

# CHOOSE YOUR ATTITUDE, CHANGE YOUR LIFE

## 4 – Choose Forgiveness over Resentment

**"It's foolish  
to harbor grudges."  
- Ecclesiastes 7:9, Good News**

**Be gentle and forbearing with  
one another and, if one has a  
difference (a grievance or  
complaint) against another,  
readily pardoning each other;  
even as the Lord has [freely]  
forgiven you, so must you  
also [forgive].  
- Colossians 3:13, New Living**

"Cannibals aren't the only ones who get fed up with people!" Occasionally we've all had our fill, haven't we? And when you do, you can either choose to forgive or not. Bitterness is an attitude that refuses to forgive offenses. On the other hand, forgiveness is an attitude that honestly acknowledges an offense and then dismisses it on the basis of God's forgiveness of us. Bitterness or resentment holds on to an offense. Forgiveness releases it, providing "a way out of hell."

### Welcome

How would you answer the following: "*One of my biggest pet peeves is....*"

### Word

#### Read Matthew 18:21-35

1. Why do you suppose Peter asked the question that he did (verse 21)? What does Peter's "concern" reveal about human nature?
2. What was the point of Jesus' reply in verse 22?
3. What do you find surprising about the parable that Jesus tells? In refusing to forgive his fellow servant, what did the first servant deny himself (verses 31-34)? How do you see the same dynamics at work in your own relationships when you choose to hold onto resentment?
4. How does Jesus' parable teach you about God and what He wants "fleshed out" in your life? Why is this so difficult, at times?
5. How does one learn to forgive "from the heart" (verse 35) and not just from one's lips? In other words, spend some time discussing ways in which you've learned to release resentment.

### Works

You can't be happy and hold onto a grudge, or be resentful, at the same time. Resentment has been called "*a hell of the heart,*" and "emotional suicide." Even more importantly, an unforgiving spirit is unbecoming of anyone who has experienced God's mercy and forgiveness. What do you need to do in terms of releasing an offender or refocusing your life?

### Worship

Spend some time acknowledging and thanking God for His abundant mercy. Possible songs: "I Stand Amazed" (147), "The Steadfast Love of the Lord" (123), "Freely, Freely" (635), "There is a Redeemer" (287), "Lamb of God" (176). After your time of worship, ask: Do you have any offenses that you've held onto lately? Spend time in confession and prayer for one another.