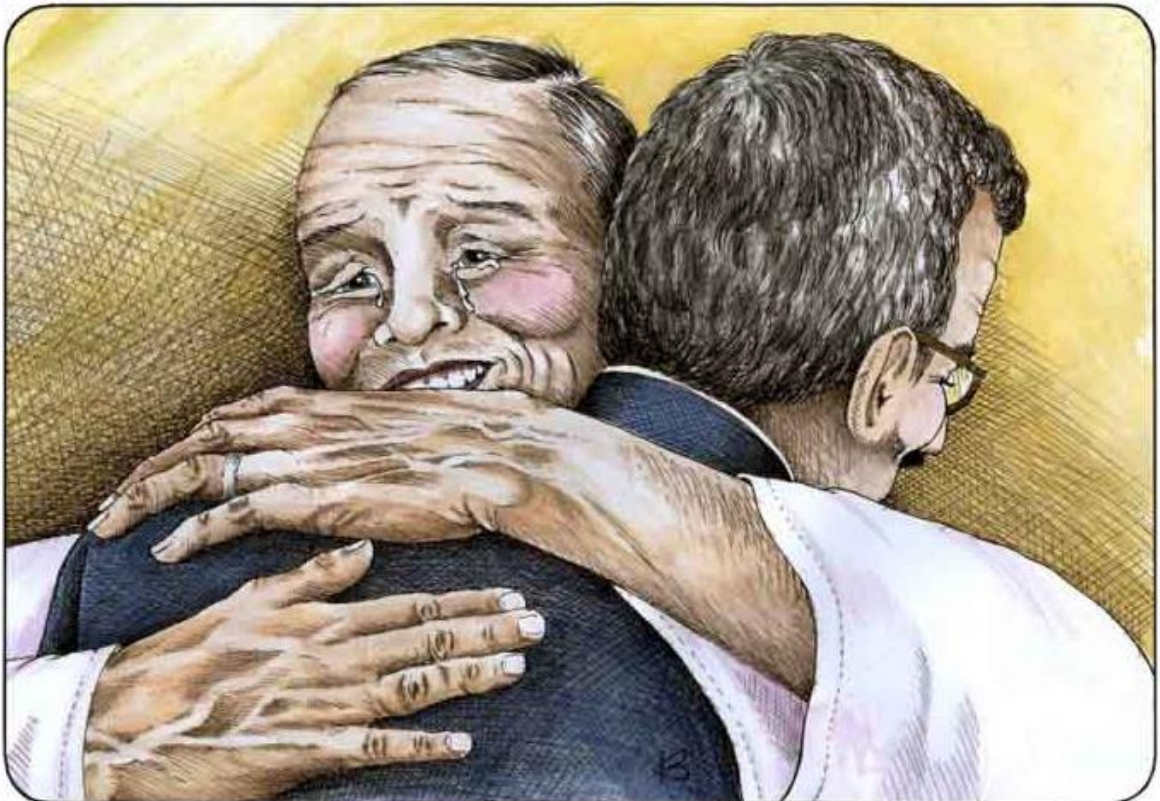


PROGRESSING TOGETHER



COURSE 111

FORGIVENESS AND RECONCILIATION



Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.

Matthew 5:9

E.R.B.
MARSEILLE FRANCE
www.ProgressingTogether.com
info@progressingtogether.com
November 2020

COURSE 111 – Forgiveness and Reconciliation

Objectives of Course 111

1. *To understand the biblical concepts of sin, God's grace and forgiveness and how these apply to human relationships.*
2. *To apply the biblical teaching on forgiveness to our relationships, knowing when and how a relationship can be restored.*
3. *To address the emotional hurt and pain caused by our own and others' sin and to trust that God is our healer.*
4. *To embrace our responsibility as Ambassadors of Christ entrusted with the ministry of reconciliation.*

Lessons

1	God's wonderful forgiveness
2	Asking for and granting forgiveness
3	Dealing with our own hurts
4	Steps in the process of reconciliation
5	Living under grace with our brothers and sisters in Christ
6	Ambassadors of God and peacemakers

Introduction

In this course, we explore the vital topics of forgiveness and reconciliation. In Lesson 1, we begin by looking at the wonderful act of love that God demonstrated toward us by sending his Son, Jesus, to die on the cross and take the sin of the world on himself. As a result of this great sacrifice, the Father declares all who believe in Jesus to be forgiven and reconciled to God.

In Lessons 2 through 5, we examine how we as forgiven and reconciled believers should likewise forgive our brothers and sisters in Christ. How are we to do this? What steps should we take when a brother sins against us?

In Lesson 6, we consider what it means as reconciled believers to be ministers of reconciliation in this fallen world. How are we to forgive and reconcile with someone who doesn't know Christ? What are some practical things we can do to be a peacemaker in our families and communities?

Throughout this course, we seek to find biblical and practical ways to **extend the forgiveness we have received from God to others** and to live as God's ambassadors in a fallen world.

Introductory Story

Your group leader will have you watch or listen to a testimony related to the topic of this Course.



Lesson ①: God's wonderful forgiveness

Name: _____ Date: _____

Lesson Objectives

1. To gain a biblical understanding of key terms: judgment, sin, faith, reconciliation, justification, righteousness, grace, confession and forgiveness.
2. To grow in understanding the hopelessness of our own sin before God, our need for a sacrifice and the price He paid for our forgiveness and redemption.
3. To recognize our need for repentance and confession of sin in order to reconcile with God and restore communion with Him.



Let us review some key passages you may have already studied in the Progressing Together Level One program. If these passages are new to you, you may require extra time to prepare this lesson by reading carefully the texts referred to before answering the questions in each section.



Read Genesis 3.



When God created Adam and Eve, he made them without sin. They were innocent and pure. He placed them in a garden paradise where they enjoyed fellowship with God and the freedom to take care of the world around them as they chose. They chose to disobey the one restriction God placed on their freedom. Reflect on what happened to Adam and Eve when they disobeyed God in the garden and be prepared to discuss this in your group.



How did their relationship with God change?



How did their relationship with each other change?



How did God punish them?



How did he show them loving mercy and grace?



Read Romans 5.

②

In Romans 5, the Apostle Paul explains how Adam's sin affected all mankind, and how Jesus-Christ's work rescued mankind from Adam's curse and reconciled many to God. Paul introduces some key theological concepts in this chapter.



As you read the chapter, write down in the blank next to the word each verse where you find the key word:

1. **Justification:** _____
Or justified: _____
2. **Faith:** _____
3. **Grace:** _____
4. **Righteousness:** _____
Or righteous: _____
5. **Sin:** _____
Or transgression: _____
Or trespass: _____
6. **Judgement:** _____
Or wrath: _____
Or condemnation): _____
7. **Reconciliation:** _____
Or reconciled: _____



Now use your list to write the correct word in the blank next to the correct definition. The first one is done for you:

Sin _____: A transgression of God's law resulting in spiritual death and separation from God.

_____ : God's just and lawful verdict that men as sinners are guilty and must face the due penalty for their sins.

_____ : The act of God, the just Judge, who acquits the guilty sinner of all charges and declares him innocent, because Christ has paid the full penalty for his sins on the cross.

_____ : The definitive decision to trust in Christ and his death and resurrection on our behalf.

_____ : The unmerited love and favor of God given to those who deserve judgment.

_____ : The restoration of the broken relationship between God and man through the sacrificial death of Jesus. A change from enmity and estrangement from God to one of harmony and fellowship with God.

_____ : Having a right standing before the Holy God and being fully acceptable to Him.



Romans chapter 5 begins by declaring that God justifies us sinful people when we believe in Him. This enables our Righteous God to forgive us the penalty of our sin and set us free. God's forgiveness toward us was not cheap!



Read again Romans 5:6-8. What did it cost God to forgive man's sin?



Why did He pay that price?



What does this teach us about God's attitude toward us?



Read again Romans 5:9-11. What is our new relationship to God?



Read again Romans 5:12-19. Explain in the boxes below:

- How Adam's sin affected humanity
- How Jesus's righteous life, death and resurrection undid those effects to restore us to God. (The first two are done for you).

Effects of Adam's sin	Effects of Christ's restoration
Death came to all people through one man's (Adam's) sin. (Verses 12,15)	God's gift overflowed to bring grace to many through one man (Christ). (Verse 15)
One sin led to judgment and condemnation. (Verse 16)	
	Those who receive God's gift of righteousness will reign in life. (Verse 17)
One man's sin led to condemnation for all. (Verse 18)	
	By one man's obedience many will be made righteous. (Verse 19)



Read again Romans 5:20-21. Reflect on how God's grace through Christ surpasses the sins of all mankind. Write down your thoughts and be prepared to share them with the group.



Read 1 John 1:5-2:2.

③

In 1 John 1:5 – 2:2, the Apostle John teaches about repentance and confession of sins.



The goal as a believer is to not sin (1 John 2:1). If we do sin, what do these verses tell us to do?



What does God promise to do if we confess our sins?



Find the key words in the above Bible passage that are defined below, and write them before the corresponding definition.

To _____ is to express that one recognizes the fault or sin one has committed and that one deserves to be punished for it

To _____ is to release someone from the requirement to repay a debt owed or from the punishment his/her offense deserves.



We confess our sins first and foremost to God but should we also confess our sins to other people? Most often, when we have sinned against another person, it will be right and necessary to confess our sin to that person and to ask their forgiveness. We will discuss this in the following lessons.

Other times, it can also be helpful to confess our sins to God in the presence of an older and wiser Christian believer. That person will be able to pray with us, to assure us of God's forgiveness and to advise us on what we should do next. There may be something we should do in order to put things right. Or we may need to leave it with God, accept His forgiveness and move on.

James 5:16 tells us: 'Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed.'



Optional activity

1. Watch this [skit about the need to confess our sins](#). Then, discuss as a group why we are often slow to confessing our sins. Then, spend some time confessing your sins to God and ask him to set you truly free.
2. Read Psalm 32 or watch the [videoed version of Psalm 32](#) as a group and reflect on the importance of confession and the wonderful blessing of forgiveness.
3. Sing one of the following songs thanking God for his wonderful forgiveness. You can also choose your own song.
 - [Psalm 32](#), by Sons of Korah
 - [I am forgiven](#), by Hillsong

- [Clean](#), by Natalie Grant
- [Amazing grace](#), traditional hymn
- [Before the throne of God above](#), by Selah



Applications

1. Spend a few moments in prayer giving thanks as a group for the things you have learned today. The following can get you started.
 - “We thank you, Lord, that...”
 - we have peace with you through our Lord Jesus Christ. (Romans 5:1)
 - if we confess our sins we know that you will forgive them and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)
 - your unfailing love surrounds us. (Psalm 32:10)”
2. In the coming days, keep expressing your gratitude to God daily for his wonderful forgiveness in Christ.



Sharing

This week, share with others what you have learned in this lesson. You can also redo the lesson with someone.



Lesson ②: Asking for and granting forgiveness

Name: _____ Date: _____

Lesson Objectives

1. To embrace God's desire that we become like Him and forgive as He does.
2. To know our responsibility to seek the forgiveness of others.
3. To identify both those from whom we need to ask forgiveness and those we need to forgive.



How are you getting on?

1. What were the main points of the last lesson?
2. What happened when you shared with others what you learned?
3. What changed in your lives as a result of these teachings?



FORGIVE ONE ANOTHER.



Read Ephesians 4:32 – 5:2.



Fill in the blanks.

“Be _____ to one another, tender-hearted, _____ one another, as God in _____ forgave you. Therefore, be _____ of God, as beloved children, and walk in _____, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.”



Grace and forgiveness are part of God's character and we are called to be like him – to imitate him. One of the ways we are to imitate his character is by forgiving others. We are told in these verses to “forgive one another as God in Christ forgave you.” A person who humbly recognizes how much he has been forgiven is a person who is able to forgive others.

Such a person will also be quick to seek the forgiveness of others when he realises that he has offended them.

When we recite the prayer that Jesus taught us (“the Lord's prayer” in Matthew 6:9-15), we state: “Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.” Jesus expects us to forgive in this world of resentment and revenge. If we do not forgive, we are implying that others are not worthy of God's forgiveness and we are not imitating God's character.

Forgiveness can be difficult but it breaks the cycle of wrong and seeking revenge. By laying aside his bitterness, he who forgives finds healing. There is also the possibility that the offender will be transformed.

② ASKING FOR FORGIVENESS



Read Matthew 5:21-26.



Here we see a believer worshipping God. Suddenly, he realises that he has caused offence to his brother. The need for forgiveness and reconciliation becomes clear to him.



If you are the one offering your gift at the altar, are you or is your brother guilty of wrongdoing?



Are you or is your brother the one who is offended?



Are you or is your brother responsible to initiate action?



What action does forgiveness require?



Is there anyone you know who may harbor anger towards you?

③ JESUS GIVES US A MODEL FOR PRAYER



Read Matthew 6:9-15.



What condition must we meet to receive God's forgiveness?



What do we risk if we refuse to forgive?



Does this verse give any exceptions to forgiving others?



When is it the hardest for you to forgive someone else?



When we realize we have a broken relationship with a brother or sister due to an offense, whether we are the one offended, or the one responsible for causing the offense, we are responsible to initiate forgiveness unless the other has reached out to us.



THE STORY OF TWO SERVANTS



Read Matthew 18:21-35.

A. Read again verses 21-22.



Forgiveness is hard especially if the sin is repeated over and over.



Why do you think Peter asks this question?



What does Jesus say in response?



What point is Jesus stressing?

B. Read again verses 23-35.



In this parable, who does the king represent?



In what ways do we have a debt like the first servant?



Who does the second servant represent?



How does his debt compare with the debt of the first servant?



Why was the master so angry with the first servant?



Optional activities

1. As a group, play the parable of the unforgiving servant as it is written in Matthew 18. Represent the servant's debt by a huge bag and his companion's debt by a tiny bag. Then, play the parable again putting a sign on the first servant's bag saying 'my debt of sin'.

Then, spend some time in praise, thanking God for cancelling your debt and giving you eternal life.

2. Watch a video of the song '[Forgiveness](#)', by Matthew West. As you listen, ask God to speak to your heart and to show you whom you need to forgive.
3. Watch the following [video about forgiveness](#) (2 mins). Then, bring your own hurts to God in prayer and ask him to help you forgive those who sinned against you. After some time, pray the Lord's prayer together.



Applications

1. Pray and ask God to show you whether there are people whom you have offended and whom you may need to ask to forgive you.

Make a note of their names below:

-
-
-
-

Ask God to forgive you for sinning against them and to help you ask them for forgiveness.

Now, pray and ask God to show you whether there are people who have hurt you and whom you may need to forgive.

Make a note of their names below:

-
-
-
-

How does their sin compare with the sins God has forgiven you by giving his one and only Son, Jesus? Ask God to help you forgive them as he has forgiven you in Christ.

2. In the coming days, meditate on the forgiveness you have received from God, the price He paid for it and the eternal blessing you receive from it. Thank Him and keep asking Him to help you forgive with all your heart those who sin against you.



Sharing

This week, share with others what you have learned in this lesson. You can also redo the lesson with someone.



Lesson ③: Dealing with our own hurts

Name: _____ Date: _____

Lesson Objectives

1. To acknowledge and abandon all anger and bitterness towards people who have sinned against us in the past.
2. To let God to transform our hearts and change the way we treat those who have hurt us.
3. To bring our hurts to God and experience God's healing.



How are you getting on?

1. What were the main points of the last lesson?
2. What happened when you shared with others what you learned?
3. What changed in your lives as a result of these teachings?



In Lesson 2, we learned that when we realize how much God has forgiven us, we can and must forgive others for the hurts that they have caused us. This is made possible by the Holy Spirit who dwells within us.

In this lesson, we are going to examine our hearts. Are there hurts or anger toward others who have offended us that might hinder us from forgiving them? We want to open our hearts and allow God to heal these hurts and replace our anger with His love. Then, with our hearts transformed, we will begin to extend grace and forgiveness, following Jesus' great example, to those who have hurt us.



① LOVE OVERCOMES ANGER



Read Luke 15:11-32 - The Parable of the Prodigal Son



This parable is really about a forgiving father and 2 lost sons. Not only was the prodigal son lost to his father in the far country, but the older son, who stayed behind on the farm with the father, was just as lost to his father even though he was with his father every day.

A. The younger son – Read verses 11-24 again.



The younger son greatly offended his father, betrayed his family, and broke trust with the whole community when he demanded his share of the inheritance and left for a distant land.



How would he have expected to be received by his father and the community upon his humble return?



How instead did the father receive him (verses 20-24)?



What steps did the father take to show his love and acceptance of the younger son?



Do you know any earthly father who would respond in this way?



Why do you suppose the father acted in this way?

B. The older son - Read verses 25-32 again.



The older son also offended his father and disgraced the family in front of the community by refusing to come into the party.

Re-read verses 25-28.



When the older son learned the reason for the celebration what was his response?



Has the older brother been able to forgive his younger brother?



How do you think the older son's refusal to come into the party was received by the other guests and his father?



We would expect the father to become angry at this and rebuke his older son. What did the father do instead?

Re-read verses 29-32.



How did the older son respond to his father's loving entreaty?



What was the response of the father towards his older son's angry refusal?

C. Releasing anger and bitterness



In what ways are you like the younger son?



In what ways are you like the older son?



Is there a situation in your life, like the older son's, where you are withholding forgiveness from someone?



In what ways do you need to experience the Father's forgiveness?



In what ways do you need to extend forgiveness to others as the Father did?

② OVERCOMING EVIL WITH GOOD



Read Romans 12:1-2 and 14-21 - Commands for Transformed Believers



In Romans 12, Paul appeals to believers, who have experienced God's great mercies, to not be conformed to the world, but rather to be transformed. Paul then gives a series of commands regarding this transformation and calls us to be gracious and forgive others who have wronged us.



In verse 1, what do you think is meant by the “mercies of God”?



In verse 2, Paul tells us “not to be conformed to the ways of this world, but to be transformed by the renewing of your mind”. How do you allow God to renew your mind?



Re-read verses 14-21. Make a list of the commands given in this passage. Then consider how you can put these verses into practice.

Commands	How can I put this into practice?

③ LETTING GOD BIND UP YOUR WOUNDS.



Read Psalm 147:3 and Psalm 34:18 - God's healing promises.



God not only forgives our sins and cleanses us from all unrighteousness, but he also cares about the feelings in our hearts. His promises are true.



Fill in the blanks.

Psalm 147:3

"He heals the _____ and binds up their _____."

Psalm 34:18

"The Lord is near to the _____ and saves the crushed in _____."



Optional activities

1. Watch one of the following videos:

- [Broken](#)
- [I forgive you](#)

Then, spend some time in prayer asking God to heal your heart and help you to forgive those who hurt you.

2. As you listen to any of the following songs (or one of your own choice on the theme of God healing the broken-hearted), pray for God to bring you comfort and healing:

- [Be Still My Soul](#), by Kari Jobe
- [Healer](#), by Hillsong
- [Praise Him in the Storm](#), by Natalie Grant
- [God of All my Days](#), by Casting Crowns
- [I Am not Alone](#), by Kari Jobe

3. Pray and ask God to help you deal with your emotional pain. Then, on a sheet of paper, draw symbols representing the hurts that you have endured because others sinned against you. Confess your negatives reactions (anger, bitterness or desire for revenge) and ask God to forgive you. After that, present your hurt to God in prayer (you can hold out your drawing to present each hurt to Him if this helps) and ask Him to heal you. Thank Him for His sure promises that He is near to you in your pain and that He is healing your broken heart. Now, write across your drawing: 'God binds up my wounds'. Put your drawing in a place where you will see it often and continue to hold onto God's promises as He keeps on healing your broken heart. The healing process may take some time.



Applications

1. Review the list of names that you wrote down in the Application section of Lesson 2. Now, look at the list of actions based on Romans 12 that we looked at in this lesson. Pray and ask God to show you one or two actions based on Romans 12 that you should put into practice

in your relationship with these people. During this week, put into practice what God has shown you.

2. Meditate on the two verses from the Psalms that we studied in this lesson. Thank God for his presence, comfort and care for the broken-hearted. Pray and ask Him to heal any hurts you are experiencing. Share with each other verses that have ministered to you in times when you are hurting.
3. In the coming days, continue to ask God to help you forgive and to heal you.



Sharing

This week, share with others what you have learned in this lesson. You can also share a testimony of how God enabled you to extend grace and forgiveness.



Lesson 4: Steps in the Process of Reconciliation

Name: _____ Date: _____

Lesson Objectives

1. To understand when we need to forgive someone from the heart and move on.
2. To understand when we need to confront someone in order to be reconciled.
3. To understand the process of church discipline.
4. To recognize when the restoration of a relationship is not recommended.



How are you getting on?

1. What were the main points of the last lesson?
2. What happened when you shared with others what you learned?
3. What changed in your lives as a result of these teachings?



As we have seen in the first three lessons, forgiving others can be very hard. It requires releasing the offender from any debt or penalty he/she owes you, while you accept to live with the loss. It involves laying aside our rights and feelings and embracing a Christ-like attitude. When we forgive others who have wronged us, it shows we understand the love, grace, and mercy that God demonstrated toward us when He forgave us.

In Lesson 2, we learned that forgiving others begins first in our hearts. However, we must sometimes in love take additional steps to correct the offender and restore him/her to obedience to God and Church fellowship.

In this lesson, we want to consider a variety of situations that call for forgiveness and how we are instructed to forgive in each one. Likewise, we want to learn how and when reconciliation can take place. To do so, we will examine three key passages: Mark 11:25, Luke 17:1-4 and Matthew 18:15-20.



① FORGIVING IN THE HEART



Read Mark 11:25. – Compare Matthew 6:14-15



Jesus' message is clear. He commands us to forgive those who offend us. Until we do, our relationship to God in prayer will be hindered.



In Mark 11:25, if you are the one standing praying, are you or is the other person accused of wrongdoing?



Are you or is the other person the one who is offended?



Are you or is the other person responsible to initiate action?



What action does forgiveness require?



Is there ever a situation where a believer is not obliged to forgive?



CORRECTING AND RESTORING A BROTHER OR SISTER



Now, let us look at another situation requiring forgiveness. Notice that, in this context, the person involved is “a little one,” a younger brother or sister in the faith.



Read Luke 17:1-4.



If you are the one Jesus is talking to, are you or is your brother the one accused of wrongdoing?



Are you or is your brother the one who is offended?



Are you or is your brother responsible to initiate action?



What action does forgiveness require? (v 3)



What should you do when someone sins against you multiple times? (v. 4)



Read again Mark 11:25 and Luke 17:3. - Compare Jesus’ teaching.

“And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.” Mark 11:25

“If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him.” Luke 17:3



The first step is to ‘forgive in your heart’ (Mark). What additional step does Jesus ask the believer to take in Luke?



Why do you think Jesus commands us to do this?



If the brother or sister does not repent, the offended believer must still forgive in their heart. However, at this point the relationship cannot be fully restored. Some further steps are necessary.



③ THE PROCESS OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE



Read Matthew 18:15-20.



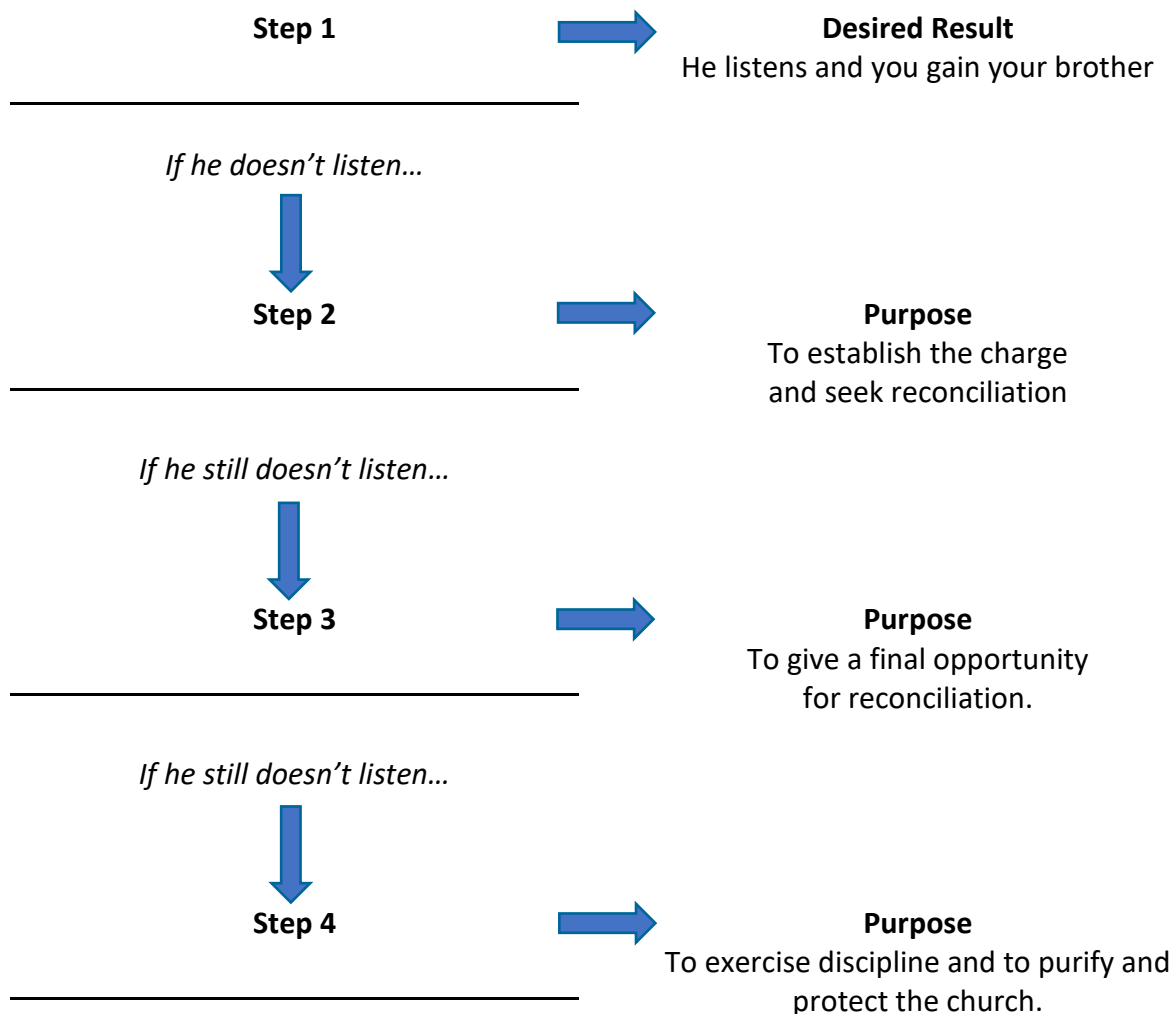
Here Jesus develops further the teaching given in Luke 17:3. The goal in speaking to your brother or sister is still the same, but what happens if they are unwilling to recognise their sin and the offence they have caused?



What is the goal in seeking out your wayward brother?



What steps should you take to seek forgiveness and reconciliation? Fill in the blanks.





What did Jesus mean when he said “let him be to you as a gentile and a tax collector”?

Read again verses 17-20.



What comfort and confidence are given to the believer who seeks to restore his wayward brother by following these steps?



④ PRACTICAL SITUATIONS – WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

After comparing the situations where forgiveness is required above, answer the following questions by ticking all the boxes that apply.



When do you suppose it is sufficient to forgive in one’s heart without addressing the situation with the offending brother or sister?

- ☐ When the offense is minor.
- ☐ When the offense is not a harmful habit or not likely to be often repeated.
- ☐ When only we ourselves are affected.
- ☐ When we fear the offender will reject us for rebuking him/her.
- ☐ When it is dangerous to meet with the offender.



When is it important to confront the offender and insist on repentance before dropping or forgetting the matter? (Remember also Matthew 18:15-20.)

- ☐ When the offense is very serious or harmful.
- ☐ When others around us are also affected by the offense.
- ☐ When the sin is keeping the offender from progressing in his/her walk with God.
- ☐ When the offender needs to be humiliated for his/her offense
- ☐ When we are having difficulty forgiving the person in our heart.
- ☐ When the offender needs to be excluded or exposed to protect others from danger.



Optional activity

Divide into two groups.

The first group prepares and play a skit showing how we usually react when someone who has offended us. Then, they will play the same scenario, showing how we should handle the situation according to what they learned in this lesson.

The second group prepares a skit showing how we usually react when we have offended someone else. Then, they play the same scenario, showing how we should handle the situation according to what they learned in this lesson.



Applications

1. Take your two lists from the Application Sections of Lessons 2 and 3. The first list has the names of those you have offended and from whom you may still need to ask forgiveness. The second list has the names of those who have offended you. You may have forgiven them or perhaps you still need to forgive them or to speak to them directly so that you can be reconciled.

Now, pray and ask God to show you what course of action needs to be taken:

- Ask for forgiveness?
- Forgive in the heart?
- Or confront in order to be reconciled?

The people I have offended	Ask for forgiveness

The people who have offended me	Forgive in my heart	Rebuke/correct in order to be reconciled

Pray for the Lord to give you wisdom and courage as you seek as you seek forgiveness and reconciliation appropriately with each one.

2. In the coming days, keep praying for each of these people and ask God to prepare you for the next steps towards reconciliation.



Sharing

This week, share with others what you have learned in this lesson. You can also redo the lesson with someone.



Lesson 5: Living under Grace with Our Brothers and Sisters in Christ

Name: _____ Date: _____

Objectives

1. To recognize difficult or broken relationships in the church.
2. To know when and how to seek forgiveness and to be reconciled with brothers and sisters.
3. To resolve to deal with relational problems as peacemakers rather than to ignore them or flee from them.



How are you getting on?

1. What were the main points of the last lesson?
2. What happened when you shared with others what you learned?
3. What changed in your lives as a result of these teachings?



Read Colossians 3:12-17.



These verses call all believers to live in harmony with one another and to bear with one another. If anyone has a complaint against another, they are to forgive one another. Being a peacemaker should be the norm for every believer in the family of the church. However, the reality is that there will be strife and disagreements among believers.

Because of this, we must always be on our guard to resolve conflict in a Biblical way. In this lesson, we will look at applying the principles we have learned in Lessons 1 to 4 to our relationships with other brothers and sisters in the body of Christ.



MANAGING DISAGREEMENTS



Read Acts 15:36-41.



Disagreements are not always caused by obvious sins or by arguments about Christian doctrine. Sometimes people disagree about the best way to do things, for example whether a certain person is suitable for a certain job. There will always be times when well-intentioned brothers will disagree. How are we as peacemakers to handle ourselves in situations like this?

Paul and Barnabas were about to embark on a second missionary journey to visit and encourage the churches they had founded. A sharp disagreement arose, however, on whether or not to take John, also called Mark, with them. Barnabas wanted to take John Mark with them again, but Paul did not.



Why did Paul not want to take John, also called Mark (v. 38)?



Why do you think Barnabas wanted to take John Mark?



In your estimation, who was right?



How was their relationship affected by the 'sharp disagreement'? (Verses 39-40)



Did God bless Paul and Silas? (Acts 16:5) Explain.



Did God bless Barnabas and Mark? (2 Tim 4:11; 1 Peter 5:13) Explain.



How did God use this conflict to advance His plan?



JESUS RESTORES PETER



Read John 21:1-19.



Peter denied Jesus three times after he was arrested. On the day he rose from the dead, Jesus appeared to Peter (Luke 24:34) and then to the eleven, including Peter, that same evening and again the following week. But it is clear that their relationship was not fully restored. Peter still felt guilt and shame. In John 21, we see how Jesus restored Peter and gave him a fresh commission.



When Peter realized it was the Lord, what did he do? (Verse 7)



Based on what we have learned in the previous lessons, why do you think Peter did this?



After breakfast, how many times did Jesus ask Peter if he loved him? (v15-17)



Why do you suppose Jesus asked Peter three times if he loved him?



What does Peter answer?



What does Jesus say that shows that Peter has been restored?



DISCIPLINE AND RESTORATION IN THE CHURCH (OPTIONAL)



The Church should not shrink away from dealing with sin but should instead seek to address it. In Matthew 18, we learned about the steps to take to confront a brother or sister in Christ when they have sinned. But what should we do when they repent?



Read 2 Corinthians 2:5-11.



In this passage, we see the reality of sin in the church and the blessing of dealing with it in a biblical way.



Re-read verses 5-6. In the light of Matthew 18:17, what do you think it means when Paul says that this brother had “caused pain to all of you” and “the punishment of the majority is enough”?



In verse 7, what does Paul’s desire that this man not “be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow” tell us about this man’s heart?



What does it tell us about how the Corinthian church was dealing with this man?



In verses 7-8, what three things does Paul want the Corinthian church to do now that this brother has repented?



The purpose of confronting someone about their sin, at any stage in the process of forgiveness and reconciliation, is to bring about the restoration of that brother or sister. If that brother or sister exhibits sorrowful repentance, we should seek to re-establish fellowship, unless there is a clear danger to ourselves or others.



Re-read verses 9-11. Paul had written to the church urging them to discipline this man because of the offence he had committed. Why was he now anxious to emphasize publicly that he too, as well as the church, had forgiven him?



Church discipline is an important process that cannot be overlooked or ignored by the church, lest Satan get an advantage over us. It allows believers to be able to live together peaceably.

The goal of church discipline is that the sinner would repent of the sin so that their relationship to the church and other believers could be re-established.



④ PEACE-MAKING OPPORTUNITIES AROUND YOU (GUIDELINES FOR RECONCILING WITH A BROTHER OR SISTER)



Read the following statements and tick those that are appropriate guidelines to follow:

A. When confronting a brother or sister about a particular offense

- ☐ Begin by praying for the Lord to prepare your own heart in loving humility, the brother's heart in receptivity and understanding, and a favorable opportunity to meet and discuss.
- ☐ Determine a favorable location where you can speak one-to-one in confidence, yet also in public, especially if there is any possible danger of strong or violent reaction.
- ☐ Begin by emphasizing your love for the brother and the importance of your relationship with him.
- ☐ Express your feeling of hurt or concern for the other based on the action itself without judging or condemning the other, and invite him/her to explain what happened.
- ☐ If the brother does not admit his sin after you have confronted him/her, you should cut off all contact with the person.

- ☐ If the offender admits his sin and repents, express your forgiveness clearly and verbally for the offense committed.
- ☐ Make sure you tell your church leaders.

B. When asking for forgiveness

- ☐ Begin by praying that God prepare your heart and the offended brother's.
- ☐ Confess whatever wrong you can honestly acknowledge without making excuses or justifying your action. Be clear and specific. Express your regret for any harm.
- ☐ If there has been injury, loss or harm, make restitution when it is in your power to do so. Repay the amount you caused the other to lose and add a bit extra. For instance, if you have stolen \$100, repay perhaps \$120 or offer a service of equivalent value. (See Leviticus 6:4-5.)

C. When reconciling with your brother or sister (See 2 Corinthians 2:5-11.)

- ☐ Make sure the offender has acknowledged his or her sin and confessed it. If there has been discipline by the church, the offender should also comply with any conditions or actions required by the church leadership. Only then can forgiveness and restoration take place.
- ☐ Make sure the repentant offender knows he/she is fully forgiven. Likewise, in the case of church discipline, church leaders should declare the forgiveness and restoration publicly, or at least to those who are aware of the offense.
- ☐ Confirm the restoration with an act of love. Console the person and celebrate his/her restoration.
- ☐ Remind him/her regularly of the mistake they made to prevent them from doing it again.
- ☐ Avoid placing the person in a situation of temptation to repeat the offense.



Optional activities

1. Think of John Mark being given a second chance by Barnabas and later reconciled to Paul. Split into two groups. Each group will imagine a similar situation happening today and prepare a skit showing how to forgive, comfort, and reaffirm someone who has let us down. Play the skits.
2. Spend some time in prayer bringing to God the times when you have let Him down and have failed other people. Then, read aloud or play a recording of John 21:7-19 using one of the following links, for instance. Move the arrow to start at verse 7.
 - [New International Version Dramatized US](#)
 - [New International Version UK](#)

Have two participants mime the actions as they listen again to the passage. Repeat this a few times, changing the actors. Then, spend time thanking God for his forgiveness and restoration.



Applications

1. Take your two lists from the Application Sections of Lessons 2, 3 and 4 (the list of those you have offended and from whom you may still need to ask forgiveness and the list of those who have offended you. You may have forgiven them or perhaps you still need to forgive them or to speak to them directly so that you can be reconciled).

Now, pray and ask God to show you if there are any relationships you need to restore. Ask God to give you wisdom and grace as you seek to rebuild this broken relationship. Ask Him what steps you should take to seek out this person. You may need to ask for his/her forgiveness or to confront him/her with the offense they have caused you. Pray that it will be possible for you to be reconciled.

In groups of two, share what God has shown you (in as much detail as is appropriate). Then, pray for each other.

2. In the coming days, stay in touch with your prayer partner, be accountable to one another and pray for each other as you take concrete steps towards reconciliation.



Sharing

This week, share with others what you have learned in this lesson. You can also redo the lesson with someone.



Lesson 6: Ambassadors of God and Peacemakers

Name: _____ Date: _____

Lesson Objectives

1. To recognize our great privilege and responsibility to represent Christ as his ambassador in the world.
2. To commit to becoming a peace-maker, reconciling others to God and to each other.
3. To recognize our anger and bitterness and to be ready to forgive, especially when hurts have been caused by unbelievers, and to commit to turning these into opportunities to introduce them to Christ.
4. To determine who we need to engage within our circle of relationships and what actions to take to encourage them to be reconciled to God.



How are you getting on?

1. What were the main points of the last lesson?
2. What happened when you shared with others what you learned?
3. What changed in your lives as a result of these teachings?



In Matthew 5:9, Jesus tells his disciples, “Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called sons of God.” Restoring peace is an essential calling of the disciple of Christ.

Notice the expression “peacemaker”. It is something we must do. This is not something that is going to happen on its own. It is interesting to notice that our sinful nature turns us into peace-breakers rather than peacemakers. This can be seen in the world today, just as it could be seen in Jesus’ time. As a result of sin, people shatter peace only too easily.

In Lesson 1, we considered the great loving sacrifice Christ made on our behalf to enable us to be reconciled to God (Romans 5:8-10). Then, in Lesson 5, we saw how we need to work at making peace with our brothers and sisters to preserve the unity of the Body of Christ, our Christian family. In this lesson, we will look at our responsibility to encourage those outside of the faith to come to Christ for forgiveness and reconciliation and to discover peace with God.



Read attentively 2 Corinthians 5:16 – 6:2.



In 2 Corinthians 5:18-20, the apostle Paul states that God gave him and his companions a ministry. What is this ministry?



Give a definition of this key word. You can refer back to lesson one.



Below is a list of key words from lesson one which we find also in this passage. Write a short biblical definition below each word. Then, check and complete your answers with the definitions in lesson 1.

- Trespasses/sin (verses 19 and 21):

- Forgiveness (verse 19):

- Righteousness (verse 21):

- Justification (verse 21):



Who is entrusted with this ministry today?



Who receives the benefit of this ministry?



What benefits do they receive?



What is the role of an ambassador?



As ambassadors for Christ, what is our responsibility?



Just how important is this ministry?



As ambassadors of Christ, to whom should we reach out? Who should we urge to be reconciled to God? Tick all that apply in the list below:

☐

Members of our family (See Acts 16:31.)

☐

Our friends

☐

Our neighbors

☐

Those who hate us and persecute us (See Matthew 5:44.)

☐

Leaders and authorities (see Mt 10:18)

☐

Those who have never heard the Gospel throughout the world (see Mt 28:18-19)



Try to complete from memory the following verses taken from Romans 12:20-21. Then, check your answer.

If your enemy is hungry, _____.

If he is thirsty, _____. (...)

Do not be overcome by evil, but _____.



By forgiving our unbelieving loved ones and enemies, by showing acts of kindness in Christ's name, by encouraging all to reconcile with God, we demonstrate the power of the Gospel to reconcile in a visible manner.



Optional activity

1. Think again of the different tasks of an ambassador. Then, discuss what it means in practice to be an ambassador of Christ to those around you.
2. Watch the following wordless [video](#) showing how we can turn the hurt caused by our enemies into opportunities to build bridges. Then, pray and ask God to show you which bridges you could build to reach out to those who oppose you or have hurt you.

3. Watch the following [video](#) showing believers being sent to share the gospel to those who have never heard it. As a group, discuss which people you could be sent to.



Applications

1. Think of those who are unbelievers in your life and sphere of influence. This may include some people who have hurt you or oppose you now. Write down their names, pray for each one and for your relationship with them. Ask God to show you what He wants you to do. In groups of two, share about the people you put on your list. Then, pray together for God to prepare hearts and open an opportunity for you to be an ambassador of Christ to them.
2. In the coming days, look for opportunities to exercise the ministry of reconciliation by sharing the Gospel with those you meet.



Review of Course 111

Review the six lessons of this Course. As a group, compose a song summarising what you have learned and illustrating how it has affected your lives.



Sharing

This week, share with others what you have learned in this lesson. You can also redo the lesson with someone.

