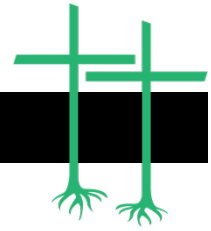


ROOTS TRANSFORMATION TEAM

Forgiveness

Week 3



Why is forgiveness important? How do we help someone express forgiveness? Is reconciliation always necessary?

❑ Six Questions to Identify a Lack of Forgiveness:

- Does remembering a particular hurtful event trigger a strong emotional reaction?
- Does the stress of remembering hurtful events trigger physical reactions or discomfort?
- Does the painful experience bring to mind anything for which God can be praised? (Or are you still upset at God with regard to that experience?)
- Can the offending party be thought of with a sincere wish that good things will happen to his or her life?
- Do you have a complete sense that forgiveness really has been accomplished?
- Is forgiveness producing positive results? (namely, in the ways we feel about ourselves and the ways in which we relate to others).
- **Source:** Chapter 3: “Facing Truth and Reality” in *Choosing Forgiveness*, Third Edition, by John & Paula Sandford and Lee Bowman. 1996, 1999, and 2003. Clear Stream, Inc. Publishing. pp.65–73.

❑ The Problem of Bitterness.

- **What is bitterness?**
 - Bitterness is harshness, anger, and other unhealthy negative reactions that generally grow out of unforgiveness in our hearts.
 - The Greek word for “bitter” is πικρία (*pikria*), which refers not only to bitter taste but also an attitude of “bitterness, animosity, anger, harshness.”
 - **Source:** BDAG: (Bower, Danker, Arndt, Gingrich), 3rd Edition – A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature
 - Bitterness is any attitude that, when experienced by other people, produces an internal reaction akin to the face made when we taste something bitter.
 - **Bitterness flows from unforgiveness.**
 - “Perhaps the most evident sign of holding unforgiveness in our hearts is the way we sometimes attack other people when we are

wronged and become irritated. If the heart is full of unforgiveness, that's what naturally will be reflected in our speech." (Sandford, John and Paula; Bowman, Lee. *Choosing Forgiveness*, Third Edition. Clear Stream, Inc. Publishing, 1996, 1999, and 2003. p.101.)

- **Matthew 12:34–35** – You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of. ³⁵ A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him.
- **Bitterness defiles others.**
 - **Hebrews 12:14–15** – Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. ¹⁵ See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.
 - *More on this in the later section on bitter root judgments and expectancies.*
- **Bitterness locks us into a torturous prison.**
 - **Matthew 18:21–35** – Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?"
²² Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.
²³ "Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴ As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold was brought to him [or 10,000 "talents." A talent is worth about 20 years of a day laborer's wages, so this debt is worth about 200,000 years of work]. ²⁵ Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.
²⁶ "At this the servant fell on his knees before him. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.' ²⁷ The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.
²⁸ "But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins [or 100 "denarii." A denarii was the usual daily wage of a day laborer, which means this debt, for a 6-day work week, was worth about four months of labor]. He grabbed him and began to choke him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he demanded.
²⁹ "His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.'
³⁰ "But he refused. Instead, he went off and had

the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt.³¹ When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened.

³² “Then the master called the servant in. ‘You wicked servant,’ he said, ‘I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to.’³³ Shouldn’t you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?’³⁴ In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.

³⁵ “This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

- Notice that the king forgave the impossible debt first. Our God is a proactive forgiver.
- Notice the servant’s harsh (bitter) attack on his own debtor (v.28).
- Notice that the unmerciful servant reaped exactly what he sowed (vv.30, 34).
 - **Luke 6:37–38** – “Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.³⁸ Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”
 - Notice that the results of sowing and reaping are always escalated. The unmerciful servant threw his fellow servant into prison (v.30), but the king handed that man over to the jailers to be tortured (v.34).
- Notice that forgiveness must be “from the heart” (v.35), which means it must be a complete work that penetrates to the core of you.
- **A refusal to forgive makes us vulnerable to demonic attack.**
 - **2 Corinthians 2:10–11** – Anyone you forgive, I also forgive. And what I have forgiven—if there was anything to forgive—I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake,¹¹ in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.
 - The enemy will capitalize on the clouded thinking and self-protectionism that accompany unforgiveness, outwitting us by tempting us toward bitter resentment,

anger, and harsh attitudes and reactions that are uncharacteristic of Christ.

- “If we harbor unforgiveness, there is no way we can see reality—all we have is our own subjective perceptions. . . . The responses we make to the circumstances and events of our life when we are very young determine the way we are apt to respond to events throughout life. Unforgiveness learned early in life is like mud in our eyes. It keeps us from seeing with clarity and truth because we are so bothered by what has happened to us previously.” (Sandford, John and Paula; Bowman, Lee. *Choosing Forgiveness*, Third Edition. Clear Stream, Inc. Publishing, 1996, 1999, and 2003. pp.172.)
- “When we hang on to unforgiveness, our discernment becomes warped because we interpret issues from a childish point of view.

The unforgiving ways we hold within us are actually childish ways. When we are unforgiving, we see, feel, and respond childishly. The way of forgiveness and love causes increasing maturity that provides real answers and real resolutions for problems.” (Sandford, John and Paula; Bowman, Lee. *Choosing Forgiveness*, Third Edition. Clear Stream, Inc. Publishing, 1996, 1999, and 2003. p.174.)

- **Ephesians 4:26–27** – “In your anger do not sin”: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, ²⁷ and do not give the devil a foothold.
 - Unprocessed anger is a foothold for the enemy.
 - The enemy lies to us, telling us that we need to protect ourselves by putting up emotional walls.
 - Unprocessed emotions are leverage points for this lie—footholds for the enemy by which he works his strategy. When we agree with him, we harden our hearts in unforgiveness, which soon leads to bitterness.

□ Understanding Forgiveness

- **What is forgiveness?**
 - Forgiveness is not a feeling.
 - Forgiveness is a decision to put our bitterness on the cross so that we can have better relationships with God and others.
 - “Rendering terms closely associated with ‘freedom, release, letting go’ (*aphièmi*, *aphesis*, *apolyo*), ‘forgiveness’ in the Gospels represents less a static, juridical concept of expunging a record of transgression than a dynamic, social-psychological

experience of being released from the deleterious effects of guilt and sinful behavior and restoring broken relations between human beings and God and among themselves. Forgiveness thus most closely aligns with liberation, salvation, reconciliation and restoration.” (Spencer, F. Scott, PhD. “Forgiveness of Sins.” *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, Second Edition. Gen. ed. Joel B. Green. InterVarsity Press, 2013. p.284.)

- “Forgiveness is saying that we release the person from whatever we might think they owe us and that we refuse to judge them anymore. We relinquish our rights for vengeance and retribution and turn them over to the Lord to deal with as He sees fit. Forgiveness may sound like, ‘You owed me love and protection. You did not give them to me. I forgive you that debt now.’” (Reese, Andy. *Freedom Tools for Overcoming Life’s Tough Problems*. Chosen Books, 2008. p.119.)
- **The way we forgive others directly relates to the way we experience forgiveness.**
 - God forgives first:
 - **Ephesians 4:31–32** – Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. ³² Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.
 - **Colossians 3:13** – Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.
 - We learn how to forgive by experiencing God’s proactive forgiveness.
 - If we do not forgive, our own forgiveness will be rescinded:
 - Remember the parable of the unmerciful servant (Matthew 18:21–35). The king forgave first. But when the servant did not respond in kind toward his fellow servant, the king reinstated his debt.
 - **Matthew 6:14–15** – For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.
 - The problem is not so much that God no longer wants to forgive us; it’s that God’s forgiveness is meant to set us free. But if we deliberately choose to remain in sinful unforgiveness after being forgiven, no sacrifice is left (Hebrews 10:26–27).

- **Mark 11:24–25** – Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. ²⁵ And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.”
 - Our decision to forgive is one of the factors leading to answered prayers.
- “Forgiveness by God motivates forgiveness of others; and in turn, forgiveness of others authenticates alliance with God.” (Spencer, F. Scott, PhD. “Forgiveness of Sins.” *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, Second Edition. Gen. ed. Joel B. Green. InterVarsity Press, 2013. p.285.)
- **Real forgiveness is “from the heart.”**
 - **Matthew 18:35** – “This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”
 - Forgiveness is not a feeling, but it does produce feelings.
 - “The mystery of unforgiveness is that most Christians know they should be forgiving, but understand very little how forgiveness is really accomplished. What typically happens is that when we experience a hurt, we attempt to handle the need to forgive by simply repressing our feelings. Or, we attempt to deal with serious matters of the heart by handling them mentally. Feelings are thus denied, rationalized away, or simply shoved down inside.
Or, we go through the motions of praying forgiveness on the surface, unaware that our heart hasn't been in it and that forgiveness hasn't really happened.
This is the reason so many of us wind up fighting battles with each other and within ourselves. Our true feelings are neither defined nor dealt with. We think we have accomplished forgiveness, but we have mostly suppressed feelings in an attempt to ‘be Christian.’ In reality, suppression of feelings avoids dealing with them and creates a false sense of being a forgiving person. Then when the pressure of so many pent-up feelings becomes too great, an explosion of emotion erupts and our stored-up suppressed hostility comes spilling out.” (Sandford, John and Paula; Bowman, Lee. *Choosing Forgiveness*, Third Edition. Clear Stream, Inc. Publishing, 1996, 1999, and 2003. p.105.)
- **Real forgiveness is only reasonable for the Christian.**
 - Bitterness is the defense mechanism of the carnal heart.

- When people have been hurt deeply by someone, they generally come to the conclusion that they must put up emotional walls to protect themselves from ever experiencing that same sort of hurt ever again.
- The deeper the hurt, the more intense the emotional walls that are needed to feel safe.
- Forgiveness is not only a decision to release the person from our anger and resentment; it is also a decision to trust the Lord for our protection and wellbeing.
 - Forgiveness only feels safe to someone who knows and understands our good God.
 - For this reason, when we see that someone needs to forgive, it's important to identify whether they're a Christian.
 - **If the person is a Christian**, then forgiveness means dying to bitterness and entrusting themselves to the Lord for future protection.
 - Forgiveness is choosing to put more faith in the Comforter who lives in us than in our own emotional defense mechanisms.
 - This means trusting that God will generally keep us safe from being so deeply hurt ever again, either by preventing a similar situation or by empowering our heart to navigate a similar situation with grace.
 - **If the person is NOT a Christian**, simply telling them to forgive is like asking them to make themselves vulnerable and unsafe.
 - Such a person needs to receive the gospel before they need to forgive.
 - F.B. Meyer once said, "Forgiveness is the exclusive prerogative of Christianity. The schools of ancient morality had four cardinal virtues—justice in human relations, prudence in the direction of affairs, fortitude in bearing trouble or sorrow, temperance or self-restraint. But they knew nothing of mercy or forgiveness, which is not natural to the human heart. Forgiveness is an exotic, which Christ brought with Him from Heaven."
- **Forgiveness requires faith.**
 - **Luke 17:3–6 – So watch yourselves.**

"If your brother or sister sins against you, rebuke them; and if they repent, forgive them. ⁴ 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."

⁵ The apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith!”

⁶ He replied, “If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and planted in the sea,’ and it will obey you.

- **John 15:5** – I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.
- Bitterness isn’t an anger problem; it’s a faith problem.
 - The solution is the gospel and an encounter with the Father’s love.

□ Understanding Reconciliation

- **Forgiveness and reconciliation are two different things.**
 - Forgiveness is one-sided; reconciliation is two-sided.
 - Forgiveness is the crucifixion of bitterness and the dismantling of emotional walls, putting faith in the Lord for our present and future wellbeing.
 - Reconciliation is a restoration to right relationship, which is only possible after we have forgiven.
- **God cares more about you having healthy relationships than about your acts of worship.**
 - **Matthew 5:23–24** – Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you,²⁴ leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.
- **Reconciliation is not always possible**
 - Sometimes the offender has long since died.
 - Sometimes the offender is a stranger from the past.
 - Sometimes the offender is unknown.
 - Sometimes there is not a reasonable way to contact the offender.
- **Proper reconciliation safe**
 - An abused person is not obligated to subject themselves to further abuse.
 - Reconciliation is not a restoration of the relationship as it once was. It is restoration to an appropriate relationship.
 - Depending on the magnitude of the crime, an appropriate relationship with an abuser is often a distant or entirely severed one. (This is not an excuse to avoid reconciliation when proper.)

❑ R.T. Kendall's Forgiveness Principles, from His Book *Total Forgiveness*:

○ 10 principles of what forgiveness is NOT:

- 1) Approval of what they did
 - What that person did was wrong, period.
- 2) Excusing what they did
 - God's idea of forgiveness is that what the person did was wrong, and a price must be paid. And then He paid it.
- 3) Justifying what they did
 - God does not justify sin. He justifies *people* by removing their sin.
 - When you forgive someone, it doesn't make what they did a good thing—even if good has resulted from it in the long run.
 - When good comes out of evil, it's not because the sin or evil produced good fruit. It's because God is powerful to redeem even the worst situations.
- 4) Pardoning what they did
 - A pardon is a release from earthly legal consequences. Forgiveness deals with the condition of my heart as an offended party, not the legal consequences of a person's actions.
 - The fact that I forgive someone does not mean that the legal system forgives them.
 - While Jesus has led many believers not to press charges against their offenders, this is not a requirement of forgiveness. Sometimes legal consequences are important to protect others.
- 5) Reconciliation
 - Again, forgiveness is one-sided; reconciliation is two-sided.
- 6) Denying [or repressing] what they did
 - Kendall connects this with what is often an unconscious choice to suppress emotions, repress memories, and avoid the pain of what happened by denying that it was actually a bad thing.
- 7) Blindness to what happened
 - Kendall differentiates this from the denial I just mentioned by identifying it as a conscious decision rather than subconscious.
 - He writes that "some people...feel that if they offer forgiveness, they are turning a blind eye to, or ignoring, the offense, and they believe that this would, in effect, be excusing a sin against God."

- Real forgiveness is **ONLY** found in union with Christ—the one who spoke from the cross, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

❏ Bitter Root Judgments and Expectancies

- **Understanding Bitter Roots**

- The most common and powerful practice in the old nature that Christian counselors must work to bring to death is bitter root judgment and expectancy.

Bitter root **judgment** operates by the power of law; we will reap what we have sown (Galatians 6:7). This is spoken of by the writer to the Hebrews: "See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled" (Hebrews 12:15).

Bitter root **expectancy**, on the other hand, is merely psychological. It is self-fulfilling prophecy: "I expect life to go in a particular way and it usually does." Whether or not it really does, we look at life through the lens of our unconscious expectations and treat others in ways that tend to bring back on us what we expected in the first place." (Sandford, John and Sandford, Mark. *A Comprehensive Guide to Deliverance and Inner Healing*. Chosen Books, 1992. p.62. Bold typeface added.)

- **Bitter roots are not an excuse for wrong behavior—especially for the born-again believer.**

- “What about free will? Are we simply controlled by other people’s roots? Of course not. We have free will and are responsible for our own actions. We can never get away with saying ‘it was her/his bitter root that made me do it.’

“But the power of the law in root judgments and expectancies is so great that resisting their defilements is like trying to stand against a gale, which pushes us one way when we are trying to go the opposite.” (Sandford, John and Sandford, Mark. *A Comprehensive Guide to Deliverance and Inner Healing*. Chosen Books, 1992. p.66.)

- **Deliverance is insufficient to deal with bitter roots.**

- These judgments and expectancies are conditions of the mind or dispositions of the heart, not demons.
- The solution is crucifixion (through forgiveness and renunciation of the lies believed)) and a resurrected new life that comes from right-seeing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

- “Demons take advantage of bitter roots to tighten their grip and add to their effects. Most of the time, however, the problems are caused not by demons but by hidden motives and structures in the heart. We may have to deliver and heal, but let's remember that demonic activity in these cases is an *effect* of the reaping, rather than the *cause*. Counsel and prayer are incomplete until the habit structures of judgment and expectancy have been replaced by positive anticipation that our Lord will cause life to go the opposite way- to blessing rather than harm.” (Sandford, John and Sandford, Mark. *A Comprehensive Guide to Deliverance and Inner Healing*. Chosen Books, 1992. p.67.)

☐ Who Do We Need to Forgive?

○ Family Members

- The closer you are to someone, the more it hurts when they wrong you.
- There is no perfect family, and therefore there is no such thing as a family that is completely free of any wrongdoing. In other words, if you have never forgiven your family for anything, I can pretty much guarantee that you need to.
- To be specific:
 - Our experiences with our earthly father or father figures have a tendency to skew our understanding of Father God.
 - Our experiences with our earthly mother or mother figures (who tend to inform our primary understanding of “nurture” and “comfort”) can sometimes skew our understanding of the Comforter (Holy Spirit). (see John 14:16-17)
 - Our experiences with our earthly siblings or close friends can occasionally skew our perspective of the One who calls us “brothers and sisters” (Jesus). (see Hebrews 2:11; Romans 8:29; and Mark 3:34)

○ Friends & Peers

- Betrayal, unhealthy interaction, perversion

○ Strangers

- Often marked by wrongdoing toward you or someone close (theft, rape, violence, rudeness, ungratefulness, etc.)
- Can be the root of racism, mistrust, or fears and anxieties in certain situations.

- **Authority figures**
 - Teachers, scout leaders, coaches, babysitters, government officials, etc.
- **Churches**
 - Church people wounded by pastors and other church people
 - Pastors wounded by church people, colleagues, and denominational officials
 - Poor theology or culture
 - Legalism vs. Passion
 - Carnal vs. Spiritual Christians
 - Orphans vs. Sons
- **God?**
 - God never does wrong, but sometimes we need to repent of our bitter judgments against Him.
- **Ourselves**
 - Forgiveness of self is vital to ongoing spiritual health.
 - Self-hatred is one of the most destructive forces a Christian can engage in.

□ **Right Ownership of Responsibility**

- **What the person did to you is entirely THEIR responsibility.**
 - If you were abused, it's not your fault.
 - If you were neglected, it has nothing to do with you.
 - Even if you did wrong to prompt the person's actions against you, you are not responsible for the way they treated you. Their actions were entirely their choice.
- **How you responded to that person is entirely YOUR responsibility.**
 - Your response is always within your control.
 - You are accountable before the Lord for any sinful words you have spoken, whether in the heat of the moment or in later interactions or conversations about the sinful scenario. Repentance is needed.
 - Your choice to become bitter is your own sinful response to another's sin. Bitterness needs to go to the cross.
- **As a Spirit-filled believer, whatever happens next is entirely YOUR responsibility.**
 - Bitterness waits for the other person to make the first move toward health.
 - In some cases, the healthiest thing for the other person is to put the ball in their court, but you still have to put it there. Be the one to initiate whenever possible.
 - If you did wrong, be the first to apologize.

- **There's a difference between rehearsing and confessing.**
 - “We are not talking about suppressing feelings. Legitimate feelings should be expressed. We need to become aware of the vast difference between *rehearsing* feelings and attitudes, and *confessing* them. We are in constant relationship with people who stimulate us—often to anger and hurt. In the name of honesty and in an attempt to defuse our angers, we can go around spilling all that is in our hearts—thinking that speaking feelings is the same as dealing with them. But without repentance and willingness to give our angers to Jesus to be put to death on the cross, what we actually are doing is continually *rehearsing* our negative feelings.
“When we rehearse our grievances, they become more and more ingrained in us and will become permanently lodged in our heart.
“If we are truly willing to deal with our issues and give our angers and bitternesses to Jesus to be dealt death blows, then what comes from our mouths will be *confession*.” (Sandford, John and Paula; Bowman, Lee. *Choosing Forgiveness*, Third Edition. Clear Stream, Inc. Publishing, 1996, 1999, and 2003. pp.101–102.)

❑ **Death to Demands and Manipulation.**

- **Forgiveness sets us free to truly love.**
 - “The process of forgiveness must begin with a simple act of choosing to begin the journey of forgiveness. Many people are reluctant to take that first step of choosing to forgive, believing that if they follow the path of forgiveness they will become weaklings who are consistently taken advantage of by others. This is not what forgiveness, grounded in love, is about. True love encourages a compassionate willingness to forgive, yet retains the strength of conviction that all parties must be fully accountable for their own decisions and behavior.
“Forgiveness grounded in true love is not a soft and naive yielding that excuses almost any kind of abuse people might direct at us. It is not a self-effacing meekness that lets people run all over us. True love releases a power within that enables us to make that risky decision to choose to forgive and to deal with the dynamics of working through what can be a painful give-and-take experience. . . .
“Love is compassionate, but it is also strong. Love is strong because it is God's way and when we love in God's name, we act in the enabling power of His Holy

Spirit. Such love is grounded in the authority of God and commands respect. It allows us to relate to others with integrity and enables us to take the risk of seeking committed relationships. Those who lack this divinely inspired power of love are more likely to fear commitment and less likely to risk forgiving others.

“To show true love toward others is to respect them enough to allow them to be accountable, particularly for the wounds they inflict on other people. Letting persons be accountable is different than demanding they be accountable. We cannot demand another persons repentance, and we seldom can establish a level of consequence that represents justice for their infractions. Even if we could control others by our demands, we would be robbing them of their personhood by making their decisions for them.

“Letting persons be accountable means respecting their personhood by allowing them to experience whatever the consequences are for their actions. Outside of the requirements of criminal law, we should neither protectively excuse nor vindictively punish other persons for the way they have hurt us. To do so is to usurp their own accountability and thus to show them disrespect.

“Forgiveness is not the same as pardoning. To pardon is to end all judgment, to lift away all due reaping for sowing. God may pardon if He so chooses. We are called and given the authority only to forgive.

“Expressing love inevitably pushes us to crises of decision:

- Do we forever hold on to the hurt, nurturing our pain and feeling it again and again with each remembrance? Or, will the power of our self-respecting love reverse the tide of our feelings?

- Is our willingness to be forgiving contingent on the offender's repentant attitude? Or, can we choose to forgive regardless of how the offender may respond?

“Simply speaking, can we choose to love our enemies and be kind to those who hatefully use us? Real love respects people even in the midst of their human frailties. When love restores one's self-respect by drawing clear lines of tolerance and honestly placing accountability where it belongs, forgiveness becomes more of a possibility. We can shift the focus of our attention from ourselves and begin to point our love toward those who have hurt us.” (Sandford, John and Paula; Bowman, Lee. *Choosing Forgiveness*, Third Edition. Clear Stream, Inc. Publishing, 1996, 1999, and 2003. pp.15–17.)

○ **Carnal love is broken love.**

- “In our humanity, we press others to obtain what we want and need, and we are pressed by others to give what they want and need. There is a world of demand coming from and foisted upon each of us.

“All unregenerate love is use, exploitation, manipulation, possession, control and demand.

“We learned how to love in the world before we came to Jesus. All our ways of loving are filled with the world's ways of demanding and controlling, measuring, judging and manipulating others to fulfill what we want.” (Sandford, John and Paula; Bowman, Lee.

Choosing Forgiveness, Third Edition. Clear Stream, Inc. Publishing, 1996, 1999, and 2003. p.132.)

○ **Godly love is selfless and comes from a place of already being complete in Christ.**

- **1 John 4:16–19** – And so we know and rely on the love God has for us.

God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them.¹⁷ This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus. ¹⁸There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

¹⁹ We love because he first loved us.

○ **Bring carnal love to the cross, and ask God to pour into you His own pure, heavenly love, living it through you in the power of the Holy Spirit.**

- *In Jesus’ name, I bring my entire world of demand to death on the cross. I renounce any form of love that places demands on others. Lord God, I choose to receive all my personal wellbeing from You. I ask You for a fresh revelation of Your divine love, and I trust You to pour that selfless love through me to others.*

MINISTRY TOOLS ASSOCIATED WITH THIS LESSON:

- ☐ **MINISTRY TOOL 8:** Addressing Bitter Roots
- ☐ **MINISTRY TOOL 12:** The Forgiveness Cross

