

# ***life groups' study guide***



*Life Groups exist at Kingsway to provide authentic relationships for spiritual growth, caring for one another, and reaching out to others.*

## ***Baggage: The Sins Done To Us***

### **The Sins Committed Against Us**

*A tale of two friends;* There once were two friends that were like brothers. They met at church where they traveled together to other cities to play softball on a very good church team. They became great friends. They were members of the same small group. In Sunday School class they gave their testimonies on back to back weeks and the similarities were amazing. Their families became friends and they took annual vacations together in Florida. They had a Christmas season event involving the entire families that became an institution and a legend to those that knew of the event.

Years into this friendship a misunderstanding occurred over a comment made by a third party. It was simple and stupid because the statement made by the third was clearly false. However these two brothers got caught up in it and suddenly events quickly accelerated to a confrontation between them.

One day they were planning the upcoming Florida vacation the next day they were on the verge of exchanging punches. No matter the reasons for the misunderstanding one friend knew the other was at fault over the issue. This entire incident could be laid at his feet and as soon as everyone got that, and he apologized everything could go back to how it was.

But the other friend thought that the first had overreacted and there was still the issue of what the third party gossiped about and what was supposed to have been said. So the second brother knew the first was really at fault and it was his responsibility to point that out to him and everyone.

So a confrontation occurred and being Christians didn't shelter them from the worldly process to deal with such offenses.

We could go into great depth on how the world handles these issues, but let's take a look at God's word.

### **The View From The Top.**

#### **Matthew 18:21-22**

Notice the focus on Peter's question in Matthew? It is the same as mine almost always seems to be: how many times do I forgive someone until I get to take my revenge?

It is normally my desire to see them suffer the consequences of their actions against me and in my pre-Christian days I was just the man to take that revenge. How does that desire fit into this verse?

#### **Ephesians 4:32**

We know what the verses say and we know what they mean, But like all Scripture the question is how do we actually put these words into practice? Search your hearts for honest answers...

Q) Do we feel that some sins done to us are worse than others and is that a factor in how we forgive?

Q) Does it matter if we feel the sinner has done the action intentionally?

Q) Do we suffer in silence or do you think we should inform the other party of the sin?

Q) Who has the greater responsibility for forgiveness, the one that sinned or the one suffering the sin?

Q) How long do we suffer before we inform them, if that's what we should do?

Let's look at another verse: **Matthew 7:4**

Truth be told, I suspect this is a verse I often forget when I feel I've been wronged and want to tell someone they have offended me.

Q) Again, we as Christians know these verses. However, reading them in this type of a study, do they feel as if they carry more weight now?

Q) If so, in what way?

### **A View From History**

We know the story about David and Bathsheba but let's focus on the second part of that story, read the following verses:

**2 Samuel 11:6-25** Let's look at some details:

Q) How grievous was this sin?

Q) No matter how hurtful the sin, how deep it cuts, in David's case a man was killed. How do the sins committed against us compare to that?

Q) In David's case who sinned against who?

Let's take a look at verse 4 of the 51st Psalm: **Psalm 51:4**

So David, having committed adultery and then having basically killed Bathsheba's husband confesses to God and in his confession says: *"against you and you only have I sinned."*

Q) Adultery and murder yet David says he sinned against God and only God, how does that translate to sins we feel are committed against us?

Q) How does this type of thought help us deal with these offenses committed against us?

### **Dealing With It**

Shortly after coming to Christ it was suggested that my wife and I attend a Bill Gothard seminar. During that time I learned a principle I had never considered in anyway. In his *Principles of Life*<sup>1</sup> Mr. Gothard makes the following comment:

"It would not be possible to have a conflict with someone unless personal rights were involved." <sup>1</sup>  
In a "Cliff Notes" version of what I learned, he goes on to say that basically we have no rights. Everything we do, are and have are Gods. He relates our "rights" to conflict. When we feel we have the right to something conflict can arise. Including the conflict of being offended against.

I found this concept almost too much and it has taken me years of putting it into practice. Even today I stumble through it occasionally.

Q) What do you think of this thought process... What "rights" have you found hard to release?

Q) How do giving over our rights to anything to God change our thoughts on being offended against?

Q) Would this concept better enable us to forgive someone when they have offended us?

Q) Does us forgiving someone take away the consequences of their actions?

Gothard puts it this way: "Forgiveness deals with our emotional response toward an offender. Pardon deals with the consequences of their offense. Unless we have the authority we may not be able to pardon an offense but we can always forgive. Forgiving a person is 'clearing his record' with us and transferring the responsibility for any punishment to God." <sup>1</sup>

*What a concept. One that I struggle with, When I am offended I want my revenge, my justice. MINE. What I feel should be done. And I usually want it now.*

Q) Do you feel the same way?

Q) How have you learned to deal with those thoughts?

The problem with my thoughts are this; I am assuming a right that I don't have.

Look at this verse:

**Romans 12:19**

Ouch. I wanted that opportunity.

It often seems that sins or offenses against us seem to involve a rumor or gossip. Thankfully God has taken care of that issue as well, read this verse:

**Proverbs 26:2** *Does not come to rest...* I love that concept. Q) What do you get from that verse?

We as a group can go over these truths all day and still be left with hurt feelings, painful decisions and anger when we feel we've been sinned against. Offended somehow. It becomes then an effort to give it all up to God and allow him to deal with the events that have happened and will happen to resolve any future issues. As with all aspects of life, some are better at this than others. My anger still can flare up until I relax and give it back to God.

It's a struggle for me at times and yet we have this from God: **James 1:20**

### ***My Anger vs. God's Desire For Me***

Before I was a Christian, and even for years afterward as God worked on me I was an angry person. The slightest insult against me might bring about my wrath. And in that my foolishness. For someone with my temperament the only way to overcome these issues was God's direct intervention. Thankfully he did so.

Q) Where are you at with that in your life?

Read this statement, also from Bill Gothard; *"Anger is the opposite of meekness. We cannot have both in our life. Either we have one as our basic nature or we have the other." He goes on to say "The cause of anger: Personal rights."*

There was something I didn't like. I wanted my personal rights and meekness didn't seem to fit me. However the more I read, the more I studied, the more God worked in me the more I realized it wasn't just empty words. God was serious about this type of character. Meekness, humility a proper standing before God. It has been and continues to be a lifelong study. A quest, a desire to be more Christ like in my life.

Read these verses:

**Proverbs 3:34    Psalm 25:9    Psalm 37:11    Isaiah 61:1**

**Matthew 11:29    1 Peter 3:4**

**And one of my favorites: Micah 6:8**

This is a list that could go on forever. A study all on its own.

Have you learned to cultivate that humbleness that allows us to overcome the sins committed against us?

Q) Would anyone like to share a personal testimony about how they worked through this?

Remember our two friends we started with? I'm sure you're not surprised to know that one of them was me. The result of those days was a friendship destroyed. Years of vacationing together ended. Entire families suffered. In time it would be learned that the comments made by the third party were indeed false. That there were made by the person in anger over circumstances during the stress of a divorce.

What both of us *KNEW* back then at that moment turned out to be not quite the whole story but the damage was done. Today we are friends again and it's a good friendship, but nothing like it was.

Perhaps all that loss and suffering could have been avoided if we, me, if we could have given up our personal rights. Our right to be offended. If we had known how to live and walk humbly before our God.