



FIXER UPPER

WEEK 1: Forgiveness & Redemption

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Fixer-Upper is a popular TV series starring Chip and Joanna Gaines, who take broken-down old houses and transform them into beautiful homes. We are using the TV series as a means of talking through the potential for God to transform even our most challenging relationships into something beyond what we might have ever imagined possible. Our approach is to do a “deep dive” into a few core Biblical values, each of which has the capacity to radically change the way we interact with our spouses, children, parents, friends, neighbors and co-workers. In this series, we will be demo-ing some old attitudes and behaviors in order to make room for the good work God wants to do in our lives.

LOVE A LITTLE MORE...

Matthew 6.27-26 (HCSB) 27 “But I say to you who listen: Love your enemies, do what is good to those who hate you, **28** bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.^(X) **29** If anyone hits you on the cheek,^(Y) offer the other also. And if anyone takes away your coat, don’t hold back your shirt either. **30** Give to everyone who asks you, and from one who takes your things, don’t ask for them back. **31** Just as you want others to do for you, do the same for them.^(Z) **32** If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them.^(AA) **33** If you do what is good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that. **34** And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you?^(AB) Even sinners lend to sinners to be repaid in full. **35** But love your enemies, do what is good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High.^(AC) For He is gracious to the ungrateful and evil. **36** Be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.

Relationships: they are not always easy, not always fulfilling, sometimes dramatic, and sometimes painful. Relationships can be the source of bitterness and resentment. They can be the cause of sleepless nights, heightened blood pressure, and even intense rivalry and hate. The ideas of revenge, vindication, and reciprocation can exhaust valuable hours of our day and keep us from really settling into what our lives were meant to be. Reading the passage in Luke 6, Jesus touches on some things that maybe we really don’t want to think about. Love our enemies? Do good to those that hate us? Bless those that curse us? Turn the other cheek? Pray for these people? Give more than what they are already taking? Honestly... do I have it in me to do that for people that have caused me intense pain, anger, and have taken advantage of me? Well... yes. He that is in us is greater than all these things (read **1 John 4.4**); we just don’t need to be so stubborn. When we look at our family members, spouse, people we dated, co-workers, bosses, even strangers on the street, we can probably come up with instances where we want to bar the door, shutter the windows, and just shut down socially. Yet, Jesus knew how we are

hard-wired; in Luke 6, Jesus is providing an app to deal with the sinful nature buried deep inside of us. Read **Hebrews 10.24-25**. We are wired for fellowship and Jesus is aware of this, and while some of the relationships that have hurt are not always Christian relationships, we are called to go beyond what the world already reciprocates to one another; we are called to be unconditional in our love (read **1 John 3.16**) and we are called to be an example to the world (read **Matthew 5.14-16**).

DISCUSS/JOURNAL:

Think back through all your relationships. How many have left you feeling betrayed, disappointed, or hurt? Which was the worst one and why? How long did that stick with you, or does it stick with you today still?

When you read the passage in **Luke 6**, how many of these characteristics to you truly practice? Which seems the easiest, and which seems the hardest? Why? Explain.

Is it harder to forgive non-believers or believers in your life? Why? Should it be this way? Explain.

RELATIONSHIPS WE ARE CALLED TO PRACTICE

NEW TESTAMENT REFERENCES:

Matthew 6.14-15	Colossians 3.13	Ephesians 4.31-32	Matthew 18.21-22
2 Corinthians 2.5-8	1 Corinthians 13.4-6	Matthew 5.23-24	Luke 6.37
John 8.7	Acts 7.59-60	Luke 23.33-34	Luke 17.3-4
Romans 12.20			

Take a few moments and read all of the verses listed above. While forgiveness will lead to emotional peace, it is going to lead to our own growth also. As we practice how Christ asked us to live, we become more like Him and it part of what we mean by Heaven is near (read **Matthew 10.7**). Consider the cycle of pain that not forgiving a person perpetuates. Forgiveness is the lever that releases the chains of this particular bondage. Forgiveness is also restoring. Healing can begin with forgiveness. Honestly; what good does it do to make your point by not forgiving? What is the point of making not forgetting? At the end of the day, the pain only has dominion over one person – the person who is not extending forgiveness.

We need to sometimes condition ourselves to practice forgiveness and break that cycle the world may practice. For instance, when someone hurts you or disappoints you, remember that 1) God has forgiven us, 2) it is God who defines our lives – other people have no true power over that, and 3) God's healing comes through forgiveness and not retaliation.

DISCUSS/JOURNAL:

When you look back at how you have been hurt, how do you allow that cycle of pain to continue in our life? Does it overflow onto everyone around you, or does it specifically relate to the other people that hurt you?

How do you exercise forgiveness in your daily life? How would exercising a life as outlined in Luke 6 affect the world around you? What testament would that leave and what kind of cycle could you start?

ACTIVATION

What can you do to help you remember to forgive? Honestly, the opposite of forgiveness tends to be much more natural for us. Is there someone today you need to go back to and let them know you forgive them? If you did, how would that make you feel? The first step is the hardest, but how do you think it would pay off? What burden could be lifted?

ENCOURAGEMENT

Have some time to read? Take some time to read the following:

The Peace Maker by Ken Sande

The Return of the Prodigal Son by Henri Nouwen

Boundaries by Dr. Henry Cloud & Dr. John Townsend

PROVIDE US WITH FEEDBACK

We are excited about the potential these studies have to help each of us process the weekend message at a deeper level, and to see God change our lives in significant ways. In order to make these guides as helpful as possible, we would love to hear which elements are most helpful, which are least helpful, as well as any other comments, questions or suggestions. Feel free to send your feedback directly to Jon Holmberg at jonholmberg@gmail.com.

Has God been prompting you to lean out over your ski's a bit? Have you had a desire to write, but not sure how to start to scratch that kind of itch? This may be your chance. We are currently looking to expand our team of writers. If you have experience, or no experience, writing studies or devotionals... it's not a big deal – Let God guide your fingers. If you would like to investigate this a bit more please contact me at jonholmberg@gmail.com.

REFERENCES