

Journey Church Hawaii [Kapolei Campus]
The Miracle of Forgiveness, Part IV
“Reclaim My Purpose for the Future”
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March 31, 2019

- ✓ Defining Forgiveness
“The process of reframing one’s anger and hurt from the past, with the goal of recovering one’s peace in the present and revitalizing one’s purpose and hopes for the future.”
[Dr. Dick Tibbits, Forgive to Live]
- ✓ Forgive Your Way to Freedom [formerly Learn to 4 Give] by Gil Mertz
- ✓ The Five Stages of Grief [recognizing the EMOTION that occurs when thinking of my offender ... am I in a process of healthy grieving or stuck and unable to forgive?]

With a proper understanding of forgiveness, we are able to release our God-Given power as we embrace HIS command to forgive. Once we have done that, we can begin to resolve our pain of the past and restore our peace in the present. We are now in a position to RECLAIM OUR PURPOSE – to live out both WHO I AM IN CHRIST and WHY I AM HERE.

All of us have been uniquely made by God [Eph 2:10], with an incredible destiny [Jer 29:11; John 10:10] and purpose [Jer 1:5].

God’s purpose for us sometimes get derailed. Most often it is b/c of our sin when we willfully disobey God. Our sin hinders our prayers, kills our joy, robs our peace, poisons our soul, and breaks our fellowship with God. In addition, our sin neutralizes God’s purpose in our lives.

Other things can foil God’s purpose, too [being too busy or too afraid].

However, nothing knocks us off track quite like unforgiveness. All of us have a destiny but some never achieve it because a hurtful incident in our past has clipped our wings and we cannot soar as God intended.

It is now time to RECLAIM GOD’S PURPOSE FOR OUR FUTURE [Hebrews 12:1]

I. Your Fate is not Your Destiny [Joshua 1:9]

- A. Susan Boyle 2009 “I Dreamed a Dream” at age 47 [desire to be a professional singer]
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RxPZh4AnWyk>
- B. Have you ever felt that your painful past has sabotaged your future?
- C. God’s Perspective [Ps 139:16; Ro 11:29]

“Success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which he has overcome” [Booker T Washington]

D. The Fate and Destiny of Joseph [Genesis 37-50]

- ✓ Joseph was a dreamer, the youngest & favored son of Jacob. He dreamed that one day he would rule over his family. He was destined for greatness
- ✓ His brothers were jealous, and sold him as a slave and faked his death
- ✓ As a slave to an Egyptian [Potiphar], he remained true to his faith, worked hard, and was rewarded with the charge of the entire household
- ✓ Potiphar’s wife was attracted to Joseph, and when he refused her, she falsely accused him of making unwanted advances, and he was thrown into jail

- ✓ In jail, Joseph remained true to his faith, worked hard, and was soon rewarded with the charge of the entire jail
- ✓ He correctly interpreted the dreams of Pharaoh's Chief Baker and Cupbearer
- ✓ Two years later when Pharaoh had a dream, Joseph correctly interpreted again
- ✓ He was promoted to "second in command" in Egypt
- ✓ He named his sons Manasseh [to forget; "God made me forget my hardship of the past"] and Ephraim [fruitful; "God has prospered me in the land of my sorrow]
- ✓ Famine in the land sends his brothers to Egypt for food, where, through a series of events he reveals his true identity. While they were sure he would seek vengeance, they were radically surprised in his forgiveness and heart to save his family, and his trust in God.
- ✓ "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. So then, do not be afraid. I will provide for you and your children." And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them. [Gen 50:19-21]

God revealed to Joseph at an early age that He had purpose for his life. Even as he suffered innocently for years, he never lost sight of God's purpose or His promises. He chose to not waste those years in bitterness, anger, and unforgiveness towards his brothers but to focus on God's purpose. You have this power today. Choose forgiveness and reclaim your purpose.

II. Making Peace with God [Isaiah 26:3]

A. "Where were You, God?"

When things go wrong in our lives that require forgiveness, we instinctively want to hold someone responsible. We need to blame somebody, so we often go to the "One with the Most Power" – God. In the midst of their pain people often ask, "how could a loving God allow bad things to happen to me or to the people that I love? Where was God when I was hurt, exploited or abused? How can I trust God when He wasn't there when I need Him most?"

- B. How has my Forgiveness Journey affected my relationship with God?
- C. The Pain and setbacks we encounter in life are the result of three things:
 1. We have to take responsibility for our own choices and natural consequences
 2. We have to accept the disappointments of other people's choices which have natural consequences of their own
 3. The Bible speaks of sin but also the curse of living in a fallen world [John 16:33; Ro 8:20-22]
- D. Making Peace with God is not about forgiving Him but about RECONCILING with Him. I need to repent of for my doubts, anger, pride, stubbornness, distrust and lack of faith. [2 Corinthians 5:17 – 6:2]
- E. How Much does God Care? [Ps 147:3-5; Eph 3:18-19]

III. Restoring Broken Relationships [1 Peter 4:8]

- A. Forgiveness I can do myself, but reconciliation requires the actions of someone else for a broken relationship to be repaired
- B. When do I choose Reconciliation? When the relationship is more important than the issue [2 Cor 5:21]
- C. Who initiates reconciliation? [Matt 5:23-24; 18:15]
- D. While repentance is not required for forgiveness, it is absolutely essential for reconciliation
- E. What does Repentance look like?
 1. Voluntary: not being forced by someone else
 2. Motivated: hoping for the goal of reconciliation and not just venting anger
 3. Humility: remembering that we all make mistakes and need forgiveness
 4. Empathy: trying to see and understand the other person's perspective
 5. Responsible: offering no excuses, no explanations, no blaming others
 6. Specific: providing details regarding the offense
 7. Transparent: holding nothing back but exposing everything
 8. Vulnerable: taking the risk that an apology might not be received
- F. Remember the Prodigal Son's Amazing Dad! [Luke 15:11-32]

IV. Rebuilding a New Future [2 Corinthians 5:17]

- A. How do I know that I've Forgiven? [Forgiveness Evaluation end of notes]
- B. Get Back on Track be the Masterpiece God created you to be [Isa 61:3]
- C. "Who am I" and "Why am I Here?"
- D. Set Goals that are [SMART: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Timely]

V. Leaving a Legacy of Forgiveness [Matthew 5:15-16]

- A. What do you want to leave behind? [2 Timothy 2:2]

[William Shakespeare]: "No legacy is so rich as honesty"

[Og Mandino]: "the greatest legacy we can leave our children are happy memories"

[Shannon Adler]: "Carve your name on hearts, not tombstones. A legacy is etched into the minds of others and the stories they share about you"

- B. Ambassadors of Reconciliation [2 Corinthians 5:17-21]
- C. Stephen: A Legacy of Forgiveness [Acts 7:54-60; Galatians 6:9]
 - ✓ As Stephen shares the Gospel with Wisdom, the religious leaders are infuriated
 - ✓ They decide to stone him, and while they are pummeling him, Stephen forgives them
 - ✓ Sadly, this display of grace did not make any difference to the crowd; they kept throwing rocks until Stephen was dead
 - ✓ Key: Saul [the Apostle Paul] was there. Not yet saved, and he observed EVERYTHING
 - ✓ His life would be one of endless persecution [2 Tim 3:10-13]
 - ✓ [Paul]: "So let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up" [Galatians 6:9]

Forgiveness Evaluation
Forgive Your Way to Freedom by Gil Mertz

1. Can you think of this person without an undue emotional response?
2. Do you find yourself still trying to avoid this person?
3. Are there still painful memories that drag you down into depression?
4. Do you still turn to other things to help you cope?
5. Do you find yourself often repeating your hurtful story to other people?
6. Do you still think of getting even with the person?
7. If you knew this person was in trouble, would you help them?
8. Can you think positive thoughts about this person?
9. Could you be happy if this person succeeded?
10. Are you able to say nice things about this person?
11. Have you stopped keeping a record of this person's wrongs?
12. Are you still holding on to some resentment toward this person?
13. Have you been able to resolve the pain of the past?
14. Do you feel that you've arrived at a place of peace over the situation?
15. Do you regret the loss of the relationship?
16. Could you reach out to this person for reconciliation?
17. Do you feel free like you have your life back and that you're back in control?
18. Are you closer to God now than when you started your forgiveness journey?
19. Can you tell yourself the truth about this situation and be objective?
20. Has your mental, emotional, spiritual, and physical health improved at all?
21. Do you still struggle with fairness or can you let go?
22. Have you learned to remember the past in a different way?
23. Do your trusted friends think you've forgiven?
24. Are you feeling any sense of conviction that you haven't forgiven?
25. Do you believe you've grown as a person since you learned to forgive?