

CANDY COVERED HAND GRENADES - PART TWO (3 Part Series)

(If you can, use these notes with the coordinating Power Point file.)

FORGIVENESS

So often, our hurt feelings can stay with us for so long they turn into bitterness. Bitterness is one of the most dangerous things you can carry. It is the “cancer of the soul.” It spreads faster than the common cold and will threaten you at every level.

There is a cure for this plague. One of the most beautiful words in any language is the word “forgive.” The word is a common one, but the essence of the word is in the last part, “give.” To for-GIVE means to give someone a release from the wrong that he has done to you. It means to give up any right of retaliation.

GIVE THE FOLLOWING ILLUSTRATION:

THE BEAR AND THE SKUNK

Dale Carnegie once noted that the only animal the grizzly bear would allow to eat with him was the skunk. Grizzly bears in Yellowstone Park often come to eat at the place where garbage is dumped. This huge bear can fight and beat almost any animal in the West, but it lets the skunk share its meal. Carnegie said that the grizzly surely resented the skunk and could have easily killed the little creature in any fight. No doubt, the bear would have liked to have gotten even with him for his intrusion, but he didn't. Why? Because he knew the high cost of getting even.

READ ALOUD: MATTHEW 6:14

NOW READ ALOUD: COLOSSIANS 3:13

(Insert your thoughts here.)

READ ALOUD: MATTHEW 18:21-22

Peter thinks he is doing pretty well to forgive seven times, but Jesus shocks him by saying Peter needs to forgive seventy times seven (490 times). Do you think that is a lot more than anyone can expect? What did Jesus mean? Answer: He was using “hyperboli” or overstatement for its shocking effect. What Jesus meant is that we are to forgive as many times as it takes to free ourselves from the plague of bitterness that our unforgiveness brings on us.

Introduce your listeners to this parable, which follows. Give them some insight into what to look for as you read it. Tell them that Jesus will tell Peter an easily understood story about what happens if you hold onto unforgiveness and bitterness.

NOW READ ALOUD: MATTHEW 18:23-35

(Parable of the Unforgiving Debtor)

Describe the value of a talent.

Talent is about 75 pounds

- Gold is right now at about \$1000/oz.
- A talent of gold would be about a million dollars (\$1000 x 16 oz. x 75 lbs.)

- 10,000 talents would be about 10.8 Billion dollars. This is how much he owed the king **Jesus is emphasizing that this was a debt this servant could NEVER pay.** This guy leaves the king and finds someone that owes him money (100 denarii...
 - A denarius is about 1 day's wage)
 - A day's wage today of about \$100 x 100 days = \$10,000.

**EMPHASIZE THE PUNCH LINE (VERSES 31-34)
FOLLOW WITH THE APPLICATION (VERSE 35)**

Now elaborate of the lesson learned from the application.

**LET'S TALK ABOUT FORGIVENESS. THERE ARE THREE THINGS
THAT FORGIVENESS IS NOT:**

- 1. FORGIVENESS IS NOT BASED ON OUR FEELINGS... IT IS A DECISION (CHOICE).**

GIVE THE FOLLOWING ILLUSTRATION:
RINGING THE BELL

Corrie Ten Boom, A Christian woman who was held in a German concentration camp during World War Two, told of not being able to forget a wrong that had been done to her. She had forgiven the person, but she kept rehashing the incident and so she could not sleep. Finally, Corrie cried out to God for help in putting the problem to rest. Listen to what Carrie wrote.

“His help came in the form of a kindly Lutheran pastor, to whom I confessed my failure after two sleepless weeks.” “Up in the church tower,” he said, nodding out the window, “is a bell which is rung by pulling on a rope. But you know what? After the sexton lets go of the rope, the bell keeps on swinging. First ding, then dong. Slower and slower until there's a final dong and it stops. I believe the same thing is true of forgiveness. When we forgive, we take our hand off the rope. But if we've been tugging at our grievances for a long time, we mustn't be surprised if the old angry thoughts keep coming for a while. They're just the ding-dongs of the old bell slowing down.”

“And so it proved to be. There were a few more midnight reverberations, a couple of dings when the subject came up in my conversations, but the force—which was my willingness in the matter—had gone out of them. They came less and less often and at the last stopped altogether: we can trust God not only above our emotions, but also above our thoughts.”

- 2. FORGIVENESS IS NOT BEING FAKE.**

Elaborate on this thought.

- 3. FORGIVENESS IS NOT FORGETTING WHAT HAPPENED.**

“You cannot get ahead while you are getting even.” - Rep. Dick Armey
Elaborate on this thought and the quote.

Listen to the definition of the word, “forgiveness” (from MATTHEW 6:14).

1. to let go, give up a debt, forgive, to remit
2. to give up, keep no longer
3. to permit, allow, not to hinder, to give up a thing to a person

HERE ARE KEYS TO OVERCOMING FORGIVENESS AND DENYING A HOME TO THE BITTERNESS THAT FOLLOWS.

Recognize that unforgiveness is not a feeling. It is a choice.

READ ALOUD: 2 CORINTHIANS 10:5

The words “bringing into captivity” are from the Greek word *aichmalotidzo*, which pictured a soldier who has captured an enemy and now leads him into captivity with the point of a sharpened spear thrust into the flesh in his back.

- The captured enemy knows that if he tries to move or get away, the Roman soldier will shove that spear clear through his torso and kill him.
- Therefore, this captive does not dare move but remains silent, submissive, and non-resistant.

However, when Paul uses the word *aichmalotidzo* in this verse, he writes in a tense that describes the continuous action of taking such an enemy captive.

- This is not a one-time affair; it is the lifelong occupation of this soldier.
- He constantly has a spear in his hand, and he is always pushing it against the flesh of an enemy’s backside as he leads him away to permanent captivity.

The devil loves to make a playground out of your mind and emotions. How can you win the battle for your mind and keep him from doing this? 2 Corinthians 10:5 gives you the weapons you need to bring to bear against him trying to capture your thinking.

1. Bring every thought into obedience to Christ. Make the right choices.
2. Recognize the thought. Identify its origin.
 - Did it come from you... or from somewhere else?
 - Is it a thought that God would approve of?
 - Will it lead you to success or trap you in unforgiveness.
3. Make it a habit to make a choice... to take control of your thoughts before they take control of you.

READ ALOUD: PHILIPPIANS 4:8

4. Watch your mouth. Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks.
5. Take these four instructions to heart.
 - a. Remove yourself from the judgment seat. It belongs to God.
 - b. Develop filters, not walls.
 - c. Release thoughts of unforgiveness and bitterness to God. There is a weakness there.
 - d. Do not expect to receive your affirmation from them. They will only drive your emotions down and keep you from becoming all you can become in Christ.