

## Slide 1: Intro

- Welcome to Forgiveness and Reconciliation workshop
- Introduce ourselves
- Short summary of a 5 week course
  - Beyond this workshop, we are happy to be a resource to help you go deeper

## Slide 2: The Difference Between Forgiveness and Reconciliation

- **Who?**
  - *Forgiveness*: one person. A single act that you do.
  - *Reconciliation*: two or more people. Can't happen unilaterally, both parties have to be willing to participate.
- **What?**
  - *Forgiveness*: a gift granted. Does not depend on what is being done by the transgressor. God freely offers forgiveness which leads to salvation.
  - *Reconciliation*: earned not granted. Like the sanctification process that happens between us and God after we're saved.
- **How?**
  - *Forgiveness*: emotional replacement. Learn how to replace feelings we experience because of the offense. Replace feelings of injustice with feelings of peace.
  - *Reconciliation*: behavioral replacement. Primary outcome is to change the way we act and how our behavior affects us and those around us.
  - These processes take time.
- **Where?**
  - *Forgiveness*: within your body. All internal work. Focused on the self rather than your external environment.
  - *Reconciliation*: within your relationship. You can't own the reconciliation exclusively, so it has to happen externally between you and your spouse.
- **How to?**
  - *Forgiveness*: pyramid model to REACH forgiveness.
  - *Reconciliation*: bridge to reconciliation.

## Slide 3: Pyramid Model to REACH Forgiveness

- **Recall the hurt**
  - Make space to reflect on your pain. More difficult in a vulnerable state (hungry, tired) or when not in a safe space. Practice mindfulness, get comfortable, breathe, pray.
  - Practice visualization—picture the event in your mind, write out the events in a story, plot it on a timeline. Recall with objectivity.
  - Check in with your body while recalling. Take deep breaths, drink cold water, stretch tension. Help your body associate the memory with a relaxed feeling.

- **Empathize**
  - Three levels of empathy, from shallow to deep
    - *Understanding*. Logically understand their reasoning behind the choice they made.
    - *Emotional identification*. Personally identify with the emotions of the other person. Sympathy: “you feel sad, I have also felt sad”.
    - *Compassionate empathy*. You can feel compassion for the other person.
  - Goal is to move from demonizing your spouse to humanizing them.
    - View your spouse as a three dimensional character.
- **Altruistic gift of forgiveness**
  - Three stages
    - *Guilt*. Remembering our own ability to transgress against people we have cared about.
    - *Gratitude*. Recognizing the appreciation we had for those who have been willing to forgive us, including God.
    - *The gift itself/willingness to give*. We might be able to partially forgive, but not be in a place to fully forgive. If you still find yourself hesitating, we can circle through Recall and Empathize to work through those lingering barriers.
  - Continual forgiveness for ongoing acts is more difficult, might cause you to get stuck on this step.
- **Commit publicly to forgive**
  - Internal commitment
    - *Decondition yourself*. Think about the individual who hurt you, have a picture of them. Reframe the feelings in your head. “I need to feel angry towards them” → “I want to feel empathy towards them”. “I desire revenge” → “I want to forgive them”. Not excusing behavior, just adjusting your thought pattern about it.
    - *Practice less criticism and find the positive*. Change the way you’re used to talking about them. You can still think negatively, but adjusting the scales to be more balanced, realistic, holistic. Not rose colored glasses either.
  - External commitment
    - Symbolic acts.
    - Washing hands/garments. Burning a list of transgressions. Visualize yourself giving a gift. Creating art. Writing a letter.
- **Hold on to forgiveness**
  - Six steps
    - Realize that the pain of a remembered hurt is not unforgiveness.
    - Don’t dwell on the negative emotions. Allow yourself to be soothed into feelings of relaxation.
    - Remind yourself that you have forgiven the person.
    - Seek reassurance from a trusted member of your community.
    - Use the documents/art you have created.

- Remind yourself of the REACH pyramid and go through the steps.

## Slide 4: Discussion

- Discuss With Your Partner
- *What could a safe space to process forgiveness look like in our home?*

## Slide 5: Bridge to Reconciliation

- Reconciliation requires two people
  - Go through each step of the process together
  - Building bridge moving together in order
  - Can't skip any steps, will feel unsafe and inauthentic
- Steps
  - **Decide to reconcile**
    - When do you reconcile? Decide it needs to be explicitly reconciled, can't just move past it.
    - Am I willing to put in the effort? Can I be held accountable for the things I've also done?
    - Motivation is helpful, kind, and truthful.
  - **Discuss**
    - The way you speak is also helpful, kind, and truthful.
    - Let go of defensiveness, exaggeration.
    - Practice self soothing, take breaks (let them know), practice empathy, practice humility, active listening.
    - Can you summarize what the other person just said? Hear and reflect feeling words.
  - **Detoxify**
    - Goal is to move from a hostile culture in your marriage to a culture that is life-giving.
    - This will offer the most external evidence of reconciliation.
    - Often takes the longest, but needs to happen fully.
    - Single behavior is usually easier to detoxify from. Agree to not do the behavior and move forward. Pattern behavior is more difficult.
    - Trust is consistency of behavior over time.
      - You haven't detoxified by changing the behavior one time.
      - Scale of the transgression probably scales the time needed to detoxify.
    - Detoxify how we view the relationship (move from predominantly negative to positive) and detoxify the behaviors.
  - **Devote**
    - If you jump to devote, people will feel manipulated. Feel that you don't really care about earning their trust.
    - All steps require kindness, not just this one.

- Ask your partner what kind of affection feels authentic and helpful to them.
- Focused on decreasing negative thoughts and beliefs and increasing positives.
- Ratio of 5/1 positive/negative interactions.

## Slide 6: Discussion

- Discuss With Your Partner
- *What stages of reconciliation do we tend to get stuck on?*

## Slide 7: Q&A