

HOLDING ON TO HOPE

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INTRODUCTION:

A. Hope is hard to hold on to because life is good at trying to rip it out of our hearts.

I. WE NEED TO FORGIVE THOSE WHO HAVE HURT US

A. Do **you** want to get even or get well?

- Getting even **doesn't** work.
 - The old law about 'an eye for an eye' leaves everyone blind.

B. Forgiveness is the **only** thing that cuts us loose from the past and creates a hope for the future.

Never pay back evil with more evil.... Do all you can to live in peace with everyone. Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God.... Don't let evil conquer you, but conquer evil by doing good. Romans 12:17-21

C. Why we should forgive those who hurt us?

- God has forgiven us (Colossians 3:13)
- You will need forgiveness in the future (Luke 11:4)
- It is the only way to get well (Psalm 19:12-13)
- If we don't, it leads to bitterness (Hebrews 12:15)

D. Releasing the bitterness:

- Recognize this weakness
- Resist your first impulse.
- Admit your part (implied by your guilt)
- Forgive one offense at a time
- Offer grace

II. WE NEED TO REALIGN OUR PERSPECTIVE

A. We need to **focus** on the hope we have in Jesus Christ, **not** negative people or negative circumstance.

Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about these things.... Philipians 4:8

B. Focusing on Christ keeps us from focusing on the negative.

...keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. Hebrews 12:2

III. WE NEED TO REMEMBER THAT GOD IS HERE TO HELP

A. We need to remember that **God** will help us deal with difficult people and get us through difficult circumstances.

And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to His purpose for them...If God is for us, who can ever (stand) against us....No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ who loved us. Romans 8:28, 31 & 37

B. What are you doubting that God can handle?

For nothing is impossible with God. Luke 1:37

C. Why not place your hope in Jesus Christ today?

CONCLUSION: