



## Unforgiving

**Purpose:** Anger and rage is rooted in an unforgiving heart/attitude.

**Supplies:**

- a few balloons (just for the leader)
- Bible

**Total Time:** 40-50 minutes

### **ACTIVITY** *-no activity*

This is a topic needing extra time and attention. The deep, meaningful conversations will be happening in the small group time. So leave extra time for small group!

### **LARGE GROUP**

(10-15 minutes)

Have a balloon and start blowing it up. Take breaks as you can ask questions and talk through the topic of emotions and feelings as this leads into the topic of anger.

*(Start blowing up the balloon.)* How is this balloon like our emotions? We can either let them out in a healthy way or we can keep them stored up inside. *(Continue adding more air to the balloon.)* Are emotions and feelings bad? Absolutely not! God created emotions. So emotions are there for a reason. *(Add more air.)* So if God created emotions and they have a purpose, what do you think the purpose is? *Give them time to discuss this.* Emotions and feelings can warn us that something is wrong, danger is lurking or something is very right, good things are ahead. Emotions help give us a connection/closeness to God, people, situations, etc. At the same time, our emotions and feelings can be extremely misleading! That's why we all need to understand our emotions so that they don't get the best of us...and maybe lead to a destructive life. *(Add more air to the balloon.)* What happens when we let our emotions out like when I let the air out of the balloon? *(Let the air out.)* It's released and out in the open. Why is it important to have our good and bad feelings out and dealt with, whether it's with

other people, yourself, or God? *Let the teens talk through this before you help them. Try to see if they understand the importance of being in touch with their feelings and then discerning how to respond.* When we are honest with what we are feeling, that will help us identify the emotions involved. This can then help prevent us from reacting in ways that could hurt or harm others. Examples: good feeling/emotion...once I feel the pitter patter in my heart all the way to my stomach for that girl/boy, maybe it's time to ask her/him out (verses allowing your mind to fantasize and turning it into a wrong response)! Bad feeling...when someone disrespects my family I feel my heart racing and myself getting hot. Maybe I need to take a walk or listen to my music before responding to them (verses blowing up and beating someone up). These both would be examples of being in tune with your emotions and feelings and responding in appropriate ways. Not saying either is easy, but they would be the right way and better way. *(Start adding air back in the balloon, but this time, just keep blowing until it's getting a little too full...like it's about to pop!)* **What happens when we store up our emotions inside a little too long?** *The teens know the answer to this! Let them share.* We might just explode and have a mess when bad/negative emotions have been stored too long. When the healthy and good emotions are stored too long, negative emotions settle in because that person may start to feel lonely, isolated, unlovable, depressed, etc. Remember God created us to be emotional beings. We've got to learn how to balance them! *(Continue adding more air or have a needle and pop the balloon.)* Keeping the emotions inside can create a noise. Some explode with anger and rage causing harm to those around them where others sink into depression and possibly lose their desire to even live. Today we're going to talk about anger and how that can turn into rage. God talks about this and it's something we all have to deal with! Including me!

## SMALL GROUP

(30-40 minutes)

Discussion Questions:

Have you ever been so angry that you did something you later regretted?

Have you ever felt that you could not control your anger when it comes to that point?

So is that just the way it is? Will we always be angry and filled with rage?

Some of you may not be able to relate to the type of rage described above. Maybe you are the type of person that keeps your anger inside and to yourself.

Does that mean that you do not have an anger or rage problem?

Perhaps you have been able to manage your outward displays of anger/rage, but does that really mean that you are free from it?

Do you ever find yourself going over in your mind things that people have done to hurt you? Maybe even reliving what happened and the more you think about it, the more

you feel angry inside – a deep burning that starts in your gut and stirs against that person or event, but you are able to push it down and keep it inside? If either of the above issues sounds like you at times, then maybe anger/rage have a hold on you.

#### Let it out:

Take a moment right now and share with the group or with at least one other person a time when you exploded in anger or rage, OR a time when you were so angry on the inside that it effected you in some way.

#### The Lie of the Enemy:

The Bible tells us that Satan is a liar, in fact that he is the “Father of all lies” (John 8:44) and his mission is to “steal, kill and destroy” (John 10:10). He accomplishes this mission against mankind and God’s people through lies (a very detailed system used against mankind). He uses our own sinfulness and the rejection, hurt and pain we experience in our lives against us and attempts to lie to us.

The root lies that feed anger and rage in our lives are rejection and unforgiveness. If the enemy can get us to believe that we are rejected by others and the events in our lives were too traumatic and hurtful that we cannot and will not forgive those who have hurt us then he (the enemy) wins. We begin to believe (and agree with the enemy) that our lives have been too hard. We have been pushed away by those who were supposed to care for us and we cannot ever trust again.

As a result of believing this lie, we begin to be controlled by anger and rage. Rejection and unforgiveness become like roots that feed the plant of anger in our lives and many of us just accept that that is how it will always be. Then the enemy wins, because we become defeated and hopeless, feeling that we can never be free from the control of anger and rage in our lives.

#### Truth Sets Us Free:

The Bible tells us *“If you forgive anyone, I also forgive him. And what I have forgiven – if there was anything to forgive – I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.”* (2 Corinthians 2:10-11).

Once we become aware of the enemy's schemes (plans), then we can have victory in Christ Jesus. His lies no longer have control over us unless we return to believing them. When we become aware of his plans and reject them, then we will walk in victory.

The truth is that even though we have sinned and turned away from God he has chosen to forgive us. Romans 5:8 says, *"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."* He died for us even though we were against him. Because of his great love, he died to forgive and cleanse us from our sin. What an amazing promise and something we did not need to earn or gain on our own.

**Can we forgive those who have wronged or hurt us?** I have met people who have said no to this question. They have said, "I will not choose to forgive this person or hurt – I will not release it/them." We are not saying that you must forget about the hurt or act like it never happened. But you must simply acknowledge, forgive and release the person – the choice to forgive is in fact a "choice." You can choose not to forgive and continue in your anger and rage or you can choose forgiveness and a life free from the ties that come from unforgiveness (bitterness, anger, rage, hatred, etc). Through the power of Jesus Christ, the choice is ours.

**Be available** for any teens that need/want to talk. Below is an outline for talking to a youth needing counsel.

## **WRAP UP**

## **CHALLENGE**

Encourage the teens to read over the below verses 3 times before your next meeting.

**Truth** (some verses to live by/stand on):

- Colossians 3:13 (NLT) - *You must make allowance for each other's faults and forgive the person who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.*
- Ephesians 4:32 (NLT) - *Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.*

- Ephesians 1:7 (NLT) - *He is so rich in kindness that he purchased our freedom through the blood of his Son, and our sins are forgiven.*
- Mark 11:25-26 (NLT) – *But when you are praying, first forgive anyone you are holding a grudge against, so that your Father in heaven will forgive your sins, too.*
- 1 John 1:9 (NLT) -But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from every wrong.

## **SALVATION VERSES**

**Counseling** a teen through forgiveness:

- **Repent:** of the sin of unforgiveness and anger at those who have hurt you (be specific as possible). Confess all attitudes of unforgiveness and unhealed wounds
- **Receive:** forgiveness for the sin you have confessed and repented of – you are forgiven, believe and receive God’s forgiveness (1 John 1:9)
- **Rebuke:** the enemy’s influence in this area of your life – you are forgiven and washed clean, tell the enemy you are tired of his lies and to get out of your life.
- **Replace:** the lies of unforgiveness and anger with the truth that you can and will walk in forgiveness and blessing. You are no longer going to be controlled by unforgiveness, anger and rage – you can and will walk as a person who forgives and releases others