



LifeNIGHT

Whole People In A Broken World
An Interactive Bible Study Series for Summer 2002

R	Happy are those who know they are spiritually poor. (Matthew 5:3, GN)
	Principle #1: Realize I'm not God. I admit that I am powerless to control my tendency to do the wrong thing and my life is unmanageable.
E	Happy are those who mourn. (Matthew 5:4, GN)
	Principle #2: Earnestly believe that God exists, that I matter to Him, and that He has the power to help me recover.
C	Happy are those who are humble. (Matthew 5:5, GN)
	Principle #3: Consciously choose to commit all my life and will to Christ's care and control.
O	Happy are the pure in heart. (Matthew 5:8, GN)
	Principle #4: Openly examine and confess my faults to myself, to God, and to someone I trust.
V	Happy are those whose greatest desire is to do what God requires. (Matthew 5:6, GN)
	Principle #5: Voluntarily submit to every change God wants to make in my life and humbly ask Him to remove my character defects.
E	Happy are those who are merciful to others. (Matthew 5:7, GN)
	Principle #6: Evaluate all my relationships. Offer forgiveness to those who have hurt me and make amends for harm I've done to others, except when to do so would harm them or others.

- **Ephesians 4:31-32 (NJB)** Any bitterness or bad temper or anger or shouting or abuse must be far removed from you—as must every kind of malice. Be generous to one another, sympathetic, forgiving each other as readily as God forgave you in Christ.
- There are nearly 2000 newspapers published daily in North America, with a combined circulation of nearly 70 million. Limitless possibilities exist for error, both human and mechanical. Add the crushing pressure of deadlines, and it's surprising there aren't more mistakes. When goof-ups happen, editors scurry to print corrections, sometimes with even more hilarious results:

- Important Notice: If you are one of hundreds of parachuting enthusiasts who bought our Easy Sky Diving book, please make the following correction: on page 8, line 7, the words "state zip code" should have read "pull rip cord."
- In yesterday's Food Section, an inaccurate number of jalapeno peppers was given for Jeanette Crowley's Southwestern chicken salad recipe. The recipe should call for 2, not 21, jalapeno peppers.
- Yesterday we mistakenly reported that a talk was given by a battle-scared hero. We apologize for the error. We obviously meant that the talk was given by a battle-scarred hero.
- Our newspaper carried the notice last week that Mr. Oscar Hoffnagle is a defective on the police force. This was a typographical error. Mr. Hoffnagle is, of course, a detective on the police force.
- In last week's issue, a picture showed some very unusual oriental dishes which were enjoyed by a party for foreign exchange students. Mi Thi Thin is a foreign exchange student who was standing in the center of the picture. We incorrectly listed her name as one of the items on the menu. We regret the error.
- In a recent edition, we referred to the chairman of Chrysler Corporation as Lee Iacocoo. His real name is Lee Iacocca. The Gazette regrets the error.
- HAVE YOU EVER TRIED TO CORRECT A MISTAKE IN A RELATIONSHIP AND ACTUALLY MADE THINGS WORSE?
- That's why we are studying the Beatitudes in this series. We want to RECOVER from the hurts others have inflicted on us, and from the damage we have done to others – without making matters worse! The problem is that we just mess things up when we try it on our own – that's why we are studying GOD'S ROAD TO RECOVERY.
- Today's text gives us two important principles to help us in repairing our relationships:
 1. Forgive those who have hurt me
 2. Make amends to those I have hurt
- We've already learned in this series that the WHY is more important than the HOW, because when I understand WHY I should do something, it will be much easier to figure out HOW to do it. So, for each of these steps, let's look at the WHY and the HOW ...

FORGIVE THOSE WHO HAVE HURT ME

WHY?

1. Because God has forgiven me.

- **Colossians 3:13 (LB)** Be gentle and ready to forgive; never hold grudges. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.
- When I remember how much God has forgiven me, it makes it a whole lot easier to forgive other people. You will never have to forgive anyone else more than God has already forgiven you!
- When you have a hard time forgiving others, it's usually because you don't feel forgiven. PEOPLE WHO FEEL FORGIVEN FIND IT EASIER TO BE FORGIVING. People who feel unforgiven find it difficult to forgive others.

2. Because resentment doesn't work.

- **Job 5:2 (TEV)** To worry yourself to death with resentment would be a foolish, senseless thing to do.
- Job tells us that RESENTMENT is unreasonable, unhealthy, and unhelpful. Does resentment ever cause people to do stupid things? Yes! It's like shooting yourself so you'll hit somebody else when the gun recoils. You always hurt yourself more than the other person. Anger is a waste of energy!
- **Ecclesiastes 7:9 (TEV)** Keep your temper under control; it is foolish to harbor a grudge.
- **Job 18:4 (TEV)** You are only hurting yourself with your anger. Will the earth be deserted because you are angry? Will God move mountains to satisfy you?
- When you get angry and resentful toward somebody, you don't hurt them. You're all upset about it, and it's not bothering them. It's making you miserable, but they've forgotten it. Resentment cannot change situations in the past, cannot correct problems in the present, and doesn't change people in the future – it just makes you miserable! Have you ever talked to someone who said, "I feel so much better after being resentful"? Never!

- **Job 21:23-25 (TEV)** Some people stay healthy till the day they die; they die happy and at ease, their bodies well-nourished. Others have no happiness at all; they live and die with bitter hearts.
- Research has shown that the unhealthiest emotion people have is resentment, because it's like a cancer that eats you alive. Bitterness has physical consequences! Have you ever said, "That guy is a pain in the neck"? He may indeed be the cause of your pain in the neck if you have resentment toward him!
- A guy walked into the doctor and said "I need some more pills for my colitis." The doctor said "Who are you colliding with now?"
- Dr. S.I. McMillan wrote a book that showed that the two greatest causes of the physical problems in life are guilt and resentment. He said, "It's not so much what you eat, it's what eats you that matters." Nothing drains you emotionally like bitterness. It just prolongs the hurt. It's like an emotional suicide. You need to forgive those that hurt you, for your own sake.

3. Because I will need forgiveness in the future.

- **Mark 11:25 (LB)** But when you are praying, first forgive anyone you are holding a grudge against, so that your Father in heaven will forgive you your sins too. "
- Resentment blocks your sense of God's forgiveness in your life. The Bible teaches that WE CANNOT RECEIVE WHAT WE ARE UNWILLING TO GIVE!
- It is dangerous to pray the Lord's prayer: "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." – "Lord, forgive me as much as I forgive everyone else." DO YOU REALLY WANT THAT?
- Forgiveness is a two-way street. One man came to John Wesley and said, "I can never forgive that person. Never." John Wesley said, "Then I hope, sir, that you never sin." Don't burn the bridge that you have to walk across!

HOW?

1. Reveal my hurt.

- You can't get over a hurt until you admit that it hurt!

- Here are your options when faced with a hurt:
 - You can REPRESS it (pretend it didn't happen)
 - You can SUPPRESS it (pretend it is no big deal)
 - You can EXPRESS it (let your anger get the best of you)
 - You can CONFESS it (admit that it hurt and deal with it)
- People say, "I'd really like to close the door on my past. I'd like to get closure so this person doesn't hurt me anymore." That's fine, but THERE IS NO CLOSURE WITHOUT DISCLOSURE. You must first admit that it hurt, then you can get over the hurt.
- For many people, one of the most helpful things is to express your hurt in a letter – and then don't mail the letter. Just getting it off your chest is the most helpful thing.
- **Psalm 55:12-14 (NJB)** Were it an enemy who insulted me, that I could bear; if an opponent pitted himself against me, I could turn away from him. But you, a person of my own rank, a comrade and dear friend, to whom I was bound by intimate friendship in the house of God!

2. Release my offender.

- The only way you can release an offender is to FORGIVE THEM. Don't wait for them to ask for forgiveness, because they may never think that they need to ask for it! Besides, you're doing it for your sake not for their sake. You are going to need forgiveness in the future, so you must obey the Word of God.
- **Matthew 18:21-22 (NLT)** Then Peter came to him and asked, "Lord, how often should I forgive someone who sins against me? Seven times?" "No!" Jesus replied, "seventy times seven!"
- Jesus is saying that forgiveness has to be continual, because those feelings will keep coming back, and every time that happens you have to forgive them all over again.
- How do you know when you have released an offender fully?
 - You can think about them and it doesn't hurt anymore.
 - You can pray for God's blessing on their life.
 - You can understand their hurt, instead of focusing on your hurt (because hurt people, hurt people!).

- YOU CAN'T GET RID OF THE PAST, BUT YOU CAN GET RID OF THE PAIN.

3. Replace my hurt with God's peace.

- **Colossians 3:15 (NLT)** And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are all called to live in peace. And always be thankful.
- Let God settle the score; after all, He can do a whole lot better job than you can! Let Him have the last word in the situation!
- Relationships can sometimes tear your heart into pieces, but God can glue those pieces back together and cover your heart with His peace. That's why you need to REVEAL your hurt, RELEASE your hurt, and REPLACE your hurt.

MAKE AMENDS TO THOSE I HAVE HURT

WHY?

- Because UNRESOLVED RELATIONSHIPS are at the root of your problems and they prevent recovery from happening. You have to take the second step, and make amends to people you've hurt as well as releasing the people who've hurt you.
- **Hebrews 12:15 (LB)** Look after each other so that not one of you will fail to find God's best blessings. Watch out that no bitterness takes root among you, for as it springs up it causes deep trouble, hurting many in their spiritual lives.
- You have to let go of UNRESOLVED RELATIONSHIPS if you want to enjoy the happiness that God meant for you to have in this life.

HOW?

1. Make a list of those I've harmed and what I did.

- "I can't think of anybody!" We figured you'd say that, so here are a few pointers to get you started:
 - Do I owe a debt to someone that I haven't paid?
 - Have I broken a promise to someone?

- Am I too controlling or too possessive of someone?
- Am I too critical of someone?
- Have I been verbally or physically abusive to someone?
- Am I unappreciative or unattentive toward someone?
- Have I been unfaithful or have I lied to someone?
- Is that enough to get you started, or do you need more help?!

2. Think how I'd like someone to make amends to me.

- **Luke 6:31 (NIV)** Do to others as you would have them do to you.
- **Luke 6:31 (MSG)** Here is a simple rule of thumb for behavior: Ask yourself what you want people to do for you; then grab the initiative and do it for them!
- Think to yourself, "If someone were going to apologize to me, how would I want it done?" And then do it that way! Here are three issues to consider:

- **THE RIGHT TIME**

Ecclesiastes 8:6 (TEV) There is a right time and a right way to do everything, but we know so little!

Make amends when it is best for them, not when it is best for you. Don't rush things!

- **THE RIGHT ATTITUDE**

Ephesians 4:15 (GW) Instead, as we lovingly speak the truth, we will grow up completely in our relationship to Christ, who is the head.

Simply say that what YOU did was wrong. Don't make any excuses for your actions, just assume responsibility. THEY may have had a part in the problem, but you're just trying to clear up YOUR side of the ledger! Don't expect anything from them in return – just apologize!

The more serious your offense, the less likely it is that you're going to be able to make restitution. There are some things you can't restore that you've taken away from other people. But don't underestimate the power of a sincere apology.

- **IS IT APPROPRIATE?**

Proverbs 12:18 (TEV) Thoughtless words can wound as deeply as any sword, but wisely spoken words can heal.

There are some situations you wouldn't want to revisit because to do so would just open up the proverbial "can of worms." So what do you do? Write the letter that you never send, then just do what you can to balance the ledger.

Romans 12:18 (NIV) If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

3. Refocus my life.

- Refocus your life on doing God's will STARTING TODAY in all of your relationships. That's what RECOVERY is all about.
- As long as you focus on someone you resent, you're allowing them to control you. And if you continue to RESENT them long enough, you will eventually begin to RESEMBLE them! WHAT YOU FOCUS ON IS WHAT YOU BECOME! Don't let your past control your present!
- God is the greatest recycler! He wants to recycle the emotional garbage in your life and bring good out of it. How does He do that? Look at these wise words from the book of Job ...
- **Job 11:13-16 (TEV)** Put your heart right, Job. Reach out to God. Put away evil and wrong from your home. Then face the world again, firm and courageous. Then all your troubles will fade from your memory, like floods that are past and remembered no more.
 - PUT YOUR HEART RIGHT
 - REACH OUT TO GOD
 - FACE THE WORLD AGAIN
- You can't manufacture enough forgiveness for all the times you're going to be hurt in this life. You just don't have the ability, because human forgiveness eventually runs dry.
- That's why you need to plug in to Jesus, so that He can daily give you the forgiveness you need to REFOCUS your life.
- Say to yourself, "I'm not a victim, I'm a victor!" THEN ALL YOUR TROUBLES WILL FADE FROM YOUR MEMORY!