

BE A BRINGER

“40 One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. 41 He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which is translated, the Christ). 42 And he brought him to Jesus....” John 1:40-42a

A bringer makes one touch each week by investing and inviting someone to Christ and church.

Name three people you will pray for their salvation this week:

PRAYER REQUESTS FOR THE WEEK

“Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you;....” I Samuel 12:23a

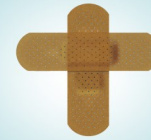


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Forgiveness

Letting Go Of Your Hurt

GROWTH GUIDE



Handout: 04/08/18

Study: 04/15/18

How Can I Stop Thinking About the Hurt?

Finding mental peace can be the most difficult aspect of unpacking forgiveness and avoiding bitterness. It is one thing to know what the Bible teaches about how we should respond to those who have hurt us. It is quite another to stop thinking about what happened. Silencing the memories can be nigh unto impossible.

My friend Tom calls this “the mental gerbil wheel.” When we have been deeply offended, we may find ourselves thinking over and over about what happened. We mentally run in place. The more we think about it, the faster our thoughts go, and the faster we go nowhere.

A biography of Chevy Chase shared how he struggled to get off his own mental gerbil wheel. Depending on your level of exposure to entertainment, you may associate Chase more with the Vacation movies than with serious reflection. But there is nothing comedic about Chase’s childhood. His mother abused him repeatedly. She locked him in a closet for hours at a time and would wake him up in the night to slap him in the face. Fifty years later, Chase has said he still cannot shake off the memories of what his mother did, even after her death.

Christians are certainly not exempt from mental battles. In his book *The End of Memory*, theologian Miroslav Volf described his fight against the memory of being interrogated as a suspected spy. Volf said:

“My mind was enslaved by the abuse I had suffered. It was as though [the person who wronged me] had moved into the very household of my mind, ensconced himself right in the middle of its living room, and I had to live with him”

Can you relate? Do you have memories that barge in and seat themselves in your living room, boisterously refusing to leave?

It is tempting to stay on the mental gerbil wheel. You may feel that you are vindicating yourself for whatever breach of trust took place. You convince yourself that you have the right to stew. Besides, you reason, it won’t hurt me to think about it. Or you may claim that you can’t help but think about it. You say, “I want to quit thinking about it, to move on. But I simply cannot. I am a prisoner of my own thoughts.”

Whatever the reason you continue running on the mental gerbil wheel, know this—you cannot afford to stay there. If you give in to the memories and allow your mind to spin them over and over, they will eventually destroy you.

The seriousness of these mental battles is driven home when we consider that one of Satan’s favorite tactics is to use unresolved relational issues. When Paul exhorted the Corinthians that it was time to forgive, he followed up with the reminder that they should be aware that unresolved differences are one of Satan’s favorite strategies to divide and destroy God’s people (2 Corinthians 2:5– 11; Ephesians 4:25– 27).

If you catch yourself brooding about a wrong done to you, be aware, too, that Satan prowls around like a roaring lion. He would love to crush your spiritual neck between his jaws when you are most vulnerable (1 Peter 5:8). You cannot afford to lose this battle for your mind. Brauns, Chris. *Unpacking Forgiveness: Biblical Answers for Complex Questions and Deep Wounds* (p. 167-169). Crossway.

KEY VERSE

Psalm 77:12

*I will also meditate on all Your work,
And talk of Your deeds. NKJV*

WEEKLY READINGS

Monday: Psalm 77:1-15

Introduction

1. What are some wrongs that have happened to you that you tend to replay in your mind?
2. Pastor Chris Brauns refers to Psalm 77 in his book as the journal of one struggling to get off the mental gerbil wheel? What can we learn about moving past our hurt from this Psalm?

Tuesday: Ephesians 4:32; Luke 17:3-4

Memorize What The Bible Says About Forgiveness

3. What does the Bible say about Forgiveness? What are some other verses besides the ones above?
4. How would reading and memorizing what the Bible says about forgiveness help you to not dwell on the hurt?

Wednesday: Hebrews 12:1-3; Psalm 121:1-2

Take Your Eyes Off Yourself And Fix Them On Christ

5. What is the benefit of fixing your eyes on Christ when it comes to the hurt in your life?
6. What are some things that Jesus has done for you?

Thursday: Philippians 4:4-7

Pray

7. How can prayer help clear your mind of hurt?
8. What does it mean that the peace of God will guard your heart and mind?
9. How can giving thanksgiving take your thoughts off of your hurts and place your thoughts on God?

Friday: Hebrews 10:23-25; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

Worship and Fellowship

10. How can attending a worship service help you to stop thinking about the hurt?
11. How can spending time with other believers help you forgive and move past hurt?
12. How can you encourage others at our church in the area of forgiveness?