

Resolving Conflicts Through Discipleship Counseling

A Strategy for Resolving Strongholds

Session Five

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Taking Back Ground (Ephesians 4:26-27)

Giving ground is the enemy's entry point in our lives

Ground is yielded to the enemy when we hold on to sin.

If we persist in sin, Satan has the time and opportunity to build a stronghold on the ground he has taken from us.

Areas to be considered in Taking Back Ground

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Occult Involvement | <input type="checkbox"/> Deception (lies & fear) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bitterness & Rejection | <input type="checkbox"/> Guilt |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rebellion | <input type="checkbox"/> Pride |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual Immorality | <input type="checkbox"/> Generational Iniquity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Idolatry | <input type="checkbox"/> Performance Based Acceptance (Legalism) |

Giving Ground is giving the enemy permission to attack me with destructive thoughts, feelings, and temptations.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Anxiety | <input type="checkbox"/> Doubt |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Envy | <input type="checkbox"/> Uncontrolled Lust |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Insecurity | <input type="checkbox"/> Depression |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Perversion | <input type="checkbox"/> Surges of Anger |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jealousy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

Taking Back Ground is taking a verbal stand against Satan's work and ways in my life, and wanting nothing to do with them anymore.

2 Corinthians 4:2a— *“But have renounced the hidden things of dishonest not walking in craftiness...”*

Ephesians 5:11— *“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.”*

Once ground is taken back it is time to command the enemy in the name and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ to leave and go where Jesus sends him.

Tearing Down Strongholds (2 Corinthians 10:4)

Stronghold—is a belief system built on a foundation of lies. A demonic stronghold is a fortress Satan builds in your heart and mind (John 8:44). A demonic stronghold brings fear and hopelessness. If Satan can get you to believe the lie he can influence your behavior. There are some false beliefs that people have based on the envi-

ronment in which they grew up and this has shaped their belief system.

Belief System—our own personal worldview, the eyeglasses through which we see life, to perceive what is true about myself, my life, my relationships with others, and God.

Shaping of Belief System—Family, church, society, peers, education, past life history, media can shape our belief systems (Romans 12:1,2).

SATAN ATTEMPTS TO “PROGRAM” PEOPLE FOR FAILURE.

Key Areas of Personal Attacks in our Belief System

- Identity in Christ and the Priesthood of the Believer
- Character of God
- False Doctrine or Doctrinal Imbalance

Temptation Defined

- The **Essence of temptation** is the enticement to have legitimate needs met through the resource of the world, the flesh, and the Devil instead of Christ.
- The **Channels of Temptation** are the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life (1 John 2:15).
- The **Power of temptation** depends on the strongholds that have been developed in our minds as we have learned to live independently of God.

Key—To remove the lies that cause me to turn to the flesh as opposed to trusting in God to meet my needs for love, security, acceptance, and significance.

The Pathway to Freedom is the Truth

- Jesus brought grace and truth (John 1:17).
- Jesus said His words are Spirit and they are life (John 6:63).
- Jesus is the truth (John 14:6).
- Jesus told His disciples the truth brings freedom (John 8:32).
- Jesus said the Holy Spirit would guide us into the truth (James 16:13).
- Jesus prayed for His disciples to be sanctified by the truth, His word is truth (John 17:17).

❑ Building Towers of Truth

Key: Build a belief system based on the truth of God's Word.

Colossians 3:16— *“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”*

- Reprogram your minds with the Truth.
- Build yourself up in the key areas of attack, you identity in Christ, Character of God, and solid doctrine.
- Make a choice for truth everyday (Psalm 119:30).
- The truth builds faith (Romans 10:17).
- We must study God's Word to help us understand the truth (2 Timothy 2:15).
- We must internalize the Word of God by personalizing, memorizing and meditating upon it.

❑ Taking Every Thought Captive (Philippians 4:8)

Responding to attack

- Consider and believe
- Dialogue and argue

Steps to resist

- Capture Thoughts (2 Corinthians 10:5)
- Evaluate Thoughts (Philippians 4:8)
- Confess Sin—if needed (1 John 1:9)
- Resist (James 4:7; 1 Peter 5)
- Take up the Armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-17)
 - ❑ Belt of truth
 - ❑ Breastplate of righteousness
 - ❑ Feet shod with the Gospel
 - ❑ Shield of faith
 - ❑ Helmet of salvation
 - ❑ Sword of the Spirit

Living out of Your New Heart in Christ

Taken from the Life Model

The Real You

Heart (Greek *kardia*): According to Scripture the activities of the heart rank as follows: 1) Thoughts; 2) Choices; and 3) Choices (will). We should think of the heart as the center of the self and as the seat of reflection, rather than the seat of emotions. We reflect properly by seeing and hearing in the Spirit, or through the eyes and ears of Jesus. Paul in Galatians 5 uses the term “walking in the Spirit.” To walk effectively, it is important that we can see and hear with the heart Jesus gave us.

Jesus lives in our hearts (Ephesians 3:17)

Paul made a distinction between his flesh and the new person “in Christ (Romans 7:14-22)

Paul lives his life “in Christ” (Galatians 2:20-21)

Above all else guard your hearts (Proverbs 4:23)

We participate in a new nature (2 Peter 1:4)

Responding in the Flesh (Proverbs 3:5-7)

Flesh (Greek *sark*): false knowing; human nature; our own discernment and desires of the flesh, living independently of God.

- “Ears are closed”—(Jeremiah 6:10)
- “Fool is right in his own eyes”—(Proverbs 12:15)
- The origin of false knowing—(Genesis 2:17)
- The condition of their heart was fat or sick—(Isaiah 6:9, 10)
- A hundred twenty years later heart very sick—(Jeremiah 17:5-10)
- Forty years later God removes the old heart and gives a new heart transplant—(Ezekiel 36:22-29)
- Mind of the flesh and mind of the Spirit—(Romans 8:1-13)

Three Conditions of *False Knowing*

1. We are listening to our own understanding.
2. Our hearts are not turned toward God, but are loving and listening to a different source (i.e. the worldly philosophies (Colossians 2:8), fleshly thoughts, the accuser of the brethren (Romans 12:11).
3. Our hearts are too sick, blind and deaf to discern God.

Responding in the Spirit (*true knowing*) Proverbs 15:14; Psalm 90:12

- Ears that hear (Proverbs 5:1; Isaiah 50:4-5; Revelation 2:7).

- Eyes that see (Psalm 32:8; Revelation 3:18)
- The contrast of the flesh and Spirit (Galatians 5:1-22)
- Hearts and minds on things above (Colossians 3:1-11)
- Putting off the old self and putting on the new self (Ephesians 4:17-31)
- Humility “the mind of Christ” (Philippians 2:1-10)
- “Sympathy” in the Greek means to feel together with (1 Peter 3:8)

Three Conditions of *True Knowing*

1. Healthy hearts
2. Hearts must be turned toward God with all of our love and strength
3. We must remove and avoid the words and judgments of the flesh (lies and desires).

Heart Characteristics

You will know your heart...

- When it is health and alive—joy-based living (John 15:11; John 16:24).
- When you turn it toward God with all your love and strength (Matthew 22:37).
- When you let your pain tell you what really matters to your heart and hear what God says about your heart (2 Timothy 1:3-5).
- When you learn to suffer well (1 Peter 4:12-19).
- When you are receiving and giving life in your important relationships (Ephesians 4:29; 1 John 4:7-8).
- When ever you act like yourself (Colossians 1:9-11).
- When ever you resist your flesh (Romans :13).
- When those who know their heart tell you what the see in your heart (2 Corinthians 7:11-12).

Resolving Bitterness

Circumstances and relationships have hurt each of us. Those hurts cause wounds that can easily fester into a bitter spirit leaving us with scars of emotional pain that we can carry for years. Unless we understand and resolve the bitterness through genuine forgiveness, we will not be able to face similar circumstances in the future. We will block the pain, causing us to emotionally lock-up when confronted with a new hurt in a relationship. More emotional pain is then buried in our hearts leaving us void of inner peace.

Bitterness is a tool of Satan to defeat believers. When unresolved within a person’s spirit. Bitterness creates resentment, anger, and emotional damage. Paul traces the development of unresolved bitterness in Ephesians

4:31. Bitterness leads to wrath (outbursts of anger), wrath leads to anger (rage, constant state of anger), anger leads to clamor (making a public scene), clamor is followed by slander (derogatory, injurious speech), and slander leads to malice (inner hatred of heart). The natural consequence of harboring an attitude of bitterness is that it eventually controls you.

Scripture warns against bitterness. Paul warns that bitterness is like a “root.” The longer it is allowed to grow, the more difficult it is to get rid of. Hebrews 12:15 states that a root of bitterness left to grow will bring defilement to “the many.” This root will produce the blighted fruit of anger, ungratefulness, a critical attitude, insensitivity to others, revenge, mistrust and depression. Unresolved bitterness is also like a highly contagious disease that has a contaminating and destructive effect on others.

The cure for bitterness is forgiveness. In order to resolve bitterness, we must first understand and experience God’s forgiveness of our sin. God chose to focus on His desire to forgive us rather than to hold us accountable for our failures (Isaiah 43:25; 55:7; Psalm 103:12). He could have demanded justice and required us to pay for our sins, but instead, placed them on Jesus Christ. He satisfied the payment on our behalf. The moment we believe by faith that Christ died for us, we are set free from the penalty of our sins.

Forgiveness demands a payment. When someone has sinned against us and hurt us, our sense of justice demands that a fair payment be made to us for their failure. If that person cannot pay or chooses not to pay, we resent the injustice and either become bitter and angry, leading to depression, or we can exercise forgiveness leading to peace. If we choose to forgive, as God forgave us, and assume the emotional debt or payment for the pain that person caused us, we will be free from resentment, bitterness, anger, and depression. As we free the offender through forgiveness, we become free from the effects of holding on to those damaging attitudes.

Forgiveness isn’t easy. We never feel like forgiving someone who has hurt us because deep inside we believe they deserve to pay for the damage they caused us. Forgiveness involves our willingness to go to the cross for the person who has hurt us and to embrace the emotional pain they have caused us. Jesus didn’t feel like going to the cross, but chose the Father’s will (Matthew 26:39). Forgiveness is taking the focus off of ourselves and graciously choosing to go to the cross on behalf of the wrongdoer.

Bitterness can be directed against

Others for the pain they have caused us

...leading to resentment and anger.

...leading to putting up walls to protect ourselves from further pain. Leading to broken relationships with others.

...leading to revenge against them.

Ourselves for our own failures

...leading to negative thoughts of condemnation.
 ...leading to feelings of despair and worthlessness.
 ...leading to rejection of oneself.
 ...leading to suicidal thoughts.

God for the events He allowed to occur

...leading to resentment and anger toward God.
 ...leading to feelings of rejection from God.
 ...leading to inability to be intimate with God.
 ...leading to the questioning of one's relationship with God.
 ...leading to an inability to trust God.
 ...leading to questioning God's goodness.

Forgiveness involves:

A choice: The person who has been wronged can choose to forgive or not to forgive.

Releasing: It is the voluntary act of releasing someone from the emotional damage caused by his sin and no longer holding him responsible for the consequences of that failure.

Substitution: One person pays for the emotional pain that another caused. In doing so, the debt of emotional damage is paid (assumed).

Resolving bitterness involves...

Choosing to forgive.

Releasing the pain from within our hearts.

Paying the emotional pain others have caused us by forgiving them.

Allowing the Lord to heal the pain we are experiencing within our hearts.

Prayer

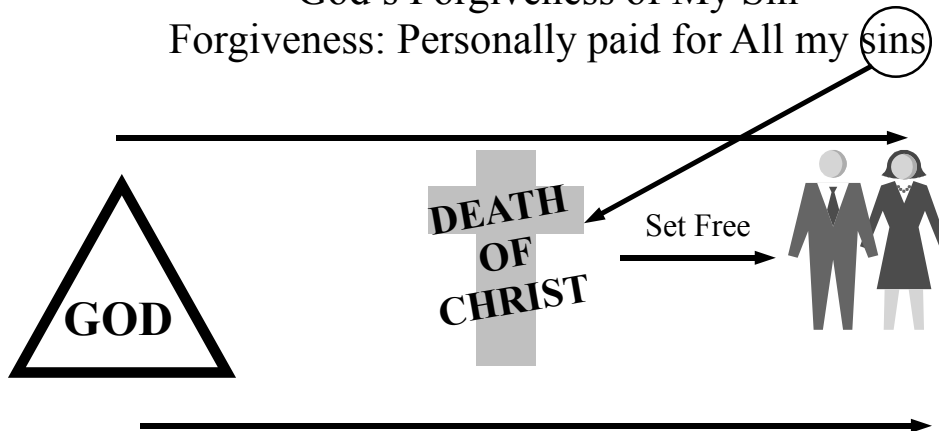
"Lord, I acknowledge that over the years, I have developed resentment and anger toward others who have hurt me. This has caused me to experience inner pain and to build walls between others and myself. It has kept me from being open with them.

"Lord, I choose to forgive each individual who has hurt me. I am willing to pay the price for the emotional pain they caused me. I desire to be free to love and be emotionally open with each person who has hurt me. I want to show them kindness, a tender heart, and a forgiving spirit.

"Lord, reveal to me those areas of bitterness, resentment, and anger within me that have been buried for so long. I want to identify and resolve each one of them. In Jesus' name, Amen."

Forgiveness

God's Forgiveness of My Sin
 Forgiveness: Personally paid for All my sins



Justice: Make me pay for my own sins

My Forgiveness of Another's Failure

Forgiveness: Assuming personal responsibility
 for the emotional pain & consequences of another's sin
Result: Freedom from Resentment—Bitterness, Anger, Revenge, Conflict

Justice: Make them pay for their failure toward me
Result: Bitterness, Anger, Revenge, Conflict

Emotional Pain Words

- Abandoned
- Accused
- Afraid
- Alone
- Angry
- Anxious
- Apathetic
- Ashamed
- Attacked
- Bad
- Belittled
- Betrayed
- Bitter
- Blamed
- Cheap
- Cheated
- Condemned
- Confused
- Controlled
- Deceived
- Defeated
- Defenseless
- Degraded
- Defrauded
- Despair
- Destroyed
- Devalued
- Don't belong
- Dirty
- Disappointed
- Disgusted
- Disrespected
- Dominated
- Embarrassed
- Empty
- Exposed
- Failure

- Fearful
- Foolish
- Frustrated
- Guilty
- Hated
- Hurt
- Inadequate
- Indecent
- Inferior
- Insecure
- Insensitive to my needs
- Insignificant
- Invalidated
- Lied to
- Lonely
- Manipulated
- Mindless
- Mistreated
- Misunderstood
- Molested
- Neglected
- Not cherished
- Overwhelmed
- Pressure to perform
- Pressured
- Rejected
- Repulsed
- Revenge
- Ruined
- Sad
- Scared
- Secluded
- Self-disgust
- Stressed
- Stupid

- Suffocated
- Suicidal
- Taken advantage of
- Torn apart
- Trapped
- Trash
- Ugly
- Unaccepted
- Unloving
- Unloved
- Unclean
- Unfairly treated
- Unfit
- Unimportant
- Unlovable
- Unnecessary
- Unprotected
- Unsafe
- Unsympathetic
- Unwanted
- Used
- Violated
- Vulnerable
- Wasted
- Wicked
- Worthless
- Wounded
- Wrongly judged

People Who Have Hurt Me

	Release	Pay
List each family member who has hurt you in the past.	How did they hurt you? (List Issues)	Describe the emotional pain caused by the hurt.
Father Mother Step-parents Siblings Friends Teachers, students, classroom experiences Employer, Employee Believers, church situations, pastor, leader, etc. God (List the ways you think God has hurt you) Myself (List each area for which you cannot forgive yourself.)		

“Lord, I choose to forgive _____ for _____ causing me to feel _____, and I am willing to pay for the emotional pain and consequences that _____ has caused me. I ask You Lord Jesus, to take back the ground I gave to the enemy through my bitterness and I yield that ground to Your control.”