**Series Road Map**

**Series Overview: Poison is the thing that kills growth. It comes in all shapes and sizes. In relationships, Poison is what ruins healthy relationship, connection, and community.**

**Week Overview: Unforgiveness might be the quickest way to poison any relationship**

***Outline:***

**Grab the Room (Intro):**

Challenge to forgive someone right now

\*\*lots of touchy unforgiveness quotes

**Tension (what’s the struggle):**

So many things teach us to “get over it” or “just deal with it”. In relationships, you can’t just brush

**Text**: The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant

**THP: Unforgiveness is Ugly**

**Supporting Points:**

**Application (call to action)**:

What are some ways you can actively practice forgiveness each day?

How can you remind others of the forgiveness you’ve received through Jesus?

There is a famous quote that goes like this: Unforgiveness is like drinking the poison yourself and expecting the other person to die.

Or wait, what about this one: Holding a grudge is like letting someone live rent-free in your head.

Or here’s another: the heaviest thing you can carry is a grudge.

Last one, I promise: You can’t be bitter and expect your life to be sweet.

Here’s the thing about all of these statements, they prove the point that **unforgiveness is ugly**.

In life and relationships, there are too many things that we let poison the way we live and connect to others. Unforgiveness might be the ugliest of them all.

(Good spot for personal story)

So much in this world might feed us messages like “just get over it” or “they didn’t mean it that way” or “forgive and forget”. But if you have any desire for true, Godly relationships, you will figure out that it doesn’t just work like that. If you feed yourself the poison of unforgiveness, you will find that life-giving relationships are hard to come by.

Did you know that the act of forgiveness or lack thereof has a legitimate effect on our own physical, mental, and emotional well being?

Carrying around the poison of unforgiveness is ugly and often leads to conflict, both internally and externally. You judge yourself and others because you haven’t released that thing, that pain, that conversation.

Conflict doesn’t just weigh down the spirit; it can lead to physical health issues. Whether it’s a simple disagreement or resentment toward a family member or friend, unresolved conflict can go deeper than you may realize—it may be affecting your physical health. **The good news**: Studies have found that the act of forgiveness can reap huge rewards for your health, lowering the risk of heart attack; improving cholesterol levels and sleep; and reducing pain, blood pressure, and levels of anxiety, depression and stress. And research points to an increase in the forgiveness-health connection as you age. In other words, the older you get the more important it is for you to forgive from the heart!

When you continuously hold onto unforgiveness it leads to issues within your own heart and then, increases the risk of depression, heart disease and diabetes, among other conditions. Forgiveness, however, calms stress levels, leading to improved health. **Forgiveness is not just about saying the words, it is an active process.** As you release the anger, resentment and hostility, you begin to feel empathy, compassion and sometimes even affection for the person who wronged you.

Unforgiveness is actually a form of hate against another person. If a person hates somebody, it is a sign that the person is lacking love in their heart. Why? They are not firmly rooted and grounded in the love of Christ, and Christ's love is not flowing through them. As simple as that sounds, that's how it works.

There is a parable that Jesus teaches in Matthew 18:21-35, that fits the mold of what unforgiveness is all about.

This parable is rightly titled, *The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant*.

You see, the story starts with Peter coming to Jesus and essentially, he is asking Jesus, “How many times do I have to forgive someone?” He’s looking for the easy way out and the easy answer, but Jesus gives him much more to think about.

**(Summarize the rest here, in your own words)**

“…if you do not forgive your brother from your heart” …. WHOA. Yikes, that turned on Peter quick.

Life offers us plenty of opportunities to feel unforgiving. The trouble is, lack of forgiveness does more damage to us than to the offender. The master had just forgiven this dude of ALL HIS DEBTS and that dude has the audacity to go after a fellow servant who owed him a smaller debt. How often do we do the same thing though?

When we don't forgive, we grow hardened, untrusting, sour, and bitter. We become vengeful. We want the person who wronged us to suffer. Those negative feelings war against the love and compassion that should characterize us as Christians, and we hinder our own spiritual growth.

Jesus gave us very important commandments to follow; one of them was to love one another, as He has loved us (John 15:12). Love is the exact opposite of unforgiveness, envy, jealousy, hate, pride and bitterness. You can’t truly love somebody and hold bitterness or unforgiveness against him or her at the same time.

Forgiveness is not

* Approving what was done
* Justifying or excusing what has been done
* Denying what was done
* Carried out by repressing the offensive event
* Forgetting what was done
* Necessarily reconciliation

Forgiveness is

* A choice motivated by love
* Keeping no record of wrongs
* Seldom easy

Corrie Ten Boom reminds us, “Forgiveness is the key which unlocks the door of resentment and the handcuffs of hatred. It breaks the chains of bitterness and the shackles of selfishness.”