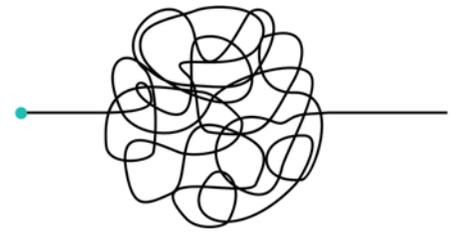


May 11/12

Dealing with people who are

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INTRODUCTION

Over the past two weeks, we have recognized that no matter where we are in our spiritual journey, we are all a Work in Progress. Knowing this not only allows us the benefit of realizing we still need God's grace and mercy, but it should also encourage us to extend the same to others who are struggling in their life journey. This week, Pastor Chip helps us see how we are to extend grace, mercy and love to those around us.

DISCUSSION

1. Take a moment and mentally review your life prior to experiencing God. Share how your lifestyle has changed since crossing the Faith Line. **Read 2 Corinthians 1:1-4.** How should recalling God's goodness toward us affect how we treat others?
2. **Read 1 Timothy 1:12-17 and 1 John 1:5-10.** What do these passages say about our condition even after we have crossed the Faith Line? **Read Romans 7:14-25.** As a believer, have you ever struggled with a spiritual issue like Paul? If so, how does this affect your view of and relationship with other believers, or non-believers, who are currently struggling with a similar issue?
3. **Read John 8:1-11, Luke 9:51-56, Luke 19:1-9, Luke 23: 39-43, and John 3:1-18.** Jesus served and ministered to various types of people - rich, poor, rebellious, sinful. Others lacked understanding, some were outcasts and others were high society. As a group, evaluate what types of people provoke frustration when you attempt to relate to them. Why?
4. **Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-13.** Which of the traits is easiest for you to display? Which is the hardest? Share one area where God has helped you grow in love and one where you feel you need God's help to grow.

DO SOMETHING

1. Recall how God has helped you progress in your experiences with Him, and thank Him for maturing you. Now pray for one person who might need the same type of grace and forgiveness you have experienced.
2. Share with one person how God is currently working in your life.
3. **Read 1 Corinthians 13** again and ask the Lord to help you work on one of the elements of love so you can show forgiveness, grace and mercy toward someone else.

RESOURCES

1. In the book *Changes That Heal*, Dr. Henry Cloud offers a down-to-earth plan to help us recover from the wounds of the past and grow more and more into the image of God.
2. *The Devil in Pew Number Seven (A True Story)* by Rebecca Nichols Alonzo is the amazing true saga of relentless persecution, one family's faith and courage in the face of it, and a daughter whose parents taught her the power of forgiveness.
3. A chance encounter with a reproduction of Rembrandt's *The Return of the Prodigal Son* catapulted Henri Nouwen on a long spiritual adventure. In Henri's book *The Return of the Prodigal Son: A Story of Homecoming*, he shares the deeply personal and resonant meditation that led him to discover the place within where God has chosen to dwell.