

August 23, 2015

“Our Lives Under Construction”

A series on building healthy relationships in our marriages, our homes, our workplaces, our friends, and our world!

“Over Your Head – Protection for Healthy Relationships from the Past” – Roof, Part 3

“...Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead,”
Philippians 3:13b

A. All of us have a past...

1. All of us have regrets.

“But for this very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life.” 1 Timothy 1:16

2. All of us have been hurt.

“Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.” Ephesians 4:31-32

3. All of us have sinned.

“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,” Romans 3:23

4. All of us have the need to forgive and to be forgiven.

“and forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us.”
Matthew 6:12

“Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven- for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little.” Luke 7:47

B. The key to letting go of our past is forgiveness...forgiving and being forgiven...

1. Forgiveness is a promise of God to never remember our past.

“Then he adds: ‘Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more.’ And where these have been forgiven, there is no longer any sacrifice for sin.”
Hebrews 10:17-18

2. Forgiveness accepts the fact we cannot go back.

“If you, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness; therefore you are feared.” Psalm 130:3-4

“Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sins the Lord will never count against him.” Romans 4:7-8

3. Forgiveness from God promises to remove the sin and even the guilt of my sin.

“With it he touched my mouth and said, ‘See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.’” Isaiah 6:7

4. Forgiveness is a process.

“Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, ‘Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?’ Jesus answered, ‘I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.’ (or seventy times seven)” Matthew 18:21-22 (See Parable)

“To forgive is to set a prisoner free and discover that the prisoner was you.” - Lewis B. Smedes

C. Unforgiveness will destroy our body, soul and spirit...

“See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.” Hebrews 12:15

1. Bitterness/unforgiveness will block our relationship with God.

“But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such ‘wisdom’ does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil. For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.”
James 3:14-16

2. Bitterness/unforgiveness will block our prayers.

“If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened.”
Psalm 66:18

3. Bitterness/unforgiveness must be released!

“Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.” Ephesians 4:31-32

4. True release will transform us to love and let go.

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” John 13:34

“Forgiveness is more than a moral imperative,
more than a theological dictum.

It is the only means, given our humanness and imperfections,
to growing and loving.” - Dr. Enright and Zell

D. Forgiveness is a reciprocal process...

“Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, ‘Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?’ Jesus answered, ‘I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.’ (or seventy times seven)” Matthew 18:21-22 (See Parable)

1. Forgiveness is a spirit of surrender to the will of God.

“Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.” Luke 22:42

2. Forgiveness is meant to be a lifestyle.

“Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.” Colossians 3:12-17

3. Forgiveness must always be extended even before it is requested...or even if it is never requested.

“But Joseph said to them, ‘Don’t be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. So then, don’t be afraid. I will provide for you and your children.’ And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them.” Genesis 50:19-21

4. Forgiveness is on the same pathway as reconciliation.

“All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.” 2 Corinthians 5:18-19

“Forgiveness is a process, yet one must be sure to extend forgiveness quickly and limitlessly. It takes commitment, focus, and dedication. No one who has ever walked the road will say it is easy. But in forgiveness, one exchanges anger, bitterness, hatred, depression and perhaps health problems, for joy, peace, and freedom—not a bad trade by any standard.” - Shoultz

“As long as you don’t forgive, who and whatever it is will occupy rent-free space in your mind” - Isabelle Holland

E. Self-forgiveness is a necessary part of the process of forgiveness... (Paul, Peter, David, etc)

“Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. And God permitting, we will do so.” Hebrews 6:1-3

1. Unforgiveness for self will have the same impact as our lack of forgiveness for others.

“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!” Galatians 2:20-21

2. Unforgiveness for self is focused on the past.

“But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins.” 2 Peter 1:9

3. Unforgiveness for self is seeking to punish us for our sins or our failures.

“he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him;”
Psalm 103:10-13

4. Unforgiveness for self is a form of pride.

“Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.”
Proverbs 16:18

*“There is no greater gift than forgiveness.
Once you believe God forgives you, then you can forgive yourself.”*

– Franklin Stewart

F. Self-forgiveness is a process too...

“Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.”

Romans 12:2

1. Self-forgiveness releases you from the past. No longer being prisoner of “*I should have... Why didn’t I...? If only... It was all my fault...*”

“Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.” Hebrews 10:22

2. Self-forgiveness accepts responsibility for our actions.

“Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life.” 1 Timothy 5:15-16

3. Self-forgiveness accepts God’s forgiveness based on His grace.

“Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.” Galatians 2:16

4. Self-forgiveness refuses to be held prisoner by guilt, blame, fear, or shame.

“Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions to the Lord’- and you forgave the guilt of my sin.” Psalm 32:5

“This is a new beginning releasing the past and embracing forgiveness. Forgiveness opens the door to the enrichment of all our relationships so that they flourish with understanding and love. With the forgiveness we express today we open the way to a brighter future.” – Robert Moment

Some Bible verses to meditate on:

I encourage you to repeat these Scriptures out loud, for there is indeed power in the spoken confession of God’s truth. Do this on a regular (daily) basis and it will begin to renew your mind according to the truth found in God’s Word.

2 Corinthians 5:17- *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”*

Say to yourself: *“I am a new creation in Christ, old things have passed away and all things become new.”*

1 John 1:9- *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”*

Say to yourself: *“When I confess my sin, He is faithful and just and will forgive me it, regardless what kind of unrighteousness I have committed.”*

Colossians 3:13- *“Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.”*

Say to yourself: *“I will love and forgive myself, as Christ has forgiven me.”*

Psalms 103:12- *“as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.”*

Say to yourself: *“My sins are not simply covered, but they are removed from me... taken so far from me, that there is no way that they can be considered part of me anymore!”*

Revelations 1:5- *“and from Jesus Christ... To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood.”*

Say to yourself: *“I am washed from my sins by the blood of Christ Jesus Himself!”*

Matthew 26:28- *“This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.”* (The New Testament Greek tells us that the word “remission” here means, “Forgiveness or pardon, of sins [letting them go as if they had never been committed], remission of the penalty.”)

Say to yourself: *“Because the Blood of Christ was shed for me, I am released as if I have never sinned.”*

Romans 5:1- *“Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

Say to yourself: *“I have been justified (made right, as if I had never sinned) by faith and have peace with God through my Lord Jesus Christ.”*

Galatians 2:16- *“know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.”*

Say to yourself: *“I cannot be justified by works of the law or acts of righteousness, but by my faith in Christ Jesus.”*

Romans 3:22, *“This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference,”*

Say to yourself: *“Because I believe, the righteousness of God is upon me.”*

Romans 4:3-8- *“What does the Scripture say? ‘Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.’ Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation. However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness. David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: ‘Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are*

covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him.”

Say to yourself: *“The righteousness of God is upon me, not as a result of works of the law, but through faith in Christ Jesus, and the grace of God. I did not earn it, yet He gave it to me, and I receive it by faith in Christ Jesus.”*

Galatians 2:20- *“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”*

Romans 6:4 - *“We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.”*

Say to yourself: *“The old me has been crucified and my old nature has been buried with Christ. Now, my life is in Christ as I have been raised to life with Him and I am free to walk in the newness of life.”*

Isaiah 43:25- *“I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more...”*

Say to yourself: *“My Heavenly Father chose to forget my past sins for His sake. When He looks at me, He doesn’t want to see my sin... He wants to see His precious creation which was purchased and justified with the blood of His Son Jesus Christ.”*

Hebrews 9:14- *“How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!”*

Say to yourself: *“Because of the blood of Christ, my conscience can be purged of dead works (past failures) so that I can serve the Living God.”*

Hebrews 10:22- *“...draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.”*

Say to yourself: *“Not only did God choose to forget my sins, but He also wants me to forget them as well. He wants me to draw near to Him with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, being sprinkled clean from an evil conscience.”*

Romans 8:1- *“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,”*

Say to yourself: *“I am in Christ Jesus, and therefore free from condemnation.”*