

I. Overcoming Bitterness

- Renounce sinful **attitudes** and unrealistic **expectations**. (Eph. 4:32, Col. 3:13)
 1. Expecting the offender to earn or deserve forgiveness
 2. Desiring to punish the offender
 3. Demanding a guarantee
- Draw on God's **strength**. (Phil. 2:13)
- Choose to live in **forgiveness**. (Col. 3:13)

*We need to capture conflict for
God's glory!*

Biblical Peacemaking

The Power of Forgiveness

1. Forgive as God Forgave You

"Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."

Ephesians 4:32

A. Neither a feeling nor forgetting, nor excusing (at first)

*B. Forgiveness is a **decision**.*

C. How do you forgive?

"I choose to forgive _____ (name the person) for _____ (describe the offense) and how it made you feel _____ (describe your response to the offense). I release _____ (name the person) to You, O Lord."

D. How do you know if you have not forgiven?

- * **Brooding** over the offense or the offender
- * **Engrossed** over hurt feelings
- * **Gossiping** with others about the offense, the offender or your hurt feelings

E. Living in forgiveness

* Four promises modeled after God's forgiveness:
(Col. 3:13; 1 Cor. 13:5)

"In response to God's love for me, and by His grace, I forgive you and..."

- 1) I promise I will not brood about this incident.
- 2) I promise I will not bring this incident up and use it against you.
- 3) I promise I will I will not gossip to others about this incident.
- 4) I promise I will not allow this incident to hinder our relationship."

F. When should you forgive?

(Luke 17:3-4; Eph. 4:32)

First, do some biblical math...

Repentance + Forgiveness = Reconciliation

Then consider those four promises above...

- Promise #1 Immediately
Unconditional, a commitment you make to God
- Promise #2-4 Upon repentance
Conditional, a commitment made to the offender.
Minor offenses may be forgiven even if there is no confession or repentance.

Promises #2-4 For major offenses, these
Cont'd promises may need to be delayed until the problem is resolved by following the steps in Matthew 18.

Even when a problem is not resolved, and there is not reconciliation, you must still live in forgiveness toward the offender.

Forgiveness keeps you from bitterness.



G. What about the consequences?

- * There is a time for **mercy**. (Matt 18:21-35)
- * There is a time for **consequences**.
(Num. 14:20-23; Prov. 19:19)
Forgiveness of *personal* offenses does not necessarily release a person from the *material* consequences of their actions.

H. Overcoming Unforgiveness

- * Unforgiveness will **separate** you from God (Matt. 18:35)
- * Unforgiveness will give **Satan** control in your life (2 Cor. 2:10,11; Eph. 4:26,27)
- * Satan binds you through **bitterness**.
(2 Tim. 2:24-26)
- * *Forgive to please the Lord, protect your heart, and honor others.*