

Date:

Podcast Worksheet
Unconditional Love: A Strategy for the Long Haul

Scriptural Text:

Micah 6:8; Romans 15:1-2, 7; 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a; Ephesians 4:1-3; 1 Peter 3:6b

Main Points:

1. DCs (Difficult Customers) constantly tempt us to go back to living and relating as a victim.
2. God commands us to bear with people, even when they are not kind and respectful.
3. In order to learn how to bear with DCs, we must first stop looking for a back door, a way out.
4. Our job is to obey God by always doing the right thing and forgiving whenever someone hurts us.
5. Recognizing the 4 stages of a predictable cycle can help you bear with a DC:
 -) Stage #1: You are in a good place with yourself and God, maintaining with your DC.
 -) Stage #2: You are getting angry more frequently, feeling frustrated and discouraged. You are finding it difficult to respond with kindness, feeling self-pity, losing your peace.
 -) Stage #3: You are at the breaking point, about to lose control, entertaining destructive thoughts. If you go to the feet of Jesus, at this point, pouring out your heart, forgiving your DC, letting out your grief, you will reset to Stage #1 and avoid Stage #4.
 -) Stage #4: (If you fall to temptation) You will suffer a bitter defeat, lose your intimacy with God, and create more disappointment in the relationship.
6. When we're heating up, we must avoid running away, unleashing on our DC, or disappearing into ourselves. These are not solutions.
7. Because we don't have the power to change our DC, we need to accept them the way God made them. God asks us to love our DC, relying on him to give us more love when ours runs out.
8. *We are called to the hardest of all tasks; to fight without hatred, to resist without bitterness, and in the end, if God grant it so, to triumph without vindictiveness. William Temple*
9. We can fight by never ceasing to pray, asking God to move in our heart, and our DC's heart.

Questions:

1. Describe a relationship with a DC. Why is it important to you to fight for this relationship?

2. Describe your experience with the four stages. What can you do to avoid Stage #4?

3. What do you need to accept about your DC? In what ways have you judged them?

Prayer of Response:

Lord God, you know the cries of my heart, how a certain relationship has caused me so much suffering. I realize my only hope for maintaining in this relationship is to trust you. So I surrender my DC into your hands. Please heal my broken heart and give me the power to love my DC. In Jesus name, amen.

Commitment: After prayerful meditation on this podcast, I am going to _____