

- ↳ Unresolved anger is sort of like an emotional unexploded bomb: volatile, dangerous, destructive, and can go off without warning. If we store up anger, we are increasing its chances of destroying us and those around us: we need to bring it out and have it treated before anybody else gets hurt. Matthew 18:34-35, if we don't forgive, this is what we have to look forward to in the future. If we don't forgive, we add to our troubles by adding to the mix, this: Ephesians 4:30-32, and this: Ephesians 4:26-27. Remember, forgiveness is not as much something between you and your offender as it is something between you and your God.
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1. This morning we are going to be learning a number of steps that to bring us to place where God wants us to be, walking in forgiveness.

- ✓ Adding to our understanding of forgiveness by defining where anger comes from: Anger is a secondary emotion. We are frightened, frustrated, disappointed, disrespected, or hurt (or some combination thereof), and, as a result, we get angry. When we see these primary emotions happen in our lives, they serve as a fair warning that anger is on its way. So, when we see these warnings we can know that we have to make some immediate decisions: we can get bitter, or we can get better. We have to decide to forgive and work through our anger or we, by default, are deciding to give the devil a foothold in our lives and grieve the Holy Spirit. An unforgiving attitude ensures that this person or event that hurt us will now control us indefinitely. It ensures that this hurt will go on hurting us for a long time. Is this really what we want?

2. If this torture is not what you want, then I am going to give you some steps over the next several weeks that will get you down the road to dissolving your anger. For these steps I am dependent on a number of preachers and counselors (including our own Pastor Greg Judd) but am relying most heavily on a book written by Gary Smalley, *Making Love Last Forever*. These steps are designed to drain anger; some will do it faster than others; all have worked for thousands of people.

- 1) Confess to God your anger and desire to forgive. Your prayer, "God, forgive me for my unforgiveness. I forgive _____. I'm untying him/her from the emotional ropes that have tied us together. He/She is no longer responsible to me. I'm cutting them loose and sailing on where God would have me go. In Jesus name, I am canceling all control that evil has had over me because of this sin. Amen."
- 2) Define the offense, an undefined offense will be hard to fight. If you can't define it, you can't fight it. Analyze and define exactly what happened "I'm just mad at them." This will not cut it! Work at it this way: you had hopes and expectation of this person; you had something that you feel you deserved from them, and you didn't get it, or something that you didn't deserve that you did get. What did we lose? What did that person take away from us? What did he/she deprive us of? In your thinking, you deserved something, and they denied you of it, and that's why you are angry. Be specific! Remember, forgiveness is agreeing to live with the consequences of someone else's sin, so you need to define clearly what you'll be living with.
- 3) Allow yourself to grieve the loss. You've identified what you've lost, so now grieve it. Somebody did something to you, don't minimize it!! Acknowledge it!! "This happened to me, and it hurts, and it denied me these things."

Grieving is essential to healing, but grieve with the end in view, James 1:2-3. We need to grieve our losses, relationships, projects, goals, dreams, rights, etc. They say that those who are the most emotionally healthy among us are children, if that's true it is partly because children let stuff out...we learn to stuff and hide things.
