



## Part 4: Why Forgive Deep Hurts?

### Background: What happened at Corinth?

*"It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you... A man has his father's wife. And you are proud! Shouldn't you rather have been filled with grief and have put out of your fellowship the man who did this? ...Don't you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough?" 1 Cor. 5:1,2,6*

### Unexpected twist: This man changes and says he's sorry!

*"I am not overstating it when I say that the man who caused all the trouble hurt your entire church more than he hurt me. He was punished enough when most of you were united in your judgment against him. **Now it is time to forgive him and comfort him.**" 2 Cor. 2:5-7 NLT*

### Why should I forgive someone who has hurt me deeply?

#### 1. For \_\_\_\_\_ sake

*"Otherwise he may become so discouraged that he won't be able to recover. Now show him that you still love him." 2 Cor. 7b-8 NLT*

*"Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death." 2 Cor. 7:10 NIV*

#### 2. For \_\_\_\_\_ sake

*"My counsel now is to pour on the love. The focus of my letter wasn't on punishing the offender but on getting you to **take responsibility for the health of the church.** So if you forgive him, I forgive him." 2 Cor. 2:8-9 The Message*

For the health of a church there must be both:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

What forgiveness is not:

- Forgiving is not \_\_\_\_\_.

- Forgiving is not \_\_\_\_\_.
- Forgiving is not \_\_\_\_\_.
- Forgiving is not \_\_\_\_\_.

#### 3. For \_\_\_\_\_ sake

*"And what I have forgiven--if there was anything to forgive--I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for **your** sake, in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his **schemes.**" 2 Cor. 2:10-11 NIV*

**A Scheme of Satan:** If I don't sin, I'll be tempted to feel \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ toward those who do.

*"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*

### The "Bitter Root": Effects of Unforgiveness

The toxic effects of unforgiveness on my body/mind systems are clinically documented: Unforgiveness

- distresses my central nervous system;
- stresses my circulatory system;
- stresses my muscular-skeletal system;
- stresses my glandular (endocrine and lymphatic) systems;
- depresses my immune system

*(www.choosingforgiveness.org)*

A 25-year study on male graduates of University of North Carolina medical school: "Physicians with hidden hostilities died at a rate six times greater than those with more forgiving attitudes." (Lee Strobel, *God's Outrageous Claims* p. 15)

"Researchers have gathered a wealth of data suggesting chronic anger is so damaging to the body that it ranks with -- or even exceeds-- cigarette smoking, obesity, and a high fat diet as a powerful risk factor for early death." (New York Times article quoted in Strobel, op cit.)

A recent study concluded: "Nursing grudges and reminding yourself of events that caused you pain can damage your health" *Psychological Science, March 2001*

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

### For Further Reading

Lewis Smedes, *Forgive and Forget* (New York: Simon and Schuster)

# Daily Meditations

Here's a chance to spend some time each day this week meditating on today's topic!

**This week's memory verse:** *"...I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his **schemes**." 2 Cor. 2:10b-11 NIV*

## Monday

Read 2 Corinthians 2:5-11. Read back over your notes. Which of the points stood out to you last weekend? Why?

Is forgiveness difficult for you?

Is there a person or persons in your life you are having difficulty forgiving?

*Ask God to help you forgive the person you are having difficulty forgiving.*

## Tuesday

Read 2 Corinthians 2:5-11 again. What "schemes" of Satan do you think Paul might be referring to?

Read Hebrews 12:15. What is the source of the "bitter root" referred to here?

How can unforgiveness lead to a root of bitterness?

How have you seen a bitter root "cause trouble and defile many"?

*Ask God if there is a root of bitterness in your heart today. If He brings a specific person or situation to mind, ask Him to help you weed out that root and truly forgive?*

## Wednesday

Read in 1 Cor. 5:1-13 about the situation that likely preceded Paul's comments in 2 Cor. 2.

Why was it necessary to remove this immoral man from fellowship? (verses 7-13)

Is there anything about the idea of church discipline that makes you uncomfortable? If so, what?

What is difficult or complicated about disciplining a sinning Christian?

How can abuses of this practice be prevented, while allowing true, biblical church

discipline to continue?

What harm comes to churches when they don't deal with unrepentant, blatant, repeated offenses, especially by church leaders?

*Ask God today to help you understand how to deal with Christians who refuse to turn from patterns destructive to others. Ask God to help you never cross the line from loving, objective, purposeful church discipline into bitterness and arrogance.*

## Thursday

Read 2 Cor. 7:8-11. In this passage, Paul is talking about positive responses to guilt over sin, and negative, destructive responses to guilt. What is the difference Paul points out between "worldly sorrow" and "godly sorrow"?

How would you explain this in your own words?

As we mentioned in last weekend's message, one of Satan's schemes is to burden us with so much guilt once we sin that we give up on ever changing. Have you ever experienced this?

What would Jesus say to a person wracked with such guilt? (See John 7:53-8:11)

*Thank God for His grace and forgiveness! Ask Him to help you extend grace to others.*

## Friday

Read 2 Cor. 2:12-3:6 in preparation for this weekend's message. How can the same message-- the message of Christ-- be either the smell of death or the fragrance of life?

Where does Paul find his confidence (verses 4,5)? How does this encourage you?

What do you think Paul means when he says, "the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life"?

How have you found this to be true in your own life?

*Thank God for the Spirit -- the Spirit of Christ-- that gives you life! Ask Him to help you have confidence in Jesus and not your own strength!*

## Saturday

Review any devotions you may have missed and polish up that memory verse at the top of page three! Please pray for this weekend's services-- that God may be honored! Thanks for your prayers!