

Biblical Soul Care Sunday School
Marriage: Part 6

Song of Solomon 2:15 “Catch all the foxes, those little foxes, before they ruin the vineyard of love, for the grapevines are blossoming!”

Every marriage has little “Foxes” lurking inside it! We all have idols and selfish appetites—and, like the foxes in Solomon’s vineyard, they can cause untold destruction and heartache. In fact, how seriously a couple takes their own foxes will influence whether their marriage blooms and glorifies God, or is a shallow and pale imitation of the real thing. From “Catching Foxes” John Henderson

Series objective: Remove the foxes that are destroying the vineyard (the marriage relationship) and replace with Scriptural and practical principles that will bring about a blossoming marriage that glorifies God.

9. Unforgiveness

The story of Jeb and Sally

The path of marriages where unforgiveness is allowed to pile up.

1. Immaturity and failure (sin)
2. Falling into comfortable patterns
3. Establishing defenses
4. Nurturing dislike
5. Becoming overwhelmed
6. Envy of other couples
7. Fantasies of escape

Galatians 6:7 teaches that what you plant, you will harvest. In a marriage, every day you harvest what you previously planted and you plant what you will someday harvest. You will reap what you sow. This can be and should be great news and hope giving to every married couple and to every human relationship that you have.

Healthy marriages are healthy because people in those marriages find joy in canceling debt. I cannot think of a more essential ingredient in marriage than forgiveness. Yet forgiveness is not always attractive. Forgiveness is difficult and costly. It will tempt you to fear and doubt. But when forgiveness is granted and debts are canceled, the return is much greater than the cost. Paul Tripp

Marriages rust into brokenness by the daily rain of the little drops of unforgiveness. Paul Tripp

Question: What keeps us from asking for forgiveness?

Question: What keeps us from granting forgiveness and canceling debts owed?

Question: What do the Scriptures teach in regards to forgiving others? What is the condition/state of the soul who forgives? What about the soul who won't cancel debt and forgive?

Why don't people just forgive?

1. Debt is power.
2. Debt is identity.
3. Debt is entitlement.
4. Debt is weaponry.
5. Debt puts us in God's position.

"What Did You Expect" by Paul Tripp
What is Forgiveness?

Forgiveness is a vertical commitment that is followed by a horizontal transaction.

Forgive (863) ([aphiemi](#)) from **apo** = implies a separation + **hiemi** = put in motion, send; means to send from one's self, to forsake, to hurl away, to put away, let alone, disregard, put off. It conveys the basic idea of an action which causes separation. It refers to total detachment or total separation, from a previous location or condition. To leave or let go.

Aphiemi means to send forth or away from one's self. It refers to the act of putting something away or of laying it aside and as used here means to let go of the obligation another person has "owes" you because of sin. It means to **remit** (to release from the guilt or penalty of) as one would a financial debt. In the present context Jesus is referring to an ethical or moral debt due to some offense by another person against us. In that sense they "owe" us. It follows that the basic meaning of **forgiveness** is to put away an offense.

Henry Law writes that **forgiveness** "is remission of due penalties, the obliteration of incurred guilt, the withdrawal of just displeasure, the blotting out of accusing handwriting, the burying all offences in oblivion, the hushing of the loud thunder of the law, the canceling of its tremendous curse, the consigning to a sheath the sword of justice. It is the frown of Jehovah softening into eternal smiles. It encounters sin, and strips it of its destroying power.

Translated "forgive" (23) , "forgiven" (23), "left" (38), also "leave", "let alone", "permit", and "send away".

Biblical pattern of forgiveness: Someone confesses, you forgive.

"You, Lord, are forgiving and good, abounding in love to all who call to you." **Psalms 86:5**

"Blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered." **Psalms 32:1**

"For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more." **Hebrews 8:12**

"Love prospers when a fault is forgiven, but dwelling on it separates close friends." **Proverbs 17:9**

“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.” **Ephesians 4:32**

“For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.” **Matthew 6:14-15**

“Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.” **Colossians 3:13**

“Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.” **Luke 6:37**

"Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, 'Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?' Jesus answered, 'I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.' " **Matthew 18:21-22**

"As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us." **Psalms 103:12**

"If You, Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared." **Psalms 130:3-4**

"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy." **Matthew 5:7**

"For judgment is merciless for the one who has shown no mercy. But mercy triumphs over judgment." **James 2:13**

"Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." **Romans 12:21**

The Lord passed in front of Moses, calling out, "Yahweh! The Lord! The God of compassion and mercy! I am slow to anger and filled with unfailing love and faithfulness.⁷ I lavish unfailing love to a thousand generations. I forgive iniquity, rebellion, and sin." **Exodus 34:6-7a**

When is forgiveness needed?

Forgiveness is a vertical commitment and relational transaction that is to occur in moments when sin has gotten in the way of the unity, love, and understanding that God welcomes us to enjoy as His children in marriage.

Some other favorite quotes:

The more you are willing to forgive, the more you experience its blessings. The more you experience its blessings, the more you are quick to give yourself to the cycle of commit-confront-confess-forgive. You start living in the benefits of short accounts between you and your mate. You love the fact that there are no big and open issues between you. You have no closets to empty, and you are thankful, and in your thankfulness you appreciate one another all the more and also the one--- God---who calls you to forgive.

Forgiveness requires remembering. Why is it that we are so skilled at remembering the other's weaknesses, failure, and sin and so adept at forgetting our own? Why are we so good at seeing all the ways that another needs to be forgiven but forget how great our need for forgiveness is? When we are filled with the grief of our own sin and with gratitude for the amazing forgiveness we have been given, then we will find joy in giving to our spouse what we have received. Perhaps a lifestyle of unforgiveness is rooted in the sin of forgetfulness. We forget that there is not a day in our lives that we don't need to be forgiven. We forget that we never graduate from our need for grace. We forget that we have been loved with a love we could never earn, achieve, or deserve. We forget that God never mocks our weaknesses, never finds joy in throwing our failures in our face, never threatens to turn His back on us, and never makes us buy our way back into His favor. When you remember, when you carry with you a deep appreciation for the grace that you have been given, you'll have a heart that is ready to forgive.

You can taste the sad harvest of marital détente that so many couples live in, or you can plant better seeds and celebrate a much better harvest. The harvest of forgiveness is the kind of marriage everyone wants. Forgiveness stimulates appreciation and affection. We stop looking at the other person as the enemy. Forgiveness produces patience. Forgiveness is the fertile soil in which unity in marriage grows. Paul Tripp

Never are you more like God than when you forgive. Never are you more like Satan than when you're angry, and you hate. John MacArthur