

This July

STARTING OVER

*How to ensure next time
won't be like last time*





LIFEGROUPS

Series: Starting Over

Scripture: Ephesians 4:26-32

Date: July 30 & 31, 2016

Adapted with permission from the North Point Ministries LifeGroups Guide

—[LET'S START]—

- Have you ever wronged someone accidentally or on purpose, then owned your actions and asked that person for forgiveness? What do you think taking responsibility for your actions did for that person?

—[LET'S DIG]—

1. Talk about a time when you've seen a person unable to get past a wrong done to them by someone else. In what ways did that person's inability to move on affect him or her?
2. Read Ephesians 4:26. Do you tend to resolve your anger quickly or do you have trouble letting it go? How does that affect your relationships? How do you think it affects the quality of your life?
3. Many times the baggage we carry was given to us by another person. But we have a defining decision to make: will we carry this forever, or will we release it? Talk about a time when you've given someone power in your life by holding a grudge against him or her.
4. What are some obstacles to deciding not to drag the wrongs others have done to you into your future? What would need to happen for you to overcome those obstacles?
5. Who is one person you need to forgive—not necessarily for his or her benefit, but for your future? What can you do this week to take a step toward forgiving? How can your LifeGroup support you?

—[LET'S ACT]—

- When taking steps towards forgiving someone try this 2 step process:
 1. List what they took from you. Don't just say, "Okay, I've forgiven them." Take time to work this through. Take a piece of paper and list out all of the things that the person took from you. You think it will be short, but that list will actually be longer than you think...your innocence, your childhood, your reputation, your marriage, your career.
 2. Release them from paying you back. They couldn't pay you back even if they wanted to, so it is foolish carrying around their debt when there is nothing they can do to repay it.

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—[SERMON REVIEW]—

- We often want to hold onto the pains of the past (regardless if we caused it, or another person inflicted it). But, it becomes like a weight holding us back from our future—keeping us tethered to our past. Every time we try to start over, this baggage just seems to come along with us.
- So, if we want next time to be better, we need to release it. It is a step that requires us to make a defining decision: To forgive them and release them of what they owe you.
- Often, the step of forgiveness is when our grips on this baggage tightens. Because we don't really understand what forgiveness is, we struggle to release it.
- Forgiveness is **NOT**:
 1. Forgetting - Forgiving is not pretending it never happened. Just because you remember doesn't mean you can't forgive.
 2. Excusing - We excuse people when they do something accidental, don't excuse what needs to be forgiven. Forgiveness is not saying, "It's okay," or, "It doesn't matter."
 3. Ignoring Justice - If someone breaks the law, call the authorities. Every time. Forgiveness does not mean you don't hold people accountable for their actions.
 4. Reconciliation - You can still forgive, but that doesn't mean the relationship will be restored, or things will return to how they once were. Forgiveness doesn't mean that you allow yourself to be hurt again. If you are in a dangerous situation, get out!
- Here are pointers about forgiveness:
 1. It is OK to be angry!
 2. Enter into forgiveness as quickly as possible for you. We don't need to forgive literally by sun down, but we avoid falling into sin when we deal with anger and hurt promptly.
 3. Remind yourself how much Christ has forgiven you.
 4. Jesus' teaches that we don't calculate forgiveness. We don't demand that others pay us back what we know they can never repay: they cannot earn our forgiveness any more than we can earn Jesus' forgiveness. Jesus' point is that He has made forgiveness free: we forgive because we've been forgiven.

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