

3. Forgiveness is an antidote to needless _____.

Matthew 18:28-35 (NLT) But when the man left the king, he went to a fellow servant who owed him a few thousand dollars. He grabbed him by the throat and demanded instant payment. His fellow servant fell down before him and begged for a little more time. 'Be patient and I will pay it,' he pleaded. But his creditor wouldn't wait. He had the man arrested and jailed until the debt could be paid in full. When some of the other servants saw this, they were very upset. They went to the king and told him what had happened. Then the king called in the man he had forgiven and said, 'You evil servant! I forgave you that tremendous debt because you pleaded with me. Shouldn't you have mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you?' Then the angry king sent the man to prison until he had paid every penny. That's what my heavenly Father will do to you if you refuse to forgive your brothers and sisters in your heart."

Hebrews 12:15 (AMP) Exercise foresight and be on the watch to look [after one another] ... in order that no root of resentment (rancor, bitterness, or hatred) shoots forth and causes trouble and bitter torment, and the many become contaminated and defiled by it.

4. Forgiveness is the _____ of the forgiven.

On a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high) ...

- how willing have you been to forgive your spouse in the past? _____
- how often have you asked for forgiveness for your own faults? _____

THE LOVE DARE CHALLENGE:

Identify anything you have done to hurt your spouse, and commit to apologizing to them without blaming them in any way or excusing what happened. Then ask God to help you forgive any deep-seated hurts in your own spirit.

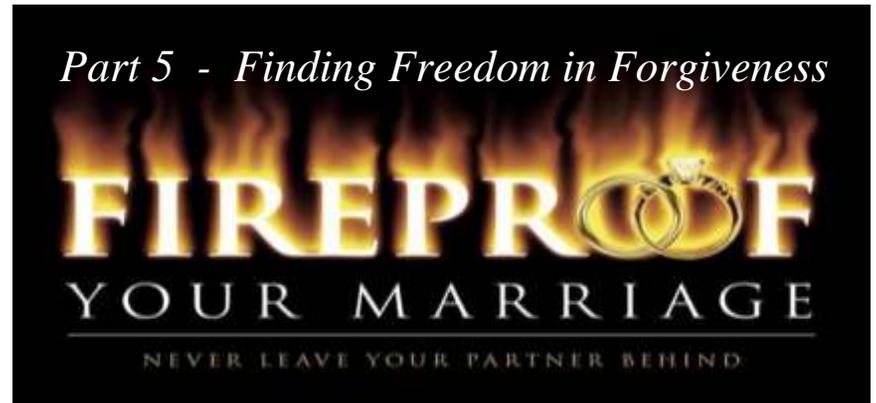
Now, commit to implementing it this week in a practical way!



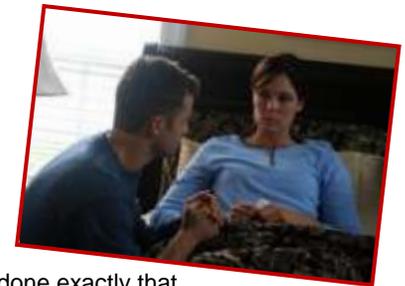
"A marriage counselor told us that forgiveness is the key to a happy marriage. So I try to give her something to forgive every day."

THE ULTIMATE DATE NIGHT, PART TWO

Join us on Saturday evening, March 28, at 7:00 here at Capital Community Church as dozens of couples renew their wedding vows to mark their completion of *The Love Dare*. A meaningful one-hour ceremony featuring beautiful music, free photography for each couple, wedding cake and punch.



Counsellors and ministers who deal with broken marriages on a regular basis will tell you that it is the most complex problem of all, often the last fracture to be repaired in a damaged relationship. But forgiveness has to happen, or a successful marriage simply won't. Your freedom (and your spouse's freedom) to experience true love is totally dependent on it.



In the movie *Fireproof*, Captain Caleb Holt lives by the old firefighter's adage: "Never leave your partner behind." But at home, in the cooling embers of his marriage, he has done exactly that.

On the job he regularly puts his life on the line to rescue others, but he has never faced a situation as tough as rescuing his wife's heart. In fact, Catherine is already well down the path to divorce. Their only hope is to forgive and start over.

So many people see forgiveness as risky – even dangerous – to their own happiness. They can only see that what their spouse did to them was wrong, and they feel that forgiveness lets them off the hook way too easily. But when you forgive another person, you're not turning them loose – you're just turning them over to God. You're saving yourself the trouble of scripting any more arguments or trying to prevail in a continuing conflict. It's not about winning and losing anymore. It's about letting go. It's about freedom.



Great marriages are not created by people who never hurt each other, only by people who make the choice to keep "no record of wrongs" (1 Corinthians 13:5, NIV). Unforgiveness keeps so many couples in prison, when all the time we hold the key to liberate our own marriage.

Tonight, we will discover how to experience the freedom found in forgiveness!



TODAY IS DAY 31 OF THE LOVE DARE!

- _____ means that you are breaking a natural tie with your parents.
- _____ means that you cling to your spouse and achieve oneness.

Love chooses to live by _____ rather than by _____.

Matthew 6:14-15 (NLT) *If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins.*

THERE ARE 4 REASONS WHY I SHOULDN'T FORGIVE

1. Forgiveness denies the _____ of wrong done to me.

Proverbs 17:14 (NLT) *Beginning a quarrel is like opening a floodgate, so drop the matter before a dispute breaks out.*

Proverbs 19:11 (NLT) *People with good sense restrain their anger; they earn esteem by overlooking wrongs.*

Nahum 1:3a (NLT) *The Lord is slow to get angry, but his power is great, and he never lets the guilty go unpunished.*

2. Forgiveness lets people _____ too easily.

Matthew 18:21 (NLT) *Then Peter came to him and asked, "Lord, how often should I forgive someone who sins against me? Seven times?"*

3. Forgiveness places too much responsibility on the _____.

Matthew 5:38-41 (CEV) *You know that you have been taught, "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." But I tell you not to try to get even with a person who has done something to you. When someone slaps your right cheek, turn and let that person slap your other cheek. If someone sues you for your shirt, give up your coat as well. If a soldier forces you to carry his pack one mile, carry it two miles.*

4. Forgiveness is _____.

Romans 9:14 (AMP) *What shall we conclude then? Is there injustice upon God's part? Certainly not!*

Luke 7:41-42 (NLT) *Then Jesus told him this story: "A man loaned money to two people—five hundred pieces of silver to one and fifty pieces to the other. But neither of them could repay him, so he kindly forgave them both, canceling their debts. Who do you suppose loved him more after that?"*

WHEN WE FORGIVE

- We _____ that a wrong has occurred.
- We _____ that there is an obligation for repayment.
- We _____ to release our offender from that obligation and to cover the loss ourselves.

Matthew 18:22 (CEV) *Jesus answered: Not just seven times, but seventy-seven times!*

Matthew 18:23-27 (NLT) *For this reason, the Kingdom of Heaven can be compared to a king who decided to bring his accounts up to date with servants who had borrowed money from him. In the process, one of his debtors was brought in who owed him millions of dollars. He couldn't pay, so the king ordered that he, his wife, his children, and everything he had be sold to pay the debt. But the man fell down before the king and begged him, 'Oh, sir, be patient with me, and I will pay it all.' Then the king was filled with pity for him, and he released him and forgave his debt.*

An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth cannot sustain itself forever; ultimately both parties end up blind and toothless.
~ Mahatma Gandhi

THERE ARE 4 REASONS WHY I SHOULD FORGIVE

1. Forgiveness is often the only way to _____.
2. Forgiveness frees us to get on with _____.

Hebrews 12:1b (NLT) *Let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily hinders our progress. And let us run with endurance the race that God has set before us.*