

LESSON 3: DEALING WITH HURTS

Part 1: Identifying Hurts

"Therefore, if you are offering a gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift."

Matthew 5:23-24

Personal Reflection

Ask God to show you if there are any ways that you have hurt your spouse. (If you are not married, think about a close friend or family member instead.) Think about the following areas and write down your thoughts:

- Is there anything that you have failed to do that you should be doing?
- Is there anything that you have done (or are doing) that you should not do?
- Have you failed to meet your spouse's needs in any way?
- Have you said anything that has been hurtful?
- Have you failed to show love and encouragement?

"If your brother or sister sins against you, go and show them their fault, just between the two of you."
Matthew 18:15

Personal Reflection

Now take a moment and think about ways that you have been hurt. It may or may not be something that your partner realizes is hurting you.

- Are there ways that you have been hurt by your spouse?
- Pray and commit to start discussing these things with your spouse this week.

Part 2: Apologize when we hurt other people

There are 6 Steps for Apologizing to restore relationships when you have hurt others:

1. **Confess to God** – When we hurt our spouse we also disobey God. We need to go to God and ask for His forgiveness for what we have done wrong. Accepting God’s forgiveness will give us a humble heart to confess and apologize to the other person.
2. **Confess to the other person without giving excuses** – Often when we confess, we want to explain why we did what we did. However, this can make it hard for the other person to forgive us.

Example 1:

Blaming: I know I criticized you in front of your friends yesterday, but I wouldn’t have if you hadn’t made us one hour late.

Proper: I hurt you by criticizing you in front of your friends yesterday; it was unkind of me.

Example 2:

Blaming: I know I was grumpy and rude towards you last night, but you should have remembered that your mother had been criticizing me a lot lately and I am tired from all the work.

Proper: It was selfish and insensitive of me to be rude and grumpy towards you last night. I am sorry I hurt you.

Compare each of the examples above. Which way would you be more likely to forgive?

3. **Apologize** – Make sure that you are specific about what you are sorry for and express your sorrow sincerely. Say something like “I am extremely sorry for what I did,” or “I feel really bad about the way that I treated you.”
4. **Ask for forgiveness** – We need to realize that we need forgiveness. It may be that our partner is not ready to forgive us immediately so we may need to be patient. Pray that God would help your partner to forgive you. You should not force them to say they forgive you against their will.
5. **Change your behavior** – It is not enough to confess and apologize if we don’t plan on changing and if we intend to keep making the same mistake. Part of restoring the relationship is making sure that you are willing and intent on changing your behavior. To the best of your ability you should try not to do it again.
6. **Accept the consequences** – The person may need time to forgive you. You need to be patient and ask God to help them to forgive you. Some hurts might destroy trust in a relationship. You need to realize that your spouse may not trust you as easily as they did before. This is a consequence of your action. Apologizing doesn’t automatically make everything new. Sometimes you have to live with the consequences of what you have done. It takes time for the hurt that you have caused to go away.

Application

Personal Reflection

Ask God to show you if there is anything in your marriage that you need to apologize for.

1. Create a plan of when you will talk with your spouse. When you talk with your spouse, apologize for the hurts you have caused. Try going through these steps. If you are not married then you can use these same steps to resolve hurt in any relationship that you may have—for example, with parents, siblings, relatives or friends.
2. Pick a good time for both people to talk. Find a time that will not be interrupted and both people aren't too tired.
3. Pray and ask God to give you a humble heart and to give you the right words to say. Pray that God will prepare your spouse to hear you and be willing to forgive you.
4. Commit to the Lord to do this. Is there anyone that can pray for you and hold you accountable to do this?

Part 3: Forgive when people hurt us

| Forgiveness is NOT | Forgiveness IS |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. A feeling2. Accepting injustice or tolerating hurtful or abusive behavior3. Demanding a person change before we forgive them4. Forgetting5. Pretending that it doesn't matter | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. A choice we make2. We face the wrong that was done, but choose not to hold a hurt against our spouse3. Trusting God to deal with the other person and forgiving even before they change4. Releasing our spouse into God's hands when we feel anger or hurt; not seeking revenge5. Accepting Jesus' death as payment for all sins |

Personal Reflection

- What new idea did you learn about forgiveness?
- How can you apply what you have learned in your marriage this next week?

Part 4: Steps to Forgiveness

If the hurt you experienced was small, then it might be easier to move through these steps. If the hurt was more significant, then this process may take more time.

Steps of forgiveness

1. Acknowledge that what was done to you was unjust.
2. Admit any anger and desire to hurt the person.
3. Ask God to help you forgive the other person.
4. Choose to take no revenge.
5. Let go of the desire to hurt the person.
6. Give the responsibility for judgment to God.
7. Ask God to remove any bitterness and resentment.
8. Ask God to heal your pain and all the consequences of the injustice in your life.

With a Partner (not your spouse)

- Which steps to forgiveness are the most difficult for you?
- What could help you in making this step easier?
- What is one thing you need to forgive your spouse for?

If you can't think of anything with your spouse, then think of anyone else that may have treated you unjustly. If you still can't think of anything, then just pray quietly for those who are going through the process.