

Built To Last: God's Blueprint For Strong Marriages
"From Bitterness to Forgiveness"
Cornerstone Church of Poway
Pastor Ed Turley
February 23rd, 2025

Sermon Teaching

Joseph's Story (Genesis 37-50)

- ✓ He was his father's favorite, which caused jealousy among his brothers.
- ✓ Had two dreams that made his brothers hate him even more.
- ✓ Betrayed by brothers & sold into slavery (Genesis 37:12-28).
- ✓ His brothers told his dad that he was dead.
- ✓ Falsey accused of rape.
- ✓ Forgotten in prison.
- ✓ Ultimately he let go of bitterness and trusted God's plan.

The danger of holding on to bitterness:

"See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no **bitter root** grows up to cause trouble and defile many." **Hebrews 12:15 (NIV) Remember verse**

Big Idea: "Bitterness anchors you to the past—only forgiveness can lift you into freedom."

Practice Forgiveness By:

1. Resolving Issues Daily

"And "don't sin by letting anger **control** you." Don't let the **sun go down** while you are still angry, for anger gives a **foothold** to the devil." **Ephesians 4:26-27 (NLT2)**

"Love prospers when a fault is forgiven, but **dwelling** on it separates close friends."
Proverbs 17:9 (NLT2)

Notes: _____

2. Confessing My Part Of The Conflict

"And why worry about a speck in your friend's eye when you have a log in your own?
⁴ How can you think of saying to your friend, 'Let me help you get rid of that speck in your eye,' when you can't see past the log in your own eye? ⁵ Hypocrite! First get rid of the log in your own eye; then you will see well enough to deal with the speck in your friend's eye."
Matthew 7:3-5 (NLT2)

What have I contributed to the conflict? _____

Am I being... • unrealistic? • insensitive? • oversensitive?
 • ungrateful? • too demanding? • overreactive?

"My dear brothers and sisters, be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. Your anger can never make things right in God's sight." **James 1:19-20 (NLT)**

- Have I truly listened to my spouse's feelings?
- Am I willing to apologize first, even if I feel they are more at fault?

“Love is not ill-mannered or selfish or irritable; love does not keep a record of wrongs.”

1 Corinthians 13:5 (TEV)

Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with **tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.** ¹³ Make allowance for each other's faults, and **forgive anyone who offends you.** Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. **Colossians 3:12-13 (NLT2)**

Notes: _____

3. Releasing Those Who Hurt Me

Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody.

¹⁸ **If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.**

¹⁹ Do not take revenge, my friends, but **leave room for God's wrath**, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. ²⁰ On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, **feed** him; if he is thirsty, give him something to **drink**. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Romans 12:17-21 (NIV)

His brothers then came and threw themselves down before him. "We are your slaves," they said. ¹⁹ But Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? ²⁰ You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. ²¹ So then, don't be afraid. I will provide for you and your children." And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them. **Genesis 50:18-21 (NIV)**

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

Big Idea: "Bitterness anchors you to the past—only forgiveness can lift you into freedom."

- Will you ask God to help you release bitterness and forgive those who wronged you.

I Will Practice Forgiveness By:

- [] Resolving issues daily—don't let anger or hurt fester.
- [] Confessing my part of the conflict with humility
- [] Releasing those who hurt me
- [] Today I accepted Jesus as my Lord and Savior

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Talk It Over



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[This is only a guide – select the points you want to discuss.]

Opening Prayer: "Father, thank You for the example of Joseph, who chose grace over bitterness. Teach us to walk in forgiveness, to release past hurts, and to reflect Your love in our relationships. Speak to us today as we learn to practice true forgiveness. In Jesus' name, Amen."

Icebreaker:

Have you ever had a situation where someone forgave you when you didn't deserve it? How did it feel?

Follow-up: What is one common challenge that makes forgiveness difficult in relationships?

Review Joseph's Story (Genesis 37-50)

Have you ever struggled with forgiving someone?

How do we let go of bitterness and trust God's plan like Joseph did?

Read Hebrews 12:15

Can you imagine missing out on God's grace? Bitterness is easy to see in others but more difficult to see in ourselves. How can forgiving someone help you?

Big Idea: "Bitterness anchors you to the past—only forgiveness can lift you into freedom."

The Danger of Bitterness

Read Hebrews 12:15

How does bitterness affect relationships, especially in marriage?

What does it mean for bitterness to take root in someone's heart?

Why is forgiveness necessary for a strong, lasting marriage or friendship?

Reflection: Bitterness poisons relationships, but forgiveness heals them.

✂ Application: Identify one area in your life where bitterness might be taking root. Ask God to help you release it.

Practice Forgiveness by:

1. Resolving Issues Daily

Read Ephesians 4:26-27, Proverbs 17:9

Why does unresolved anger create distance in relationships?

How does quick reconciliation help prevent deeper issues from forming?

How can we practice daily forgiveness in small ways?

Illustration: Holding onto small offenses is like carrying a rock in your shoe—it may not seem like much at first, but over time, it will hurt and slow you down.

✂ Application: Think about a recent small conflict—how could you have resolved it sooner and with grace?

2. Confessing My Part in the Conflict

Read Matthew 7:3-5, James 1:19-20

Why is it easier to see the faults of others than our own?

What are common things we do that escalate conflicts?

How can humility and self-reflection lead to reconciliation?

Reflection: Healthy relationships require both people to own their part of the problem.

✂ Application: Before discussing a disagreement, pause and ask yourself: What part of this conflict do I need to take responsibility for?

3. Releasing Those Who Hurt Me

Romans 12:17-20, Genesis 50:18-21, Ephesians 4:32

How does the wording, “as far as it depends on you” help you in conflict resolving?

How well do you do at leaving room for God to work? Why?

Joseph had every reason to seek revenge—why did he choose forgiveness instead?

How does trusting God’s plan help us release past hurts?

What happens inside of us when we hold onto resentment?

✂ Application: Who in your life do you need to release from bitterness today? Take a moment to pray for them.

Final Reflection & Challenge:

Joseph’s story shows us that forgiveness isn’t about excusing the wrong—it’s about trusting God’s plan and freeing our own hearts.

Which of these steps—resolving issues daily, confessing your part, or releasing others—do you need to focus on most?

Close In Prayer: