

## Overcoming Darkness

### Step 2 - Closing the Open Doors

4.10.16

#### Introduction

1. This is a process; You don't get it all at once. It is bit by bit.
2. Pic of Neal Lozano's Book, Unbound.
3. Illustrate how the door is open through sin, hardened through the demonic, broken through repentance, renounced through confession and cast through authority.
  - i. Scripture:
    1. Gen.4.1-8: The open door to sin and Satan
    2. The example of Israel & God's command that they obey him. If they disobeyed him, their enemies would have legal access to come into the PL and eventually overtake them. When they walked in 2 Chr.7.14 then God would overthrow their enemies and hardships and restore all that had been lost.
    3. Eph.4.26-27
    4. 2 Tim.2.24-26; 1 Tim.1.19f; 1 Cor.5.5
    5. We each deal with personal sin. The key to seeing if there is any demonic influence is to consider whether the sin is repetitive in nature. The question to ask is: Is this an issue I constantly deal with? This is critical in pinpointing the access point or lie we have believed. Why is it there?
    6. A stronghold is built when we give in to sin/lie and deny or justify it or thinks it's normal or when sinful thoughts build upon each other. Strongholds are fortified lies. They are like a bird's nest that is built one straw at a time.

7. Our sin problem becomes more than a flesh problem when it becomes demonically empowered, addictive or compulsive.
8. The example of King Saul – 1 Sam 18–20. A perfect example of opening a door through the sin of jealousy and then it effecting all of his life.

### Repentance – Exposing deception

1. Deception is a part of every sin.
  - a. Sin entered the world through deception.
  - b. Jesus confirmed the role of deception on the cross – “Father forgive them they don’t know what they are doing.”
  - c. Deception keeps us from fully understanding the full implication of our sins.
2. The father of lies has his hand in every sin through direct or indirect deception. We know enough to take responsibility, but we aren’t fully aware of the implication of our sins.
  - a. Lies need to be exposed to the Light and then recognized and renounced. We need a clearer revelation of the underlying causes of sin. It’s not just the sin I committed, but what is the lie behind it. Illust – Pastors can have a strong desire to grow churches to build their self-esteem. They can confess their prideful ego, but the bigger issue is what is behind the drive. Otherwise, it will continue to manifest.
3. We are asking the HS to reveal not only the sin, but the access point to that sin. (Write them down so we can renounce them)

### How We Open The Doors: The Six Ways The Enemy Gets Access To A Person’s Life

1. Personal Sin
2. Unforgiveness
3. Family Sin

#### 4. Ungodly Vows and Judgments

#### 5. Trauma and Objects

#### 6. Soul Ties

### Step 2: Closing the Open Door of Unforgiveness

Matt.6.12-15; 18.21-35

1. The essential nature of forgiveness. Satan resist it b/c it's the opposite of his nature. He is unforgiven and tries to propagate that characteristic upon us. He gives away what he is. This is why it's so hard to forgive at times, b/c he resist it.

#### 2. Forgiveness is most powerful weapon for overcoming darkness.

- a. Jesus gave His life for the forgiveness of sins (Mt.26.26-28)
- b. To live the abundant Christian life, you have to learn to forgive.
- c. My experience with Christians who don't forgive others or themselves - barrenness in their relationship with God; it's stiff; lifeless; they think it's their church; they are content to put the blame on someone/thing else.
- d. Many deep wounds b/c of broken relationships. This is especially true for those who have gone through divorce (adult & child), forceful job terminations, broken trust or friendship betrayals, overlooked potential.

#### A. Forgiveness flows to us before it flows from us - Mt.6.12-15.

A. We are commanded to forgive - Mt.6.12-15. I'm not sure what to do with the verse as it relates to our eternal security. The reason some of us have such barren spiritual lives isn't b/c we don't love God or you don't serve Him, but b/c we haven't forgiven others. You're holding onto a hurt that is hurting you.

Illust – Unforgiveness is a poison we drink that we think will kill the other person! Person telling me her spiritual life was so dry & I found out it was b/c she was harboring unforgiveness towards a person who hurt her.

1. Forgiveness is not natural. It's natural to hold a grudge, to be tacky and curt, resentful, bitter or critical when someone has hurt us. We are called to do something that is beyond our natural ability. We are called to bless & release (instead of catch & release).

2. Don't confuse anger with unforgiveness. Anger is primarily an emotion that is momentary. Whereas, unforgiveness is a position of the heart. It's a settled state that will not let go of past offenses. Anger is often a sign of unforgiveness, but it's not the same as it. If you or someone you know is consistently angry, then it might be a sign of unforgiveness.

3. **How do you know you haven't forgiven:**

a. **You overact when they commit another offense.** You think you've forgiven them and then when they do something else it causes a very negative response.

b. **You frequently bring up the situation and it causes pain.**

c. **You cannot genuinely ask God's blessings on the person.**

d. **After several years, you don't see how God has used it for good.**

g. **You are "sticky".** You pick up on real or perceived attitudes, nuances, words, actions, etc from people who hurt you and it sticks to you. You are hyper sensitive and it's very hard to let go of these things. You mull over them and it stews in you. Like a lint roller. Everything sticks and God's Word bounces off.

h. When I'm walking in grace and forgiveness, those same words, actions, etc bounce off me and they don't find a roosting spot. I have grace towards people and don't get offended or live in rejection.

i. **King Saul is a perfect example of a "sticky" person. He became hypersensitive about David's victories and he considered anyone who stood with David a traitor, including his own son Jonathan.**

By the way, it was obvious that King Saul had opened a door to the devil, b/c he was tormented by the demonic. The whole section of 1 Sam.18–20 is an intense picture of what happens when you open a door through sin.

B. Parable Of the Unmerciful Servant – Mt.18.21–35

i. V.21 – The Jewish teachers of the day taught that you only had to forgive a person 3 xs & Peter is feeling good about himself. “Is 7 xs enough?” Jesus saying two things, “You keep forgiving until it is complete; you have rest” and “There is no limitation on forgiveness...You forgive regardless of how much they hurt you.”

1. Forgiving another is like that. It takes time and you often have to forgive them numerous times before you feel a release from unforgiveness.

a. Please note: There is a diff betw repeatedly forgiving and refusing to forgive!

2. Definition: Forgiveness is releasing them from the sin/hurt/loss they caused you and blessing them.

3. Signs of forgiveness: outpouring of love; the ability to pray for God’s best; bless the person; an appreciation for the person; gratefulness for how God has used the person in your life. You’re able to see how God is using it for good or you truly believe God will use it for good. Unforgiveness blocks God’s love; forgiveness releases God’s love.

4. We may never come to an end in forgiving a person.

ii. Three Act Drama

1. Act 1, vs.22–27

a. This man owed Millions – 375 tons of silver! (\$250 Million) A debt so large that he couldn’t pay it off in a life time.

b. It illustrates how great our debt is to God. It’s so great that we can’t pay it off. It’s so awful

that it can't be minimized. We can't pay it back.

- c. The King does more than what's asked. He could have given him an extension or a lengthy payment plan. Instead, he completely forgives him. He goes way beyond what was asked for. He asks for an extension and gets a cancellation. So it is with God. He gives us more than we ask or deserve. NOTE: FORGIVENESS CAME FROM THE KING FIRST. Forgiveness flows to us and then it flows through us.
- d. If God forgives us so impossible a debt should we not have the same spirit towards those who hurt us?

2. Act 2, vs.28-30

- a. The amount the servant owed him was nothing compared to his debt! He uses the same plea as the one used before the king, but this time there is a completely different response!!
- b. This man did not reciprocate. He did not treat the fellow servant the way the king had treated him. He abused him and had him thrown in jail, b/c the Law of Moses allowed it. But, this forgiven man was not shown the law, but he was given grace and freedom.
- c. Appl - We are to forgive those who owe us something b/c of their behavior/attitude towards us. Under the Law of Moses, it was an eye for an eye, but under the Grace of God, it is forgive those who have sinned against you - Mt.6.12. We don't give people what they deserve, we give them what God gives us -

grace, freedom & forgiveness. We get grace and we give grace.

i. Col.3.13

ii. Story of Chris Carrier

3. Act 3, vs.31–35

- a. The king calls him an “evil” or “wicked” servant. He’s evil for two reasons. First, he had received forgiveness and he did not give forgiveness. Second, the experience of such great forgiveness did not change him! He was forgiven, but he was not a forgiving person. (Like Saul with David) He was still the same guy, who approached the king. Then, he asked the king for time to pay his debt back, and he’s still operating under the same mindset. There was no repentance – changing of his mind – , which is the first step to breakthrough.
- b. He is thrown in prison to the tormentors. He was put in confinement. These were people whose job is what to inflict pain on prisoners, so that they will change. He was isolated and tormented.
- c. Likewise, when we don’t forgive, we put ourselves into confinement – away from God’s best – and experience oppression from demonic tormentors.
- d. There is both a warning and a promise in v.35. The warnings are that we will be isolated from God and others & we will be tormented by the enemy. The promise is that He will not give up on us, but He’ll use whatever discipline is necessary to change us. If we aren’t changed

by his super abundant grace, then he'll use the enemy. It doesn't have to be a permanent condition. The tormentors would oppress until there is a confession of truth. If you don't forgive, you imprison yourself to the enemy's torments.

- i. Ill – See yourself in this big prison unit. You're looking through some bars at a person on the other side who is crumpled up in a ball. You feel really bad for the person. Suddenly, the bars you're looking through swing open.. You think, "Great, this poor, broken person is now released." You step towards the person to tell them that he is released. He says, "What do you mean?" You then realize the bars that opened were to your prison and the door has swung open to your freedom.
  - ii. Kim Mitchell's story about seeking her father's forgiveness. She had not loved him like 1 Cor.13 said to love. She felt as light as a bird; this huge release; lift in my spirit. She didn't realize she had been in a prison. Unforgiveness keeps us locked in a prison that we think that those who hurt us are confined in. We're looking through the bars thinking they are behind them, but it's us who is incarcerated.
- e. Bottom Line: It's all about change. God forgives us of our load of sin; he expects us to be so changed by His gracious and

compassionate heart towards us that we'll have the same attitude towards others. When God forgives us, He makes us a forgiving person, not just a person who is forgiven. He sees forgiveness more than just erasing a bad deed, but changing the one who has been forgiven. Forgiveness is more than a cancellation of an old action, but it's the creation of a new life. When I forgive from the heart, it's a clear sign that my heart has changed. It's a clear sign of repentance.

- II. Deception Blocks Forgiveness** – meaning, we think we can hold on to these excuses and walk in freedom.
- a. We refuse to forgive, determined to hold on to anger and a desire to revenge
    - i. I don't want to forgive!
    - ii. Once you feel my pain then I'll forgive
  - b. We lack faith to forgive
    - i. We believe the offense is unforgivable.
    - ii. We believe we can't forgive. "Do you know what they did to me?"
    - iii. Mt.19.24–26: With man it's impossible, but with God all things are possible.
  - c. We minimize the need to forgive
    - i. We don't acknowledge our hurt or personal offense.
    - ii. We down play the actions.
    - iii. Neal's story of the lady who had a cousin who attempted to rape her. She didn't think it was an issue.
    - iv. Issues with your parents. You think that b/c they loved you and you loved them that forgiveness isn't needed...or that they didn't mean to do certain things then forgiveness isn't necessary...Js said, "Father forgive them, b/c they don't know what they're doing." Forgiveness was still needed

eventhough the people thought they were doing a great thing by killing Jesus.

d. We fear forgiveness because we misunderstand it.

- i. We believe forgiveness will lower our defenses against continued hurt and vulnerability. True forgiveness does mean becoming vulnerable again, but it does not mean submersing our human dignity to the abuse of another. To forgive doesn't mean returning to an abusive relationship. We must remove ourselves from abuse.
- ii. Forgiveness doesn't mean forgetfulness. Paul could forgive those who stoned and slandered him, but he didn't forget it. We don't have the ability to forget, but through the HS we do have the ability to forgive.
- iii. Forgiveness means neither reconciliation nor condoning wrongdoing.
  1. Forgiveness involves one person only, plus the power of God.
  2. Reconciliation involves two people plus the power of God.
- iv. Forgiveness is an act of the will, not a feeling.
  1. F is realizing the person didn't fully know what they were doing.
  2. We decide to give up our right to the offense against us. We lay it down..

e. We fail to take responsibility.

- i. We demand an apology or remorse, thereby shifting responsibility from us. We expect them to understand what they have done to us and why it hurt so bad.
- ii. We think the other person has the key to unlock our forgiveness. "If they'll acknowledge they've done...if they'll just ask for forgiveness then I'll be able to move on."
- iii. Forgiveness is our responsibility – Mt.18.21f.

- iv. Continued unforgiveness gives an advantage to the enemy (2 Cor.2.10f.)
- f. We transfer the offense.
  - i. These are people who remind us people in our past who hurt us. It could be a current pastor, teacher, boss, etc. God brings people into our lives to uncover unforgiveness towards others.
  - ii. Small offenses may represent larger rejections.
- g. We are not ready.
  - i. "Need more time" can be an excuse to withhold ourselves from the process.
  - ii. We need someone to listen to the story. We must surrender to God's power in order to obey.
  - iii. Do Not Hold Back from the process.
- h. We think we have already forgiven.
  - i. We need to forgive them from the heart (Mt.18.35).
  - ii. You know this has happened when you can sincerely bless those who have hurt you (Lk.6.27f.)
- i. We have a victim mentality.
  - i. This can happen when we suffer abuse, injustice or deception at the hands of others.
  - ii. Jesus was a victim, but he never took on a victim identity. He laid down his own life.
  - iii. A victim mentality embraces helplessness, hopelessness and powerlessness. Someone else brought it on and must take away your pain and hurt.
  - iv. We blame another and feel that we are owed.
  - v. We wait for another to fix our problems.
  - vi. We refuse to let go b/c we like the excuse for our lousy life. We don't have to take responsibility for the direction of our lives.
  - vii. We allow another's actions or inaction to determine our present.

- viii. F calls us to give up our victim identity and accept who we are in Jesus. Forgiveness allows us to take back our power, our life, and our rightful place as a child of God.
- ix. The Alchemist story – am I a victim or am I a boy in search of his treasure.

**j. We cannot or will not forgive ourselves. John 8.36 – If the Son sets you free, you are free indeed!**

- i. We think we deserve what we got.
- ii. We have pride – I should have known better.
- iii. We are left with self condemnation and self bitterness.
- iv. We don't release ourselves from the hurt we might have caused others. It creates this self-loathing and feeling of inadequacy and unworthiness – “I'm an awful person; if I was a good person this would have never happened.”
- v. If you cannot forgive yourself, you have opened a huge door to the demonic. Remember: the devil only gives to us what he has. There is nothing he can do to remove the stain of unforgiveness from his life and he wants you to believe the same about your sin. He can never be forgiven nor forgive himself and he wants you to believe that about yourself. He lives in regret and he wants you to live in regret.
- vi. This is why you cannot reason most people out of forgiving themselves b/c this belief is energized by the demonic (Opening illustration). You have come into agreement with a deception.
- vii. If you cannot forgive yourself, you end up repeating everything the devil says about you – You're a puppet that repeats his words: how could you; you'll never be able to live that down; you've ruined your family; you're life will never amount to much; you will never have a good relationship with that parent, child, friend; you're a lousy parent, child or If you just knew what I did...You are parroting what the evil one is saying. You have come into

**agreement with the devil and that needs to stop now. When two or three come into an agreement about anything, you're get what you ask!**

1. **You are saying that the blood of Jesus is not powerful enough to break the hold the enemy has on you.**
2. **You must begin confessing what God says about you! Repent – change your mind – and start saying what God says and don't let your feelings dictate the truth.**
3. **If you say, "You just don't understand" the response is, "No, you are the one who doesn't understand, what God says about you and what the blood of Jesus has done for you."**

- III. Growing a forgiving spirit
- a. Think about all that you did to Jesus
    - i. Our sins put Him on the cross; my rebellion became the source of his pain; w/o him I am destined to separation and torment.
    - ii. We are moved by the stories of those who sacrifice themselves for others. The story of the cross is the greatest of them all.
  - b. Recognize all that He's done for you – Luke 8.
    - i. Video illustration
  - c. Meditate upon His deep affection for us – Ephesians 1.
    - i. You must get your eyes off the offense and offender and onto the goodness of God.
  - d. Ask God to enlarge your heart to both give & receive His love
    - i. Paul Keith Davis & Secretariat. She is considered one of the greatest horses ever. The secret to her greatness...an enlarged heart!
    - ii. She is a sign of what we can expect God to do in these days.
- IV. The story of Secretariat – [www.whitedoveministries.org](http://www.whitedoveministries.org) . The Aug & Sept 2010 newsletters.

Conclusion:

Practical Steps for Tonight:

1. Get in the presence of God.
2. Ask God to bring someone to mind and the specific hurt he/she has caused. It might have been an intentional or unintentional action, but it left you wounded. Say out loud, "In the name of Jesus, I forgive\_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_(specifically what they did or didn't do). I release you from the pain you caused.
3. Renounce any enemies that hold you bound to unforgiveness (bitterness, entitlement, revenge, anger, rage, impatience, cynicism, resentment).
4. Forgive yourself.
5. Take authority over these enemies in the name of Jesus.
6. Pray for and bless those you have forgiven.
7. Receive the Father's blessings.

It may take a while for you to begin sensing the new reality. It's like the route of a river. It stays the same course until there is a flood and then its course can change. Like all the ox bow lakes around here. You've been hit with a flood of truth today and if you'll meditate on it and let the HS have his way it will change the course of your life.

We not only want to be able to forgive, but we want to be a forgiving person towards others and ourselves.