35

2-11.13: If your focus is on loving, serving, blessing and encouraging others will you get anything out of it yourself? ***There is great joy in knowing that God used you to help others. There are probably many other reasons as well and your class will come up with some. It is more blessed to give than to receive.***

Reflection:

There are two different ways to look at life: The sad way is "Look what they did to me." The happy way is, "Look what God has used me to do for others."

- Which way best describes your own focus in life?
- Are you in the Cistern of Sadness, or starting to climb out of it, or out of it altogether?

2-11.14: What could make you fall back into the Cistern of Sadness? ***If you go back to a focus of "I'm so sad; look what they did to me," you'll fall back into sadness.***

2-11.15: What happens to the pain of sadness when we rejoice over being used of God to help people? ***It fades away. Then we can remember what happened but not feel the pain.***

2-11.16: Is it possible to get over great emotional pain? ***Absolutely!***

2-11.17: Might this process of getting over sadness take some time? ***Yes. It takes time to crawl out of the Cistern of Sadness. It is a process. The joy comes as we do good for others, which takes time.***

Reflection:

- Do you feel like your life is over and ruined or are you admitting that you are still alive and have some fight in you? (*Fight means a desire to destroy the works of the devil.*)
- Have you changed your whole focus in life to "Who can I love? Who can I serve? Who can I bless? Who can I encourage?"
- Are you enjoying helping others? Are you feeling the joy and making that joy grow?

Activity:

- Have students write down someone that they want to encourage, bless, serve or express love to.
- How will you do this?
- What's your plan of action?
- When are you going to do this?

Part 2, Chapter 12

Read Acts 7:60**Activity:**

- *Have the class write out Stephen's prayer.*
- *Now have them write in the name of the person or persons who have been really mean or evil or unjust to them. Example" Father, don't hold this sin against(Fill in the blank.)*
- Have you ever felt like something done against you was just "unforgivable"?
- Have you ever said, "I could never forgive that!"?
- Do you really want that person or persons to burn forever in hell because of what he or she or they did to you?

2-12.1: Why is saying "No, I don't want them to burn in hell forever" a beginning form of forgiveness?" ***Forgiveness is all about having others delivered from judgment.***

Part 2, Chapter 13

Reflection:

- Have you ever thought that it might be stupid to forgive?

2-13.1: Who is the author of that thought that it's stupid to forgive? ***Satan***

Read Luke 7:37-50

2-13.2: Who is most likely to love you the most:

- A. Someone you forgive for something small?
- B. *Someone you forgive for something big?***

2-13.3: Is there any guarantee that the person you forgive will love you more, or even at all? ***No, it's only a likely hood.***

Read Luke 6:32-36

2-13.4: What can we expect with real certainty if we love our enemies? ***We will have a great reward in heaven, and we'll become like Jesus in character with all the peace, joy and victory that goes with that.***

2-13.5: What should we not be expecting if we lend to them? ***If we lend to them we should not expect anything back.***

Author's Note: While it's likely that those you forgive will love you more, there is no guarantee. Loving your enemies and doing good to them has the guarantee of a heavenly reward and of changing your character. If they repay you with kindness and if they love you more, that's great. That's extra. But don't be disappointed if it doesn't happen.

Part 2, Chapter 14

Read Acts 22:4

2-14.1: How do we know that Saul of Tarsus killed more than one of God's children? ***He persecuted them to their death (plural).***

Read Acts 26:10

2-14.2: When Christians were put to death Saul cast his vote against: (circle your answer)

A. Him?

B. Her?

C. Them?

2-14.3: How many people have become God's spiritual children through the life and writings of the Apostle Paul? (circle your answer)

A. Hundreds?

B. Thousands?

D. Hundreds of thousands?

C. Millions?

Read Acts 8:4-10

2-14.4: How was the loss of Stephen leveraged into a gain for the Kingdom of God? ***The death of Stephen began a wave of persecution that spread the gospel of Christ even to non-Jewish people—Gentiles. The death of Stephen was also leveraged by the conversion of Saul into an apostle (Paul) who wrote 13 books of the Bible and became the Apostle to the Gentiles, spreading Christianity world-wide.***

Read Phil. 1:14

2-14.5: How was the loss of Paul's freedom leveraged into a gain for the Kingdom of God? ***Most of the brethren became more bold to speak the Word of God without fear. When Paul was in prison he couldn't be killed and that's where he wrote so many of his epistles that are now books of the Bible.***

2-14.6: Why is it so important to see what a person could become instead of freeze-framing a picture of what they are—as if they could not be changed even by God? ***It helps you forgive them. It helps you pray effectively for them.***

Additional Study: What are some ways God can leverage a loss into a great gain for his Kingdom?

Answer: 2 Cor. 4:17 It can be leveraged into great heavenly rewards.

Answer: Job 42:12-16 It can be leveraged into earthly blessings.

Answer: Acts 12:23 It can be leveraged into divine judgment.

Answer: 2 Cor. 1:4 It can be leveraged into comfort for others.

Activity: Write out Rom. 12:19

- Have you ever had God leverage a loss?

Read Acts 12:1-23.

Herod had the Apostle James killed with the sword. Unlike Saul, Herod was struck with a bolt of justice instead of a bolt of mercy.

2-14.7: This was leveraged judgment. Why can we say that? ***Because it wasn't an ordinary death. He was smitten by an angel in front of people and eaten by worms very suddenly.***

Part 2, Chapter 15

Read 2 Tim. 2:24-26

2-15.1: If someone is an opponent to a godly person it means they have been taken

_____ ***captive*** _____ by the _____ ***devil*** _____ to do his _____ ***will*** _____.

2-15.3: Since that is so, who is the victim, really? ***The miserable captive of Satan.***

Read Luke 22:31-32

2-15.4: In the matter of Peter's denial of Jesus, who did Jesus see as the victim, himself or Peter?
Peter

Reflection:

- Who do you see as the victim – yourself or the person who harmed you that was taken captive by the devil to do his will?
- *Get them to admit that a usual response is to feel sorry for ourselves instead of the person who is a captive of Satan.*

Part 2, Chapter 16

Reflection:

- Have you ever used a pressure cooker or seen someone else use one?
People use them in canning.

2-16.1: Why is a pressure relief valve essential to avoid an explosion? ***It lets off excess pressure to avoid an explosion.***

Read Luke 6:27-28

2-16.2: Why would Jesus tell you to pray for those who persecute you? (Circle your answer)

- A. For their benefit? B. For your benefit? **C. Both?**

2-16.3: Who benefits first when you pray for your enemies? You or them? ***You. You let off the negative emotions and are immediately blessed.***

Reflection:

- Do you have any real enemies? *This is not a trick question. If you have real enemies you need to identify them.*
- Who bugs you the most?
- Who causes you the most trouble? *Get people to think this through so that they can apply it to their own lives. Who are their enemies? If we don't admit to having any, then we don't have to pray for anybody or do good to anybody. We can be spiritually lazy.*
- Are you letting off the steam, the frustration, anger and negative emotions by praying for them? *Yes? No? Not enough?*
- If no, why not?
- When do you plan to start praying for them?

2-16.4: What are some ways that people explode or blow up when they do not release the pressure of frustration and negative emotions in a positive way?" ***Heart attacks, strokes, nervous breakdowns, all kinds of stress related diseases, quicker aging, bad decisions, etc.*** (Your class may come up with many more answers.)

Activity:

- Lead the class in a time of prayer for those who are causing them the most trouble.

Part 2, Chapter 17

Read Rom. 12:17-21

2-17.1: Why should we do something good for someone who is causing us trouble rather than taking revenge? ***It will keep us from being overcome by evil. It will bring greater conviction to them. It will leave room for God's wrath if he wishes to avenge us. It will be a great witness to them about God's love in Christ.***

Read Luke 6:27-35

2-17.2: In verses 27-28 what four things did Jesus say to do to or for an enemy? ***1) Love them, 2) pray for them, 3) bless them, and 4) do good to them.***

2-17.3: Why is it so much better to do all four things than just one? ***Doing all four leads to reconciliation, love and healing of relationships much faster. It also brings more personal joy. You will also have a great heavenly reward and you will mature into a full grown child of God with tremendous fellowship with the heavenly Father.***

Additional Study: Read the story of Joseph and his mean brothers.
Gen. Chapters 37-45, especially Chapter 37 and Chapter 45.

As a teacher, you can sum up this story in just a few minutes for the purpose of discussion. You probably will not want to read the whole story in class. Hopefully, you will have asked your students to read this in advance.

2-17.4: Joseph had the power to harm his brothers but instead he did good to them. This led to family what? ***Reconciliation***

2-17.5a: Is reconciliation like a snack or a feast? **Feast.**

b: But why? ***It is so filling and satisfying and delightful.***

Reflection:

- Do you have a story of reconciliation you have experienced or witnessed that would be good to share briefly with the class?
- What broken relationship would you like to see healed?
- What person do you want to be reconciled to?
- *Let's pray for that!*

Lead them in prayer: Get them to desire and ask for a Joseph style miracle of reconciliation. Remember, God did not kill Joseph's brothers. He gave them back to Joseph in a miracle of family reconciliation.

Part 2, Chapter 18

Read 1 Pet. 2:13 and 2 Cor. 12:10

2-18.1: What are two things we can do for the Lord's sake? ***We submit to governmental authorities for the Lord's sake and we can delight in weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions and difficulties.***

2-18.2: Could we forgive for the Lord's sake? **Yes**

2-18.3: What did Jesus do to keep "that person" from going to hell? ***He died on the cross to stand between them and hell as a roadblock, doing everything he could to keep them from going to hell. He paid the price for their salvation, if they will just accept it.***

2-18.4: Since Jesus has done so much to provide a way for that person to be forgiven and taken to heaven, could you forgive that person for Jesus' sake? ***Of course!***

Activity:

- Lead the class in prayer: Have them actually tell the Lord, "*Lord, for your sake, I forgive that person.*"

Part 2, Chapter 19

Read John 17:10

2-19.1: How does this apply to you? ***Jesus wants you to feel like the person you are having difficulty with belongs to you so that you'll fight for them, not against them.***

Reflection:

- Have the class give examples of someone going all out to help, love or reclaim their own.
- Have you ever "claimed" someone for the Kingdom of God and later saw them saved or delivered?

Read Exod. 32:7, 11-12 and Exod. 33:1

2-19.2: Why did God keep saying to Moses, “Your people have sinned”? ***He wanted Moses to feel that they were his people so that he would intercede for them.***

2-19.3: Why did Moses keep saying to God, “Remember, the Israelites are Your people”? ***Moses felt God would not destroy them if he would still remember that they were his very own people.***

Reflection:

- How many people in the Body of Christ actually have a John 17:10 attitude, in your opinion?
- Do you have a John 17:10 attitude?
- Would you like one?
- Lead the class in praying, “Lord, let me feel what you feel for your people.”
- Were any of your prayers worded a little differently?
- Would you like to share your written prayer?

2-19.4: Why is a John 17:10 attitude necessary for great leadership? (Note: *The greatest leaders in both the Old and New Testament, Moses and Jesus, both had this attitude.*) ***Leaders make great sacrifices for those they claim as their very own.***

2-19.5: What would have happened to ancient Israel if either God or Moses had said, “Those people are not mine?” ***They would have been destroyed in judgment.***

Additional Study: Read Hos. 1:9-10

2-19.6: Why was it so ominous for Hosea to hear God say that the Israelites are “not my people?” ***It meant that God had given them over to judgment and national destruction.***

Additional Study: Read Dan. 9:19

2-19.7: Did Daniel appeal to God in intercession by reminding God that the people were his very own? ***Yes***

Consider: Perhaps we should be reminding God that the Pilgrims dedicated this nation and continent to God when they landed at Plymouth Rock.

2-19.8: Why would that be a good idea? ***As we appeal to God to send national revival instead of national destruction we should appeal to him to remember us as his very own.***

Part 2, Chapter 20

Read Rom. 14:13

2-20.1: What must we stop? ***We must stop passing judgment on one another.***

2-20.2: What must we determine to avoid doing to each other? ***We must avoid putting stumbling blocks in the way of a brother or sister.***

Read Rom. 14:20 and 1 Cor. 10:32

2-20.3: What are some ways that a believer could lay a stumbling stone for another believer?

In Paul's day, eating food sacrificed to an idol might have emboldened some weak Christian to keep on worshiping and honoring idols. What answers do your students give?

Read Mark 9:42

2-20.4: Why is laying a stumbling stone for another believer a very serious thing? ***God considers laying stumbling stones as harmful to others and that is sinful.***

Reflection:

- Has someone caused you to stumble spiritually?
- Have you ever caused someone else to stumble?

Read John 11:9-10 and 1 John 1:7

2-20.5: We cannot justify stumbling over stumbling stones put in front of us. It would be our sin to stumble over them and their sin to lay them in front of us. How do we know that we have no excuses for stumbling over stumbling stones? ***We can go around or step over a stumbling stone if we walk in the light of fellowship with God.***

Reflection:

- Have you ever had to go around a stumbling block or use one as a stepping-stone?
- *We don't have to stumble if we walk in the light of Jesus.*
- We can fail badly at meeting the emotional needs of our family if our priorities are wrong. By ignoring family members and failing to spend the proper amount of time with them we endanger them.

2-20.6: How could the devil twist this principle and bring harm to you? ***He could use it to condemn you for something you were not responsible for. He would try to give you false guilt. False guilt hangs around because it can't be forgiven. God doesn't forgive false guilt because it doesn't really exist.***

*Read this word from the author to the class: Never let the devil grade your report card. He's not your teacher, and only your teacher has a right to grade your report card. Not the janitor, not the bus driver, not the person walking down the street. Only your teacher. The Holy Spirit is your teacher. If the Holy Spirit corrects you it will be a **pull** into the heart of God and you'll feel better. If the devil condemns you it will be a **push** away from God and you'll feel terrible. Don't allow him to do that.*

Reflection:

- Do you try hard to meet the emotional needs of your family members? Your mate? Your children? Your grandchildren? Your parents?
- How could you improve in this area?
- What actions should you take?

Part 2, Chapter 21

Reflection:

- Have you ever been angry at God or disappointed with God?
- Have you ever felt like God failed you?
- Since these things can crush the human spirit, do you feel like you have a “crushed spirit?”

Read Prov. 17:22, Prov. 18:14 and Ps. 34:18.

2-21.1: What does God do for those who are crushed in spirit? ***He saves them.***

Read and write out Eph. 3:20

Reflection:

If you are thinking the answer is something small and you are asking for something small God may skip over it to do something bigger and better.

- Has this ever happened to you?
- Give an example of where you have experienced a disappointment only to find out that God was doing something bigger and better.
- *Use these testimonies to encourage others who still don't understand why God didn't do certain things.*

Read John 11:21 and John 11:32

2-21.2: What were Martha and Mary believing God for? ***They were believing for Jesus to come and heal their brother.***

Additional Study: Read all of John 11.

2-21.3: How much bigger was God thinking in the case of Martha and Mary's prayer and their disappointment? ***He was thinking of raising Lazarus from the dead, so hundreds would believe, so the Pharisees would get jealous and plan to kill him. Then, by his sacrificial death, God could provide the redemption price for everyone in the whole world, making a way for a church to be formed from every tribe, tongue and nation in the whole world.***

Reflection:

- Have you ever played the game of checkers?
- Have you ever sacrificed a checker in order to double jump your opponent?

Additional Study: Refer to 1 Sam. 31, the story of Ziklag, David's town being burned.

2-21.4: When David got “jumped by Amalekite raiders how bad did he feel? ***He wept until he had no more strength to weep.***

2-21.5: What bigger thing was God doing? ***God helped David recover everything of his own, plus all the plunder these raiders had taken. He used that to give gifts to the elders of Judah. Then they made him king in Hebron. God had literally opened up the King Row for him, by allowing him to be jumped.***

Refer to the entire story of what God did to and through Joseph in Genesis, chapters 37-50.

A word from the author: The author believes that Jacob must have prayed, "God, bring my boy home safe tonight," as he sent him off to check on the older brothers. This prayer was too small.

2-21.6: What did God do instead? **God took Joseph to Egypt, schooled him in administration of a large household, then schooled him in the administration of a prison. Then he taught Joseph how to move in the gifts of the Spirit and made Joseph the right hand man for Pharaoh. He was schooled in administration over a nation for seven more years as he stored food. Then for the next seven years Joseph administered food to that nation and the surrounding nations. God used Joseph to save all the descendants of Jacob and there in Egypt these people became a nation within a nation. Moses led them out to be a witness nation to the whole world.**

Read Prov. 3:5-6 and John 14:1

2-21.7: What must we do even if we do not understand what God is doing? **Trust that he is doing something good for us and being faithful.**

Read Jer. 32:40-41

Note: We are in the new covenant Jeremiah foretold.

2-21.8: What will God always be doing for those who keep the New Covenant in Christ? **He will never stop doing good to them and he will rejoice in doing good to them.**

Conclusion

Read Phil. 3:10-11

c-1: What would it be like to be like Jesus in his death? **We'd die without bitterness and unforgiveness.**

Read John 14:26 and John 16:13

c-2: Why is it so necessary to ask the Holy Spirit to be your coach in the application of these truths to your daily life? **The applications will be truthful, you'll be reminded of them, and you'll be taught just how to apply them. You'll avoid the condemnation of the devil and be comforted by The Comforter.**

Read James 3:1 in the NIV translation

c-3: Why would it be a good thing for you to pray for the author of *21 Ways to Forgive*? **Teachers will be judged more strictly so they need prayers that God will help them practice all that they teach. If their teachings are very helpful, then they are targeted more by the devil, who is always trying to stop the transfer of truth.**

Ask your students to pray for you to be able to practice what you have taught.

Activity:

- Have the class read the author's prayer on page 99 of *21 Ways to Forgive*.
- Have the class members write down any part of that prayer that seems especially significant and meaningful to them.
- Ask if they can say to God, "This is *my* prayer!"

Read James 5:16**Reflection:**

- Will you make a commitment to pray for each other for divine enablement to put these truths into practice?

CLOSE IN PRAYER, MAKING A COMMITMENT TO PRAY FOR EACH OTHER.

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