

- I. ONE THING—The One Thing that I'd like to take away from today's class and believe God to accomplish in my life is:

II. MEDITATION

A. Review your class notes from Tuesday.

- Take some time to think about the main ideas of the lesson. If you want to add details to your notes, you'll find the audio message on our website under the Resources tab. (www.DivineDesignDiscipleship.com).
- Which of the scriptures referenced were particularly meaningful to you? Write out those verses below and spend some time studying them this week.

B. Rewrite your One Thing into a prayer, expressing your heart's desire for God to make this truth become your experience.

III. PERSONALIZATION

A. When Unable to Reconcile on the first attempt, follow these biblical procedures:

- Matthew 18:16-19 NIV--If they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.'¹⁷ If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector. 18 "Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. 19 "Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. 20 For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them."
- Take another person if going in private didn't work, someone with these qualities:
 - Someone will aid reconciliation vs. take your side
 - Who is respected by both parties
 - Who values both people (i.e. don't take your lawyer or your mother)
- The next step, if the person refuses to reconcile, is to involve a group of believers:
 - Invite people from their place of accountability such as small group, officers of church or workplace
- Finally, treat them like a pagan or tax collector, meaning to agree together to bind forgiveness to the person even though they aren't repentant.
- Insights:

B. Maintaining An Open Heart—Prayerfully consider these Scriptures and the guidance they offer whenever you are called to endure a long-standing relational difference:

- The Forgiven Unforgiving Servant (Mt 18:35ff) did not forgive his debtor a way smaller debt and was turned over to tormentors.
- Why Tormentors? Maybe Jesus was saying that unforgiveness is the most deadly of sins because it destroys families, friendships, marriages, and churches!
- Pr 4:23 NLT-- Above all else, guard your heart, for it affects everything you do.
- Heb 12:15 NAS-- See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled
- This parable was spoken in answer to Peter's question in Matthew 18: 21-22 NIV-- Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times."
- After His resurrection Jesus charges His followers with Unconditional Forgiveness in Jn 20:19-23 NIV-- Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" 20 After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.²¹ Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." 22 And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."
- God-like forgiveness is only available at one source: the indwelling Holy Spirit:

Matt 19:26-- Jesus looked at them and said to them, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

- Insights:

B. Coming Out Gold—Even though the relationship isn't reconciled, some wonderful things can be gained as we follow the call to "be tender-hearted & forgiving." (Eph 4:32)

1. Refining the Heart

- Focus on God changing my heart vs. the heart of the other person.
- Replace time spent with them with time spent with Him!
- Invite God to expose idols of Approval, Influence, Control, etc.
- God uses unresolved relational issues for working godly character in us:
 - 1 Pt 1:22 GNT-- Now that by your obedience to the truth you have purified yourselves and have come to have a sincere love for other believers, love one another earnestly with all your heart.
 - Ps 66:8-12 NIV-- Praise our God, O peoples, let the sound of his praise be heard; 9 he has preserved our lives and kept our feet from slipping. 10 For you, O God, tested us; you refined us like silver. 11 You brought us into prison and laid burdens on our backs. 12 You let men ride over our heads; we went through fire and water, but you brought us to a place of abundance.
 - Job 23:10-- But He knows the way that I take; When He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold
- Insights:

2. More of God

- Focus on your loss or lack in the relationship leads to a Poverty Mindset.
- In this empty spot, ask the Lord, "Who do You want to be for me in this place?"
- Cultivate intimacy with God by inviting Him to be friend, husband, brother, advocate, healer, etc. Seek the Scriptures for these roles and His names.
- Let Him show you a secure place near Him where you can find transformation and freedom: 2 Cor 3:16-18—Whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.
- Insights:

3. Seasons Old and New

- Ask the Lord, "Are you releasing me from the call to this person?" (Not the call to love, but the call to intimacy & vulnerability).

- Consider the biblical examples of this in the story of Joseph (Gen 37-50) and Paul and Barnabas: Acts 15:39 NLT--Their disagreement over this was so sharp that they separated. Barnabas took John Mark with him and sailed for Cyprus.
- Be open to allowing more distance between you for the good of both parties and for God's larger purposes.
- Insights:

4. Training in Unconditional Love

- Whenever you come in contact with the other person, ask the Lord for wisdom on what love looks like: Heb 4:15-16 AMP-- For we do not have a High Priest Who is unable to understand *and* sympathize *and* have a shared feeling with our weaknesses *and* infirmities *and* liability to the assaults of temptation, but One Who has been tempted in every respect as we are, yet without sinning. Let us then fearlessly *and* confidently *and* boldly draw near to the throne of grace (the throne of God's unmerited favor to us sinners), that we may receive mercy [for our failures] and find grace to help in good time for every need [appropriate help and well-timed help, coming just when we need it].
- Approach each encounter with the other person in the power and authority that comes from speaking as God instructs you to: Jn 12:49-- For I have not spoken on My own *authority*; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak.
- Insights:

5. Holding Onto Hope

- As you wait, ask God for a vision for the relationship and for personal words and promises to help you persevere:
 - Heb 6:18-19 NLT-- God has given us both his promise and his oath. These two things are unchangeable because it is impossible for God to lie. Therefore, we who have fled to him for refuge can take new courage, for we can hold on to his promise with confidence.
 - Is 58:11-12 MSG—I will always show you where to go. I'll give you a full life in the emptiest of places... You'll be like a well-watered garden, a gurgling spring that never runs dry. You'll use the old rubble of past lives to build anew, rebuild the foundations from out of your past. You'll be known as those who can fix anything, restore old ruins, rebuild and renovate, make the community livable again.
- Don't forget that time is on your side: Rev 12:12 NIV-- Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short."
- Pray for perseverance:
 - Heb 10:36 NLT--Patient endurance is what you need now, so you will continue to do God's will. Then you will receive all that he has promised.
 - Gal 6:9 AMP-- And let us not lose heart and grow weary and faint in acting nobly and doing right, for in due time and at the appointed season we shall reap, if we do not loosen and relax our courage and faint.
- Insights:

C. Continue to grow in your relationship with God by applying these principles:

- Make God your secure foundation: Ps 118:8 TV--It is better to put your faith in the Eternal (God) *for your security* than to trust in people.
- At the beginning of your day, take a few minutes to connect with God: Proverbs 8:34 NAS--Blessed is the man who listens to me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at my doorposts.
- Deepen your intimacy with God by rejoicing in Him. Take time each day to offer Him thanksgiving and praise.
- Maintain connection with God by applying “The Middle of the Page” listening exercise whenever you sense distance between you and Him: “Is there anything causing separation or disconnection between us right now, Lord?”

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