

The Four Priorities Chapter 12

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Facilitator Guide by Reclamation Church

Chapter 12: Emotional Assets – Bitterness or Forgiveness

Note: The timelines below are only a guide, as well as the questions to ask. Make this your own and go where the Holy Spirit leads you. Take your time and, when needed, break this chapter into several meetings.

**Open
(10 min.)**

Spend a few minutes each week catching up with one another, then share prayer requests.

Do: Open in prayer.

**Recap
(5 min.)**

Do: Briefly give a summary of your meeting last week.

- We gave our best evaluation of our own attitudes, and whether we are more grateful or if we gripe more.
- We looked at the Israelites as examples of those who complained, did not trust God, and God continued to discipline, yet provided for their needs.

Ask: What did you think about differently this past week regarding being more grateful? Did you thank God for 5 different things each day? If so, how did it help to change your attitude? (Consider sharing some of your own thoughts.)

**Discuss
(5-7 min.)**

Ask:

- How have you been negatively impacted by someone’s “root of bitterness?” (share)
 - How have you personally seen positive outcomes from being forgiven or giving out forgiveness? (share)
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Four Common Problems from Anger, pgs. 120-122 (15 min)

Ask: Discuss how you have seen or experienced the following four common problems that stem from bitterness/anger.

- Physical Problems
- Mental Problems
- Relational Problems
- Spiritual Problems

Say: It's amazing how bitterness can give way to anger and then be the cause of many physical ailments.

At the end of this section, there was a reference to **Ephesians 4:31-32**. Let's turn there now and glance at earlier verses.

- In this section of Ephesians, the believer is called to live as children of light by doing something that is key. Read verses 20-24. What can change our thoughts and attitudes? *(The Holy Spirit can renew them so that we stop living as we used to.)*
- What does it say to do in verse 32? *(Be kind, tenderhearted, and forgiving JUST AS God forgave us through Christ.)*
- Before we were able to come to God through Christ, what were we to God, according to Romans 5:10? *(We were his enemies; still in sin.)*
- How are we to forgive others, according to verse 32? *(AS God forgave us, and we were his enemy!)*

Forgiveness, pgs. 122-125 (30 min-1hr.)

Ask: In the second paragraph of this section, what did the author say are the **three mistaken ideas** about forgiveness? *(Justifying the actions of the offender is the same as forgiveness; time heals all wounds; and expressing forgiveness to someone who hasn't asked to be forgiven.)*

Do you have any insights from those three mistaken ideas?

Say: Let's look at each step of the forgiveness process.



**Forgiveness,
cont.**

Do: Discuss what the book has to say about the 5 Steps of Forgiveness, and your thoughts and experiences with each of these.

- Step 1: Forgive the Debt – **refuse to dwell**
- Step 2: Release the Offender – **even if they are deceased**
- Step 3: Understand the Growth and Healing Process – **grief is ongoing**
- Step 4: Make Reconciliation – **if reconciliation is needed, healthy boundaries are also okay**
- Step 5: Express Kindness

Say: In Step 3, the author mentioned the account of Joseph from Genesis 37-50.

Ask: If you are familiar with the account, what stood out to you about how Joseph was treated and how he responded to his brothers? (**share; we don't see from scripture that Joseph ever became bitter, nor questioned God, but continued to trust God, lived holy, demonstrated God's presence and blessing in his life; he waited on God's timing and ultimate plan to elevate his position to save His people, and showed forgiveness to the brothers that hated him and wanted him dead.**)

**Take Action
(30 min.)**

Read through and discuss the questions at the end of the chapter.

Next week, we'll continue to discuss our heart attitude. Do we tend to live more with depression or joy?

**Close
(5 min.)**

Homework: Read Chapter 13 (and referenced scriptures in the Bible) and come prepared with questions you might have from this chapter, as well as completing the end-of-chapter questions.

Close in prayer.