

**SERIES: THE PROCESS OF BREAKTHROUGH
PART 9: OWN YOUR RESPONSIBILITY**

Last week Pastor Scottie taught on **Step 8: Right the Wrong. This is where I make a list of those who have hurt me and I willingly choose to work through the process of forgiveness to do my best to restore these relationships.** This step is impossible until you really have done the deep work you must do to walk through the process you were taught last week. Scottie taught on, first of all, I must **Forgive those who've hurt me.** Why? Because Father God has forgiven you by the sending of His Son Jesus Christ to die on the cross for your sins, rebellion and imperfections. I must also forgive because resentment, bitterness and hatred all come from unforgiveness, and they will single handedly ruin my faith. Hebrews 12:15 says, **“Look after each other so that none of you will miss out on the special favor of God. Watch out that no bitter root of unbelief rises up among you, for whenever it springs up, many are corrupted by its poison.”** We also need to forgive others because we will need forgiveness in the future. Jesus says this in Mark 11:25, **“But when you are praying, forgive anyone you are holding a grudge against, so that your Father in heaven will forgive yours sins, too.”**

Learning the process of forgiveness is so important, and I think for most of us, we have not really had anyone teach us how to do this. We just know that the Bible tells us we must

forgive. Before we look at the why we are to make amends, I want to look at how we personally learn to forgive those who have wronged us. None of us ask to be hurt so we can forgive. When we are violated, or sinned against or something is done to us or happens that we did not ask for and we did not want, we are thrust into what I call:

I. The crisis of forgiveness

It's a crisis because an injustice has been thrust upon you, and Jesus says, "I need you to forgive them just like I have forgiven you when you have wrong Me and violated My person and sense of morality, ethics and standards for living." Because you have been violated against your will this is what causes forgiveness to be so difficult. It becomes a crisis.

The process of forgiveness:

A. Confess what was done to you

Depending on the severity of what done this can be readily identifiable, or it can be very difficult to do. The personal, the more intimate and the greater the damage done the more difficult it will be to do. What I have learned in dealing with these kinds of issues in my own life for 63 years, and being personally involved with others who have gone through hurtful betrayals and traumas, I have learned that it is necessary to be ruthlessly honest with yourself on what really happened. I mean down to the details that you experienced physically, auditorially, olfactory wise and visually. The

reason this is so important is you cannot forgive what you don't remember. When you repress or push down the memories of what really did happen to you, they have a way of coming up at the most inappropriate times. They usually come to the surface when you're under a lot of stress or fatigued or in a lot of pain. Those experiences that you push down into your unconscious are the stories that come out to haunt you in your nightmares and night tares. God has created you in such a wonderful way that you were designed to remember things neurologically, emotionally and physically. When it comes to forgiveness the first order of business is to remember what happened and confess it to yourself, and usually when we get stuck we will need someone we trust and believe has the skill set to help us through it.

B. Commit to admitting and accepting what you feel

The reason for getting honest about what happens is so that you can then admit that whatever happened did truly happened, and then you can accept and identify the different feelings that the trauma caused you to experience. With every violation there will be feelings that you experience. It is so key to identify them so that you can dissolve those negative feelings that take up unwanted space in your mind, emotions and will. Some negative feeling words are afraid, alone, angry, annoyed, anxious, ashamed, abnormal, betrayed, bad, bitter, cheated, crushed, confused, depressed, deprived, dejected, despair, desperate, disappointed, discouraged, dominated, embarrassed, empty, evil, frustrated, grieved,

heartbroken, helpless, humiliated, hurt, incapable, injured, indifferent, indecisive, irritated, lonely, lost, livid, miserable, nervous, negated, offended, overwhelmed, paralyzed, pathetic, preoccupied, rejected, resentful, sad, sacred, suspicious, tearful, terrified, timid, tormented, uneasy, unimportant, victimized, worried, or worthless. You can see that these different feelings can give you clarity and help you get in better touch with what you are feeling with what happened to you. When a person says they can't put words to what they experienced, it will be hard to work through the pain until you do. To name what you're feeling is to reclaim that part of you that was lost in the hurt and the damage that was done to you.

C. Confide your feelings with God and other trusted friends or a counselor

There is a cleansing, healing freedom to be gained when you share the hurt, pain and negative feelings that were generated by the trauma or hurt or disappointment.

D. Construct boundaries

This is where you have to be very clear on what you want in your life and what you don't want in your life. What you will allow and won't allow. A boundary by nature has to do with what you are responsible for in your life. This is where the acronym SERFVIP is very helpful. You alone are responsible for what happens to you and how you take care of yourself Spiritually, Emotionally, Relationally, Financially,

Vocationally, Intellectually and Physically. Your personal boundaries are your responsibility. Forgiveness means you will get to cancel the debt against the person who transgressed one of your boundaries.

E. Cancel the debt

F. Consider reconciliation

Why? Because unresolved relationships are the root of your problem, and they prevent recovery and breakthrough from happening. As you discover the why of forgiveness and the how to forgive, then it is important that you pursue making amends to people you've hurt as well as releasing the people who've hurt you. Why? Please read with me Romans 12:17-18, **“Never pay back evil with more evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable. ¹⁸Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone.”** Paul is saying here, the reason you can't get over that habit, that hang-up, let go of that hurt, is because you're holding on to some unresolved relationships. And those must be dealt with if you're really going to get on with your recovery and become the person God wants you to be and enjoy the kind of happiness He meant for you to have in the first place.

II. How to make amends to those I've hurt

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

You say, I can't think of anybody. This is a typical response of denial. So I put a few suggestions down for you to think about. **Is there anyone I owe a debt to that I haven't repaid? Is there anyone I've broken a promise to? Is there anyone I'm guilty of over-controlling? A spouse? A child? A brother? An employee? Friend? Is there anyone I'm overly possessive of? Is there anyone I'm hypercritical of? Have I been verbally abusive to anybody? Or physically abusive? Or emotionally abusive? Is there anyone I have not appreciated or not paid attention to, or for whom I've forgotten an anniversary? Is there anyone I've been unfaithful to? Or, have I lied to anyone?** Is this enough to get you started, or do I need to go on? You make a list of those you've harmed and what you did.

B. Think how I'd like others to make amends to me

Luke 6:31, **“Do for others as you would like them to do for you.”** So you stop and think, “If someone was going to come and apologize to me, how would I want it done?” And you'd do it that way. There are **three keys on how to make amends to another person.**

1. The right time

Ecclesiastes 8:6, **“Yes, there is a time and a way for everything, even as people's troubles lie heavily upon them.”** You don't just drop a bomb on somebody. You don't just do it when they're rushing out the door or laying their head down on the pillow, “By the way, I've got some stuff to

deal with.” You do it according to their time, not when it's best for you, but when it's best for them.

2. The right attitude

Ephesians 4:25, **“So put away all falsehood and ‘tell your neighbor the truth,’ because we belong to each other.”**

How would you like somebody to apologize to you?

Privately with humility, with sincerity, to simply say what they did was wrong, to not make any justification for it, no excuses, not talk about your part, 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 in this step. You don't try to justify your actions, and you focus only on your part and don't expect anything back from the person you're trying to make amends to.

Make restitution where possible. If you've borrowed something and not returned it, you return it. If you owe somebody some money, financially, you pay it back. The very first time I did this step that I remember we lived in Pomona where we pastored *“The Gathering Place.”* Two single women had loaned me their electric chainsaw so that I could cut down some huge Yucca plants that belonged to the church. In the process of cutting the trees down I burned up their chain saw. I went and paid for a new one. I honestly try to live my life this way every day. I do not want anyone being able to say legitimately that I didn't do what I was supposed to do concerning them. I obviously am not perfect, and there have been some who have left our church very angry,

resentful and bitter towards me. But I always try to make sure I have done what is right towards them; so I could come to a point in my life where I could stand today and say, “Folks, I have nothing to hide. I'm not perfect, but all the things I've done have been repaired, have been made amends for to the best of my ability.” That gives you freedom and confidence.

There was a man named Zacchaeus in Luke chapter 19. Zacchaeus was a tax collector, and in those days whatever you could charge people, you would pay Rome what they asked for, and then you could keep over and above anything else you got. So they would rip off everybody, and they were the most hated people in society, and Jesus chose to go to his house. Zacchaeus's life was changed when he met Christ. He said, “Lord, I will give half my wealth to the poor, and if I have overcharged people on their taxes, I will give them back four times as much.” Jesus looked at him and said, “Salvation has come to this guy.” This guy means business. He's a real Christian. He's willing to put his money where his mouth is. He made restitution wherever it was necessary.

(Scott F – come up and stand by Pastor Scott)

Note: The more serious your offense, the less likely 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. What you do is you go to that person at the right time, with the right attitude and say, “I'm sorry, I was wrong, I don't deserve your forgiveness, but is there any way I can make amends to you?” And you leave it at that.

SCOTT FICKAS: Breakthrough Testimony

3. Is it appropriate?

Proverbs 12:18 says, **“Some people make cutting remarks, but the words of the wise bring healing.”** Again, there are some situations where it would be unwise to contact the one you've hurt. Remember the qualifier on this step is, “except when to do so would harm them or others.” In some situations you wouldn't want to go back to because it would just open up a whole can of worms and probably make the situation worse. So what do you do in that case? You spend some quality time with Jesus Christ, and you ask Him to forgive you for what you did to that person through your actions or words, or what you did not do but should have, and you ask God to heal them of any harm, hurt or heartache that you might have caused them. Romans 12:18: **“If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.”**

C. Refocus my life

Focus your life on doing God's will starting today in your relationships. That's what recovery is all about. David points to the process of how to refocus your life to get on God's track for your life.

Please read out loud with me Psalm 32:5, **“Finally, I confessed all my sins to You and stopped trying to hide**

them. I said to myself, ‘I will confess my rebellion to the Lord.’ And You forgave me! All my guilt is gone.”

1. Get your heart right

Release and forgive.

2. Reach out to God

Ask Christ into your life. Say, “Jesus Christ GOD’S SON, come into my life.” Reach out to God. You can't manufacture enough forgiveness for all the times you're going to be hurt in the world. You just don't have it. Human forgiveness runs dry. You need to plug in to Jesus Christ, so that daily He gives you the forgiveness you need to let go of that on a daily basis, and finally it's released. You reach out to God and He gives you forgiveness you thought you couldn't do.

3. Face the world again

You don't withdraw, you don't hide in a shell, you resume living, you take chances, you say, “I'm not a victim anymore.” And you start looking ahead.

Notice what happens when you do these three steps:

David confesses that God forgave him, and all his guilt is gone. The memory will fade away. Wouldn't you like to be free from all that relational garbage? That's the purpose of Step 9. I challenge you to take it with me today.

COMMUNION

“As they were eating, Jesus took some bread and blessed it. Then He broke it in pieces and gave it to the disciples, saying, ‘Take this and eat it, for this is My body.’ And He took a cup of wine and gave thanks to God for it. He gave it to them and said, ‘Each of you drink from it, for this is My blood, which confirms the covenant between God and His people. It is poured out as a sacrifice to forgive the sins of many.’” Matthew 26:26-28