

# **BAGGAGE CLAIM OR BAGGAGE SHAME?**

## **INTRODUCTION:**

**\*Luggage Illustration** – get 1 person to help go through each bag...

- “Do you carry around a lot of extra baggage too?”
- The number one cause of extra baggage is...a lack of forgiveness!

## **MESSAGE:**

### **1. Forgiveness is for YOURSELF!**

- \*Others may not even know or care or be able to help that they've hurt you.
  - Even Jesus said in Luke 23:34,  
“Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.”
  - Story of Karen running over me with her bike...she couldn't help it.
- \*When (not if) you get hurt by other people you must let God remove the pain.
  - He does this by drawing you to forgive others...
  - Matthew 6:14 says,  
“For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.”
  - That's pretty strong stuff! But we need to understand that if the pain remains and we choose not to forgive others it will produce bitterness, hatred and jealousy in our lives! Ultimately, unforgiveness has the power to alienate us from God and those around us!
- \*Remember, forgiveness is for yourself!

## 2. Forgiveness is FORGETTING!

\*“Do you keep a record of wrongs?”

-This is one area that I fall way short in...

\*You see, God intends us to forgive and forget just like He does...

-Isaiah 43:25 says,

“I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more.”

\*“But we love to hold onto our baggage so much! Why?”

\*Story of Robert E. Lee...

-In his book, *Lee: The Last Years*, Charles Bracelen Flood reports that after the Civil War, Robert E. Lee visited a Kentucky lady who took him to the remains of a grand old tree in front of her house. There she bitterly cried that its limbs and trunk had been destroyed by Federal Artillery fire. She looked to Lee for a word condemning the North or at least a sign of sympathy for her loss. After a brief silence, Lee said, “Cut it down, my dear Madam, and forget it.”

\*It is better to forgive the injustices of the past than to allow them to remain and poison the rest of your life.

-Philippians 3:13-14 says,

“Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But on thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead. I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.”

-We should forget the past and all its' wrongs and focus on the future...

\*Remember, forgiveness is forgetting!

### **3. Forgiveness is a LIFESYTLE!**

\*Read Matthew 18:21-35.

-“Seventy-Seven times...what was Jesus trying to say...what does this number represent?”

-We, like Peter, always look for the minimum requirement...

\*The following is a true story about a man who did more than the minimum...

-You see, God wants us to do more than forgive once in a while. He wants us to be forgiving people!

\*“Why does it seem so hard to forgive others when God has forgiven us of so much?”

-If you can remember God’s perspective then in will make it easier for you to develop the habit of forgiveness in your life.

\*Remember, forgiveness is a lifestyle!

### **CONCLUSION:**

\***The hardest person to forgive is yourself.**

-Maybe that’s why we have such a problem thinking that God wants to forgive us...

-Conscience (Us) vs. Super-conscience (God).

\***Whiteboard Illustration** – have each person come up and write one sin on the board that they remember...

-“This is how much God loves you...” (Erase the Board)

\***Altar Call...**

“Welcome Home” by Shaun Groves

**“When Love Meets a Brick Wall”,  
World Vision, June/July 1994  
By Gordon Wilson**

On the morning of Sunday, November 8, 1987, Irishman Gordon Wilson took his daughter Marie to a parade in the town of Enniskillen, Northern Ireland.

As Wilson and his twenty-year-old daughter stood beside a brick wall waiting for English soldiers and police to come marching by, a bomb planted by IRA terrorists exploded from behind, and the brick wall tumbled on them. The blast instantly killed half a dozen people and pinned Gordon and his daughter beneath several feet of bricks. Gordon’s shoulder and arm were injured. Unable to move, Gordon felt someone take hold of his hand. It was his daughter Marie.

“Is that you, Dad?” she asked.

“Yes, Marie,” Gordon answered.

He heard several people begin screaming.

“Are you all right?” Gordon asked his daughter.

“Yes,” she said. But then she, too, began to scream. As he held her hand, again and again he asked of she was all right, and each time she said yes.

Finally Marie said, “Daddy, I love you very much.”

Those were her last words. Four hours later she died in the hospital of severe spinal and brain injuries.

Later that evening a BBC reporter requested permission to interview Gordon Wilson. After Wilson described what had happened, the reporter asked, “How do you feel about the guys who planted the bomb?”

“I bear them no ill will,” Wilson replied. “I bear them no grudge. Bitter talk is not going to bring Marie Wilson back to life. I shall pray tonight and every night that God will forgive them.”

In the months that followed, many people asked Wilson, who later became a senator in the Republic of Ireland, how he could say such a thing, how he could forgive such a monstrous act.

Wilson explained, “I was hurt. I had just lost my daughter. But I wasn’t angry. Marie’s last words to me – words of love – had put me on a plane of love. I received God’s grace, through the strength of his love for me, to forgive.

For years after this tragedy, Gordon Wilson continued to work for peace in Northern Ireland.