

# I Love My Addiction

## A Program with a Purpose – Exposing Your Value to God

1 Corinthians 16:15

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### Lesson Four

## Exchanging a Grudge for Grace

***And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you*** (Ephesians 4:32).

One of the key elements to enjoying your new life ***in Christ*** and experience freedom from your old destructive addictions is found in the Biblical principle of forgiveness! It is a proven fact that those who hold grudges are prone to be physically unhealthy and emotionally hateful people. They will blame everyone for their mistakes and not take personal responsibility leaving them miserable, addicted and often times, doomed! One key component to a life of freedom is to accept all responsibility for your addictive habits! The lifestyle you once lived was offered to you and accepted by you! There were many people involved in your introduction to these destructive ways, but ultimately you could have said no! Someone once said, *Blaming is so much easier than taking responsibility, because if you take responsibility, then you might be the blame.*

Forgiveness – *The act of forgiving; the pardon of an offender, by which he is considered and treated as not guilty. The forgiveness of enemies is a Christian's duty* (Noah Webster's 1828 Dictionary). **FORGIVENESS IS RELINQUISHING OUR RIGHT TO GET EVEN!**

Our Instructor, God and Saviour Jesus Christ has given us the perfect example of forgiveness. He so desires for you to apply this principle to your life which will help make you free from your addiction. ***Let them shout for joy, and be glad, that favour my righteous cause: yea, let them say continually, Let the LORD be magnified, which hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servant*** (Psalm 35:27). If you have made the decision to accept His free gift of forgiveness, by receiving Christ as your personal Saviour, then you have been pardoned from the punishment of all your sin. Basically, God chose to love you instead of being forced by your unbelief to punish you! God does not want anyone to suffer the punishment of Hell. This is why He died for the sin of the world and has offered eternal life to every man, ***But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man*** (Hebrews 2:9).

Jesus gave us another example of forgiveness during his last supper with his disciples in the 13<sup>th</sup> chapter of John's Gospel. The Good Shepherd would wash the feet of the disciples to teach them how to love and serve others. One of the men who had his feet washed would be the person that betrayed Him, ***Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean*** (John 13:10, 11). Jesus washed the feet of Judas Iscariot, His enemy, to help us understand that forgiveness is for us, not the one who harmed you.

Gary Beikirch, Medal of Honor recipient, has one of the most powerful testimonies about how forgiveness heals the heart. Upon his return from Viet Nam, he was met by angry mobs calling him horrible names and spitting on him. An American hero, fighting for the rights of the very people who persecuted him, like many others, was damaged by the treatment his fellow Americans poured out on the veterans upon their return to their homeland. Mr. Beikirch said, *Forgiveness is the well to which we draw the water to wash the enemy's feet.* This statement is one of the most powerful truths that will lead you to changing your addiction from a destructive addiction to a productive one—an addiction to the ministry. Gary Beikirch used the weapon of forgiveness to conquer his hatred, fears and addictions! Today, he travels and preaches the Good News of the forgiveness of Jesus Christ, his and our Good Shepherd! You can listen to his testimony at <https://vanhornroa.com/videos/>.

You do not have to understand why someone chose to hurt you, nor do you have to make them your close friend, you simply need to ask the LORD to forgive them and wish no evil upon them. Once you find the strength to release your hatred and anger towards those who have hurt you, you will be on the fast-track to recovery! This strength can only be found in the grace of God, ***And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me*** (2 Corinthians 12:9)

It may be very difficult to understand this truth, but we are to be thankful that the LORD allowed us to have trials and heartaches that ultimately will provide us with a source of strength to use our past to help others find peace from the Good Shepherd, ***In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you*** (1 Thessalonians 5:18). You are valuable to God! He needs you to trust Him to turn your tragedy into a triumph for the glory of God and the good of others!

To hold a grudge against someone who has hurt you in the past is to elevate yourself above God. He died for the sins of the person that offended you and is willing to forgive them too. ***For God***

**sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved** (John 3:17).

- Forgiveness of your abuser can be hard to accept
- Forgiveness does not say that what they did is okay
- Forgiveness releases YOU from the grief
- Forgiveness gives God permission to deal with the individual any way He chooses
- Forgiveness is a matter of our will and not our ability—**And his fellow servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt** (Matthew 18:29, 30).

Our instructor, Jesus, informs us that it is through Him we have the ability to forgive, **To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ;** (2 Corinthians 2:10). Knowing that Christ Jesus is willing to forgive those that have harmed us, we too have His power to forgive, **I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me** (Philippians 4:13).

When you allow Christ to dominate your will, He will use your addiction to the ministry to dictate your response to those who have done you wrong, **To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:** (Colossians 1:27).

The true picture of this principle is found when your Instructor, Jesus, the Living Word of God, was on the cross dying for your sins, my sins and the sins of the men who had His blood on their hands, **Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots** (Luke 23:34). He was looking at the men that beat Him and nailed Him to the cross when He made this statement. Jesus is the true picture of grace.

According to Webster's 1828 Dictionary, the word **grace** has the meaning of the free unmerited love and favor of God, and the spring and source of all the benefits men receive from God.

Picture this simple illustration in your mind to help you understand what the word grace really means.

Imagine a thief breaking into a home. As he walks down the hallway, he sees a jar of money on a dresser in a bedroom. As he goes into the room to steal the jar of money, he wakes up this family's only son. Not wanting to be caught for breaking and entering, the thief goes over and suffocates the baby to keep him quiet, he then grabs the money and runs for the window. All of this commotion wakes up the father of the house. While rushing to see if his son is alright, the father sees the thief go back out the window he came in. The father realizes his son is dead and jumps out the window after the burglar. The father chases the man down, tackles him and kills the thief with his bare hands.

This is a picture of **revenge**. The thief killed his son, so the father took the man's life in exchange for his son's. Now imagine this same scene with a slight change:

The thief breaks into the home. Walking down the hallway, he sees a jar of money on a dresser in a bedroom, while attempting to steal the money he wakes up the family's only son. He suffocates him to keep him quiet, then grabs the money and runs for the window. The father wakes up, rushes to see if his son is alright, he gets a glimpse of the man going back out the window. Seeing his lifeless son, the father jumps out the window after the man. He chases him down, tackles him, ties him up and calls the police. The police arrive and take the man to jail. The killer has a trial, is found guilty and is sentenced by the judge.

This is a picture of **justice**. Basically, if you do the crime, you do the time.

Now, let's look at this last scenario. We see the thief breaking into the home. He decides to steal a jar of money off the bedroom dresser, in doing so, he wakes the family's only son. He suffocates the boy to keep him quiet, then grabs the money and runs. The father wakes up, checks on his son, finds him dead and goes after the killer. He chases the man down, tackles him and brings him back into his home. The father invites the murdering thief to sit in his own favorite easy chair and then he goes out to the kitchen and gets the man a tall glass of cold milk and some fresh chocolate chip cookies. Bringing him the treat, the father says, *You have killed my only son; now I want you to take his place and be my adopted son.* This, my friend, is a picture of **Grace!**

God sent his only Son to die on the cross of Calvary because of the sins that you and I have committed. It was your sins and mine that killed God's only Son, Jesus. Yet, God so loved us that

He sent Jesus to take the penalty for our sins—death on the cross. ***For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord*** (Romans 6:23). After His payment for our sin, He now offers eternal life to all who believe, ***For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life*** (John 3:16).

Key thoughts of forgiveness:

- It is an act not an emotion
- It is a choice
- Forgiveness does not come naturally
- It has a lasting effect on you
- You will have a testimony that can help others experience the freedom of forgiveness too.

You will find that some of the most influential people in the world have exercised the principle of forgiveness in their lives. Our Biblical example and the results of unforgiveness is found in a man named Ahithophel.

***Moreover Ahithophel said unto Absalom, Let me now choose out twelve thousand men, and I will arise and pursue after David this night: And I will come upon him while he is weary and weak handed, and will make him afraid: and all the people that are with him shall flee; and I will smite the king only:*** (2 Samuel 17:1, 2)

Who was the man called Ahithophel?

- At one time Ahithophel was a counselor to King David. The Bible says this: ***And the counsel of Ahithophel, which he counselled in those days, was as if a man had enquired at the oracle of God: so was all the counsel of Ahithophel both with David and with Absalom*** (2 Samuel 16:23).
- He obviously was a man that knew and studied God's Word, or it would not have been said that he enquired the very words of God to give counsel. When it says, ***...the oracle of God...*** it means as if God Himself gave this counsel.

- No doubt, he was a man that could handle himself in battle or he never would have made the statement in 2 Samuel 17:1, **...and I will smite the king only**. David was known as a mighty warrior; it was David that killed the Goliath the giant!

When you do the research, you will find that Ahithophel was Bathsheba's Grandfather:

***And David sent and enquired after the woman. And one said, Is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite*** (2 Samuel 11:3)?

***Eliphelet the son of Ahasbai, the son of the Maachathite, Eliam the son of Ahithophel the Gilonite,***" (2 Samuel 23:34).

Eliam is the son of Ahithophel, Bathsheba was the daughter of Eliam; this makes Bathsheba Ahithophel's granddaughter.

What caused Ahithophel to hate David enough to kill him?

- David had seduced his little granddaughter, brought her into his house and had a sexual affair with her, which resulted in her pregnancy with David's child.
- David then had Bathsheba's husband killed so he could marry her.
- Ahithophel's great grandchild died because of God's judgement on David's sin. **WE MAY BE ABLE TO CHOOSE OUR SIN, BUT GOD AND ONLY GOD CHOOSES OUR CONSEQUENCE!**

David begged God for forgiveness; God forgave him of his wicked sin and blessed him with more children. David's prayer can be found in Psalm 51. Ahithophel was so mad that he quit seeking God in all areas of his life.

Who lost in the game of bitterness?

- Ahithophel! His bitterness caused him to hate King David so bad that he was willing to kill him with his own hands. When Absalom decided not to allow Ahithophel to kill David, he committed suicide. ***And when Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled his ass, and arose, and gat him home to his house, to his city, and put his household in order, and hanged himself, and died, and was buried in the sepulchre of his father*** (2 Samuel 17:23).

- Think of all he missed out on because of an unforgiving spirit—no doubt he had other grandchildren, he had a wife and a role in the kingdom that allowed him the privilege to influence the entire nation.
- Instead, bitterness caused him to die the death of a fool!

Forgiveness is for you! This principle can be one of the hardest to exercise, but offers the most benefits to your success in your new life. ***Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;*** (Matthew 5:43, 44).

***For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people*** (Hebrews 10:30).

I would like to include this testimony Brother and Sister Van Horn, the author of this addiction program:

The date was January 12, 1979; the place was Andale, Kansas, a small farming community just outside of Wichita, Kansas. A fifteen-year-old girl was on her way to a basketball game just three blocks away from her home. It was a cold night, and blizzard conditions had set in. She never made it to that game that evening. A man came up from behind her, put a knife to her throat, forced her to get into his car, and took her out into the country and brutally raped her. He then made her get out of the car, took his knife, stabbed her in the throat, and left her alongside of the road to die. God was very gracious to this young girl; she was able to keep her senses and did not panic. She noticed two houses close by; one was about a half a mile away, but the lights were not on. The other house was one and a half miles away with the lights glowing. She concluded that she had a better chance of someone being home there. She began to run towards this house with her fist pressing tightly against her wound; she remembered this procedure from a first aid class. She thought about cutting through the field but decided that if she died in the field it would be months before her body would be found and did not want to put her family through that kind of trauma, so she continued down the road and the long lane to the house.

When she arrived at the front door, she began to bang on it hoping someone was home to help. Thank God there was! An elderly couple lived in the home, and their daughter, was there for a visit. They immediately called 911, began to get her warmed and kept pressure on the wound. Her ambulance ride was one she will always remember. Over and over she quoted a memorized prayer her religion had taught her. She knew that she was not bad enough to go to Hell and did not think she was good enough to go to Heaven; so, as per her religious training, she hoped her prayers would help her find favor with God.

She survived the trauma and continued on with her life. Four years later I met Paula Winter for the first time and fell in love with her. Her neck had the scars of her abuse, and naturally it came up in conversation while we were dating. I was not active in church at the time; but I was a born-again Christian, and I knew what God said about salvation. I asked her if she knew she would be in Heaven if she had died that night. She told me about her testimony of praying and hoping that she was good enough to be taken from purgatory and placed in Heaven someday. I did not know anything about her religion, but I knew that was not what the Bible says it takes to be saved. I then told her salvation's great plan, and she prayed that night to receive Jesus Christ as her personal Lord and Saviour! Glory to His holy name!

Twenty years after her abduction and rape, God called us to the Rock of Ages Prison Ministry. I was attending the first Faith Promise Missions Conference at my father's church, Calvary Baptist Church in Crestline, Ohio. Dad surrendered to preach when he was fifty-seven years old, studied for two years, and took this church for his first pastorate at age fifty-nine. God showed me His will for my life in this meeting. Paula was at baby shower in our home church that evening. When I went home that night, I told her that God had just sentenced me to life in prison! She had the choice between one of two things to say that night: she had every right to tell me that she was not going to spend the rest of her life being a part of telling murderers and rapists about God's love. What she told me was an amazing display of unfeigned love. She said, *That night when God looked down, He saw two sinners lost and on their way to Hell, an innocent little girl stuck in a religion of no hope and a wicked sinner. If God can save me, He can save them too!* Paula has given her testimony for a number of lady's meetings, and it has been used over and over to help ladies who have been abused. Her testimony can be heard in full on our website, [www.vanhornroa.com](http://www.vanhornroa.com).



Remove all the grudges you have against people who have harmed you and replace them with a forgiving spirit—Grace! God needs you to use your story to win others to Christ! ***And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose*** (Romans 8:28).

1. What is one of the key elements to enjoying your new life in Christ?
2. What is Noah Webster’s definition of forgiveness?
3. Who is our Instructor?
4. What did Jesus do to teach the disciples how to love and serve others?
5. What did Gary Beikirch say that will help you change your addiction?
6. What does God need you to trust Him to do?
7. To hold a grudge against someone who has hurt you in the past is to do what?
8. What is the last of the five key thoughts of forgiveness?
9. When you do the research, what will you find out about Ahithophel?
10. Who is forgiveness for?

(Answers to these questions are all located within the pages of this lesson)

Regardless of what you have been told or even what you may think, God loves you enough to make you free from your destructive addictions and restore your life to the purpose in which He created you—***Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created*** (Revelation 4:11). By changing your shepherd from self to Jesus, the ***Good Shepherd***, you will begin to bring God the pleasure you were created for. God wants to use you to tell others how to receive the same freedom you now have and introduce lost souls to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. ***Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins*** (James 5: 20).

God the Father wants His children to be successful and prosperous, ***Let them shout for joy, and be glad, that favour my righteous cause: yea, let them say continually, Let the LORD be magnified, which hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servant. And my tongue shall speak of thy righteousness and of thy praise all the day long*** (Psalm 35:27, 28). As you continue to trust in your new Shepherd, Jesus, He will make you prosperous so you can cheerfully, without being ashamed, tell others about His great love—you are valuable in His eyes! ***Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee*** (Psalm 51:12, 13).

Seek Knowledge

Apply the new-found Knowledge and Wisdom to your life

Then, teach others the secret to your success!

***Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven*** (Matthew 5:19).

Memory Verse:

***And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you*** (Ephesians 4:32).

Suggested Reading:

- A chapter of Proverbs each day according to the day of the month
- The life of Joseph is another wonderful Biblical account of forgiveness. Read Genesis 37-50 and see why Joseph endured such difficult times.
- John chapter 13

Model prayer to help you remove your grudges and replace them with grace:

Dear LORD God, it is very hard for me to forgive those who have hurt me so bad. Please give me the strength I need to pray for my enemies and help me to learn to forgive them as You have forgiven me. As your Word commands, I thank You for allow me to have these trials in my life. Please help me to use them to lead others to You. In the name of Jesus, I pray, Amen.

**Be sure to pass out at least five Gospel tracts this week and invite at least one person to come to class with you next week. Use your past to build your future!**