



BREAKING THE ICE

Do you get embarrassed easily? What's your most embarrassing moment?

What's one do-over you'd like to get from the last few months?

MAIN CONTENT

This week, Pastor Kevin continues the conversation about having a “Do-Over.” We all need a do-over every once in awhile.

Some of our do-overs come from making bad decisions and some have more to do with how we've been hurt by others. These do-overs can have scars attached to them. Whether they are physical or emotional, none of us makes it through this life unscathed with scars.

1. Do you have a physical scar that's a reminder of something that happened in your life? How has that scar affected you?

These scars in our lives can be attributed to the very beginning of human existence, life in the Garden of Eden. In Genesis we read that Adam and Eve were in the garden walking with God, but one day they disobeyed Him. Their disobedience was a sin that separated them from Him. They broke fellowship with God and each other when they sinned that day. Their disobedience was the beginning of sin for all mankind.

Our lives are kind of like a spiritual garden. We have the choice every day to plant kindness and hope or to plant anger and distrust.

2. If you were to look at the metaphorical garden of your life, what would you say you have planted?

The idea that we plant seeds is a common thread in the Bible.

MAIN CONTENT

Read Galatians 6:7-10.

The seeds we plant directly affect other people in our lives. The biggest seed to overcome on our lives is unforgiveness. When we have unforgiveness in our lives, it keeps us from God. It blocks the closeness we have with Him.

3. How have you struggled with unforgiveness in your life? Are you still holding on to the unforgiveness or have you released it to God?

We may have been betrayed by someone which caused us to hold unforgiveness towards them. We are not alone; even Jesus was betrayed, yet He forgave. And He tells us to forgive over and over (Matthew 18:21-22).

4. Where have you experienced forgiveness in your life from someone you are close to? How did that forgiveness make you feel? How did that forgiveness change the relationship?

Jesus believed in the importance of forgiveness. He talked about it to the disciples and told them parables about how to forgive.

Read Matthew 18:23-35.

In this parable that talks about forgiveness, the king forgave the land owner of a large debt, but the land owner didn't forgive the smallest debt owed to him.

5. Do you find it difficult to forgive others in your life? Why?

When we forgive others, we let go of the bitterness, anger and resentment in our lives. When we pull up the roots of bitterness, anger and resentment, we are letting God take it from us because we were not made to carry it.

6. When is the last time you gave God the bitterness that's been taking root in your heart? How did it make you feel to give it to God? How was your life different after you let go?

God doesn't simply encourage or suggest that we forgive others, He commands it. He didn't say we would forget about the offense, but He wants us to forgive them and give it to Him. He wants us to let it go because of the freedom our hearts discover in doing so.

And just because you forgive someone doesn't mean you excuse their behavior or have to reconcile with them. God doesn't ask you to reconcile with an abusive relationship. He doesn't even ask you to forget the offense. He asks you to forgive, to cancel the debt and give up your right to revenge.

The only way you can withhold forgiveness from someone else is to live in denial of the greater amount of forgiveness that you need from God.

7. Where do you need to surrender unforgiveness in your life?

PRAYER

God, thank you for sending your Son to be the ultimate sacrifice for my forgiveness. Thank you for the forgiveness you give us every day. Will you gently reveal to us where we are harboring unforgiveness, resentment and anger towards others. Show us how to forgive and release these things to you. Heal our hearts so we can grow closer to you and live a life free of unforgiveness. Amen

ACTION STEP

Some of our wounds are deep and can be hard to forgive. God sees our wounds and wants us to heal from them. This week, ask God to get to the depth of your heart where you have unresolved unforgiveness. Pray and ask Him to help you forgive others. This could take time, but it's worth the time you are investing in your spiritual journey to grow closer to Him. Keep a journal as your road to healing continues. Make notes of the healing process so you can look back at God's faithfulness.