

Why We Don't Forgive

By Bob Stone

Bob Stone:

And you say well I don't care where you're going next. Well I got a method in my madness. Seriously I started off traveling in September I was home for three months at Grand Rapids Michigan at Cornerstone College and then a Nazarene church in Birmingham Alabama and southeastern Bible College in Birmingham. And then Gaston Alabama Baptist Church there. And then look at that October 1921. Biola. Now what did I do. I got the people in Gaston Alabama to pray for these three days. That's why some of you haven't been able to get away from what I've said. Been getting to you.

Hasn't it been getting down in your spirits gonna leak from your brain down into your heart. If you're not careful and you can guess what I'm gonna ask you to do I go. Leave Monday from my hometown Birmingham Alabama to Cleveland Tennessee the league college for three days so I'm gonna ask you dear people you who either live too far away from home to go home today. Or you are so interested in what else was gonna be taught today that you came this morning. I'm asking you to pray for this. The two thousand students at Lee College where I'll be speaking for three days next week.

Would you do it right Now. Amen and thank you. All right. There might just be some beautiful things happen there next week. They've asked me to do my dating dilemma material and so good night might save from some students from going up the biological hand grenade ladder getting sexually involved. Oh yes. Might save some girls from getting pregnant eliminates some

abortions? Oh yeah. Aren't you glad Ron Hay for his changed? Boy. Thought it was funnier than that. All right. Well. Let's give us some review. Because of the way this thing is scheduled. I've had a hard time because each one each time we've got some new people that haven't heard any of this. So look what we've got. A little quick review. Here's a man here's a woman it doesn't have to be that can be just two people. This person has these people these X's over here on the left representing people that have hurt them. That starts an invisible crust or a shell around them a dotted. Invisible crust. And then here's some X's over here on the right. That represents the people that have hurt this person. They've got an invisible crust or dotted shell starting around them. Then boil it down into a little nugget here. I've found that most of the time there's one person who's hurt us the most.

You want me to give you a statistic there. I'm not trying to impress you in over a fifth hour. Twenty one thousand counseling appointments I've had that many because I'm elderly. I've had 15 people who knew how to scripturally deal with hurt. And here I was one of them. And I didn't know how until 15 years ago 15 years ago last May. So I've been doing my 200 speaking engagements a year for 30 years and not until only 15 years ago. Did I know how to scripturally deal with my hurt. I didn't know how to deal with that hurt from my childhood. When my mother was drunk. And we're on the wrong side of the road and the headlights are coming right at us. Are we gonna make it home alive tonight. Ruined holidays. Hey some of you know what that's all about because you had a drinking parent didn't you. And boy. My sister and my mother didn't talk to each other for two years.

My sister was married. She'd had a child during that time. And I remember getting finally the approval of my sister to go on Christmas Day to visit mom for the first time in two years. And when my dad who lived four blocks away picked me up went over to my sisters and then she consented to do that. We tore home and mom was drunk by the time we got there. You got some of those memories in your memory bank. OK now that one person has hurt us the most.

Let's say starts this wall goes up block by block by block between these two people that begins to fill in the vacancies in that original crust or circle. Now we've got to protect ourselves because it hurts to hurt so we build layer after layer after layer. OK now first principal father heal my broken heart. Psalm's one hundred and forty seven three. He heals the broken in the heart and binds up their wounds. Have you memorized the verse yet. Remember now my my punchline there time does not heal a broken heart. Only God does. Time forms a scab. Over the wound and then look at the infection that shows up later. Anger and resentment and hatred and bitterness. That is a lot of pus. All right. I told you about my fingers smashed my fingers but I didn't tell you this one. The surgeon that I had was one of those kind of men too. Good night. He was non compassionate. See my fingernail was gone off this index finger and my left hand. The stitches underneath there I had splints on both. Index and my middle finger there. So I had to go see the surgeon every other day for two weeks. OK. And he would take that dressing and just go and just tear that just send me into orbit. All right. Just love to go see the guy. And so. Finally after two weeks of that he said hey it's looking pretty good Bob. You can come once next week. Your wife's a nurse she can take care of the dressing changes and all that stuff and I said wonderful. I've never kissed another man. But I came real close that day.

All right. So. Now. I'm watching the road to the final four beating on the couch having a great time. It's time to change the dressing. So it took me one hour and 10 minutes to get the dressing up when I pulled the last layer of the gauze off. I'm not kidding you. The end of that index finger was black. My heart just sunk. I couldn't believe what I was seeing and I reached over and touched it and I couldn't tell that I was touching it. There was no feeling on the end of that finger while I was on staff of a church at that time is pastor of counseling and was there 10 years and so there was a man painting the walls in the church and every single day that Pete picker would ask me the same question. How are your fingers doing? How are your fingers doing? So this one day I had to be honest with him I said the end of the fingers all turned black and I have no feeling. He looked back at me and said you know that's just like my finger was before they amputated it.

Thank you sir. Thank you. I can't express to you how meaningful. Your statement was. So I went to the surge in the next day and told him what had happened and what did he do. He reached out and pinched the end and my finger. He said I thought you said the thing was dead. I said I must have been lying. He said lay down. He pushed me in the face on this table and I looked over and his nurse was coming in with his great big tray of sharp instruments and I thought the guy at the church is right. He ripped off the dressing and no kidding. No shot no pills no. No bullet to bite on cold turkey. He started cutting on the end of my finger with a scalpel. I'm telling you. That was the worst pain I had ever felt in my whole life. I was dripping in sweat from the top of my head to the bottom of my feet. I could feel it going down through the hairs on my head and my legs here and just between us girls I was biting on this arm to keep from yelling out.

Okay. And then he threw something in the trash can. No wait a minute. What was that? I was looking the other way. I couldn't even watch him and so finally to look at your finger Bob and I looked over there. And much to my amazement there was the most gorgeous pink skin underneath that black that he had cut away. Now what. That I want to do. I went over with my other finger and touched it and I could tell I was touching it. There was some there was feeling there. And some of you think a relationship is dead don't you some of the feelings gone. A lot of the feelings gone all of the feelings gone.

Oh my friend. I say you let God do some spiritual surgery on you. Go to the spiritual emergency room ask him to stitch your broken shattered crushed heart up there's new life underneath that deadness right now. Father here my broken heart that is dealing with the inside dotted circle. Confess your blank to God. That's confessed your anger and your bitterness and your resentment. Come clean with him. Don't point the finger of blame at the person on the other side of the wall from you. Don't try to justify your stinking attitudes. Let him let him turn his spotlight on you like David did in the end of some one hundred and thirty nine search me oh God and know my heart. Try me see if there be any wicked way in me you willing to do it and you confess that. Well then you've dealt with your outside your inside dotted circle scripturally by asking him to hear your broken heart. You've confessed your anger and your resentment and your bitterness. That's getting rid of your outside solid circles.

Now we're dealing with a wall. How in the world do you get rid of that wall that went up block by block by block until it's so high that when you look at each other on the human level you don't

see each other see each other anymore or you don't see them all right? Since you asked. Alright forgive those who have wronged you.

That's my major topic this morning. Let's find out. What happens when you don't you know there are consequences. You know yesterday in the dating seminar the dating dilemma seminar I didn't hardly get to any of the consequences that I had already for you. Physical mental social spiritual consequences. The list is almost endless and there are consequences for not doing a term paper. There are consequences for speeding when the speed limit is way below what you're traveling right. Do you think there are any consequences for not forgiving? Well let's just look at a few of them. One of them would be you set yourself up as the other person's judge oh Romans 2:1. Who art thou that judges another you wretch. I added that last part in there. I. Saw you. You are the judge here. He's good. He's the judge. Oh here's a nasty. Have you ever thought of this when you don't forgive? That's a form of revenge. Gonna get you. You don't treat me like whatever you did not. You won't get away with it. I am going to get back at you. If it's the last thing I do I actually had a woman tell me that her husband divorced her and two months later she was curious. Is this man dating someone already? So she went over and sat in his parking lot of his apartment building and sat there for two and a half hours. One thirty in the morning in drove her husband. She recognized his car and he had a woman in the front seat with him. So when he got out the car she pulled the trigger got him right in the gut down to the pavement he went the other woman jumped out of the car to run around to help him. She fired five more shots at her missed her on all five because she's moving and police came and took her to the police station.

The ambulance came and took him to the hospital and. You're sitting there thinking hold the Phone. That's revenge. I've never heard it. Before you go very far with that gang. I gotta tell you something in my 35 years of counseling I have found that most Christians don't go around shooting people. They just don't forgive question Have you forgiven everyone for everything all right another one and that's Romans 12:19 right. Vengeance is mine I will repay you sayeth the Lord. He doesn't need our help.

Sometimes we think he's moving too slowly I need to help God out here and put this thing in gear or he's not being mean enough. I got some ideas God got some ideas out I'll help yeah. Now he's saying hey I'll take care of it. You can count on me to take care of this.

You're concentrating on the offender rather than your risk than your responsibility. You're concentrating on what they did rather than your responsibility to forgive. And then one more. That affects your relationship with your Heavenly Father you knew that right. Matthew 6 14 15 if you don't forgive men their trespasses your father which is in heaven won't forgive you yours if I regard iniquity in my heart. The Lord will not hear me. Some 66 18 you might just as well quit praying cause he's not gonna answer until you get this thing settled up. All right. Are we rolling?

Now how do you know when you have forgiven? Oh let's get some positive stuff in here. The beautiful song that Ken. Set us up with this morning you won't bring up the past. So how many times do I have to forgive? Can you imagine? I'd like to do this kind of stuff. I like to picture what happened there and what was going on and so we go over there to Matthew 18 and find out

Peter goes to Jesus and asking the question. How many times do I have to forgive? Now before he even gives Jesus a chance to answer he says a certain number. Now I don't know if this is true. I don't know Greek and I don't know Hebrew. I'm not. Smart. I'm a lot like you. And so I don't know if this is true. But here's what I'm thinking. Maybe Peter knew what he was doing there. Any mention the number that represents perfection in Scripture. 7. Now can you imagine the look on Peter's face when Jesus answered him, 70 times 7 Peter. Wow.

You got to be kidding. Was he talking 490 and then you can. Give him one right there see. No no he didn't. Peter look at me. You better learn to forgive my brother. You better learn how. And you better learn to forgive because you probably have to do it every day. Can I ask you a question this morning? Have you forgiven everyone for everything? All right. So you won't bring up the past. You won't be a human tape recorder you won't be a grave digger. It'll be gone. OK. Now look at this when your emotional focus will be positive. What in the world does that mean? OK. In order to explain it I've got a backup if you haven't forgiven you'll probably be experiencing one or both of these emotions anger got your teeth together. Hey you go to bed. You wake up the next morning. Half your pillows gone. Or hurt. So anger or hurt. Or both. Hurt. I can't believe this person did this to me a wonderful person like me. And boy you lay on your pillow at night and you're thinking about what that person did to you and the tears are going down in your ears. If you lay on your back then they'll just go down your neck. So you're emotional focused when you have forgiven. We'll be positive. What will that be?

Oh Father. Thank you. Thank you from the bottom of my heart that you've forgiven me for what I've done. And you're offering to me all the forgiveness that I need to apply to the people that

have wronged me. Oh I'm going to focus on that. And there's gonna be a heart of gratitude and joy in there. Have you ever thought of this all the forgiveness that you need is available. He hasn't run out your situation isn't true to gross or too serious for the forgiveness of God. You mean to the lady who told me her three and a half year old daughter was sexually molested by the babysitter with a coke bottle. That was a female baby sitter. By the way. To the 19 year old sitting in my office. From southeastern Bible College who said to me. My dad got me pregnant and I started sharing with her some of this and I and I admit to you right now I went too fast with a girl but I ask her this question Have you forgiven him yet. And I'm telling you she looked back at me with the anger that I have never seen in anyone's face. And she said no Bob Stone and I never will as long as I can breathe. Oh he's forgiven you. And offer his all of forgiveness that you need to forgive everyone. For everything.

All right. So I hope that explains a little bit of that. I have a hard time explaining that but the emotional focus will be positive and it'll be gratitude and joy out of the heart. Now there is one you ever gone to bed with unforgiving spirit. Let's have audience participation right now. How many of you have gone to bed with an unforgiving spirit. Boy you better raise your hand. I wouldn't want to be sitting next to you if you didn't raise your hand. Yeah. Visions for 26. You knew what was gonna come there right. Be angry and sin not. I got to put you on pause right there. Hold up my hand and admit to you that there are two sides to every pancake. All right. Two sides to every story. I think there's two sides to this to. Sometimes we can be angry be angry and sin not. I get angry at those men who sexually molested their children. I'm telling you the truth. If it if it wasn't for the control of the spirit inside of me I'd want to go get those guys. We can be angry with sin but oh when we when we want to seek revenge I think we've gone to the

other side. When it starts controlling us and starts eating us alive like Hebrews twelve fifteen. Be careful. That any of you read fails to respond to the grace which God gives.

What is Grace you say? Oh I know that one. Oh I learned that in one of my classes here at Biola or my pastor taught me that see sometimes in the Greek in the New Testament means unmerited favor. See I knew that. What does that mean? Getting something that you don't deserve. Like one of forgiveness divine acceptance. Peace in the middle of a storm. Wisdom when you don't know what to do. Direction. Eternal life. Wow the list just keeps going. But have you ever heard this definition for Grace. Whatever you need to get through anything. Where do you get that? Second Corinthians twelve nine my grace is sufficient is that the truth or is that a lie. It's the truth be careful that any of you fails to respond to the grace which God gives for if he does there can very easily spring up within him a bitter spirit which is not only bad in itself but can also poison the lives of many others it'll eat you alive.

A woman from my church walked up to me and she said I heard a rumor about you. I said all which one did you hear. And she said I heard that you believe that bitterness is worse than cancer I thought I was gonna disintegrate right there on the spot why. That was Shirley Moor, Shirley Moor was standing in the hallway of our church with cancer and I guess she saw the anguish on my face and she said now relax Bob relax. She said I can tell what you're thinking. So even though that's a disease that's taking my life a little each day I want you to know something. I believe you're right. Bitterness is worse. It's like a poison. It can even spread to the people around you. Have you ever seen it infect a family?

So here we are dealing with this wall. Applying these beautiful truths. Now. Some of you think. I'm heavy into psychology. I am not. I took nine hours of psych in my life. General. Child Adolescent I don't remember one thing I learned in college ok but I sure have been going and trying to find out what the root problems are and the solutions to these things. And look at here. I don't want to list some of the things that I have discovered in ministry as to why we don't forgive. See what you think of these number one. Personality. I just touched on that a little bit yesterday in one of my sessions that the strong willed child often becomes the strong willed adult. And so that person has a hard time forgiving. Do you. Do you like to kind of just chew on it for a while just let it? Just. Enjoy being angry for a while.

My wife's a quicker forgiver than I am. I have to go down in my workshop and kind of bite out of some two by fours or something for a while. We don't have a cat anymore so I can't. So. She ran over it. I was studying when one night and read them below my studies our garage and all of a sudden I heard the garage door open and then she put it in gear and then all of a sudden I heard out. All right. Family background. Family background is another thing.

As to why we don't forgive K you know what I'd like to know if I can. If I stayed here for a semester I'd like to meet with every one of you. I'd like to sit down and find out what kind of father you had. One of the things I'd like to know is was he a man that taught you about forgiveness. Some of you are about ready to burst into laughter right now. You gotta be kidding my dad. Don't cross this man. Woo hoo. Oh he's asleep in the chair and you want to watch the TV and he had it on and you come in and change the channels and he wakes up. I was watching that. You know. I remember one guy said hey my dad's the one that hurt me the most is and will

tell me about it. He said well he's a Baptist pastor and he won't let us speak during a meal. He said he has hit me so hard in the mouth. It's knocked me over backwards in my chair at mealtime. Etc cetera et cetera. What kind of dad did you have? Was he the kind that dad taught you about example. I taught you about forgiveness by example. He was a walking demonstration of forgiveness. Did he teach you from the word what forgiveness is all about? Or. If you haven't got a dollar bill to your name just. It's morning. But you had a dad who taught you about forgiveness in my little humble. Accurate opinion. I believe you are a wealthy person friend. You are a wealthy person because I believe it's one of the most important topics in the whole world.

All right. How about another one. If you don't like those yet you don't feel that the person deserves it. You scumbag you're not getting forgiveness out of me. No sorry. I'll go to my grave before I forgive you. Have you been having that kind of an attitude? You don't know much about the subject another reason all you've never studied about forgiveness. Now I'm going to make a statement. I think it's very accurate. I don't think most Christians have. I have studied the subject of forgiveness beyond salvation. Could you stand to your feet right now and minister to this audience about this very important topic. And give some support to what you have learned because you've applied it to situations in your life. I'd be afraid that some of you wouldn't have a thing to say. You couldn't keep this audience listening to you on this topic for over a minute.

OK. Here it comes. I got a phone call from our son in law. One o'clock in the morning. Dad Joe wants out I can't believe this I walked her down the aisle I handed her hand over to this girl I mean this this man and perform that ceremony. She told him ask kept asking me for three weeks in advance. Are you gonna cry daddy. And I don't. Don't keep bringing this up Josie. Sometimes

I think I'm part woman. I can cry with any buddy in town. I cried when lassie stepped on a nail. And so during that ceremony see I made the mistake of looking Jill right in her eyes. She started to tear up and oh good night. I started losing it. Now Carrie our youngest daughter she's in the wedding party right behind me. And she started going. Oh no I'm not gonna make it through this thing. One guy told me later that I thought I was gonna be at the longest wedding I've ever been to. Not very many words but long wedding. Right now.

John says seven years later Joe wants out. I talked I waited a couple of days for Jill. Finally she called me and she's mad at John for telling but I was gonna find out anyway. I said Jill he wasn't he wasn't being mean to you or trying to trying to score any points with me. He was hurting. Long story short. I told Jill if she didn't want me to come to Atlanta. Two hundred and one hundred and eighty five miles away that I wouldn't come. But if she didn't tell me not to come I was on my way and I knew it was delicate I told her that hey when a parent tries to counsel married son or daughter and they don't want it. Well then it's not going to do any good. Unasked for advice is like criticism and so she didn't tell me not to come we spent four hours talking about it. Long story short she divorced John.

Now John six weeks later calls me up and says Bob doesn't call me dad anymore. If you were to give me some bottom line advice what would you say to me? OK you want me to be honest John. As straight as you can make it I believe you've neglected your spiritual life for seven years. You worked on Sundays. Turner Broadcasting Company and television field. And John I challenge you to study the subject of forgiveness because I picture you dear brother as a man who's drowning and you better study this subject before you go on. I saw a man come spiritually

alive folks as he dug into that subject with both feet. He read everything. Get a hold of. He has listened to my tapes every day. And to Charles Stanley's I mean he was going at it you know much about the subject are you drowning. You're not ready. You need some time for God to work some more in your life. Now that could be an excuse. You don't want to forgive. Let's just boil it right down. You don't want to. No Sir. Well whatever of those apply to your life I pray that you'll see what you're doing and do something about it. I think it's one of the four most important topics in the world to a Christian. 0 4. What are they in your opinion? Okay. The Lord Lordship of Christ. Learning to be a servant. You will never graduate from being a servant. Love and number 4 forgiveness. I think those are the four biggies where we need to concentrate. I hope this institution. Teaches on those topics.

Have you ever thought of this? Forgiveness is a command. I missed this August but I've been for years in a row to a church in. North Carolina. Right down the street from Fort Bragg. A couple wanted to see me a year ago August in a counseling session had some marriage problems. While we were talking I happened to ask the man. Do you know what a command is? And the husband and wife started laughing and I looked at him and said did I say something funny. And he looked at me and said Bob I've been in the United States Army for 16 years. I said oh you know what command is right. Yes. Is it something you do when you get around to it? Is it something you do when you feel like it? So have you ever thought of it like this? Be kind one to another forgiving one another even as God be kind. Be tender hearted. Be. I can't even quote it to you be kind one to another tender hearted forgiving one another even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you isn't that a command.

All right. Have you ever thought of this? It's a choice a lot of Christians have chosen not to. But I've got a good one for you. Have you ever heard of a definition of forgiveness? Has it this little church outside of Birmingham Alabama. Thirty people in this church. Wooden floor and everything. And the pastor that morning said hey when you come back to speak in the evening service tonight would you would you spend the whole hour just on forgiveness. We'll sing a song pray and turn you loose.

I said you got it. I was telling those people stuff about forgiveness I didn't even know I knew. And after it was over this man walked up to me in the lobby of the church and he didn't say Oh thank you brother for coming. I learned something you know a lot of people don't learn anything from what I have to say. But he didn't say any of that. He looked at me with kind of this frown on his face and he said well you never did define it. And you never try to be spiritual when you're mad. You know you haven't put that on. The smile on your face and you think can you scumbag. I just poured my heart out in that auditorium for an hour. And you're going you never did define it and. And then it hit me. The guy's right. I had never heard of a definition of forgiveness in my whole life. Now since then I read Swindler's book on forgiving and forgetting. And he quotes Mark Twain in there. Forgiveness is the fragrance of flower leaves on the heel that crushed it all just between us. That's a little bit too flowery for Bob Stone and that doesn't get to me.

All right let me set you up for this. This is gonna be good now. Don't go to sleep yet. Here I am in New York. I'm there for six days at this. Retreat Center. Gorgeous place and it's a couples

retreat and I love to do those people get away from their children lock them in the closet for the weekend giving a bunch of food the last six days. And we can be together and have a two one hour sessions in the morning together play 89 nine games of volleyball and afternoon you know when we eat together and there's time for sitting under a tree and talking about their situation. I love those. Then we have a session for the community. It's open to the community at night. Watch what happened and I'm bragging on God first night 80 percent full next night not an empty seat in the place next night they're hauling in chairs from other buildings. This is making goose bumps go up and down my spine I'm telling you the truth. So God you're at work. They're inviting their friends and neighbors people at work. Maybe they were inviting their enemies. I don't know. And so the place just jammed by that third night. But something else was taking place every one of those nights in that empty auditorium about 30 minutes early when I was setting up the overhead projector.

I noticed a couple sitting over here every night 30 minutes early just sitting there. Finally the third night the man walked up to me he said My wife is so shy and such an introvert she can't even walk up to you and say Would you meet with her. See Bob. Something has happened to her in her childhood. She's never told anybody about this. She's never told me even and we've been married 11 years and she's a basket case. Tell you the truth. So what is what is a basket case. He's well she she's very withdrawn like I told you but she cries every day. Super depressed can't hardly function in the home as a as a wife and mother and taking care of the place. And she needs some help. Would you meet with my wife? That's why I'm here sir.

Next night I met with her. Within 10 minutes she told me what had happened. Incest with her father incest with her uncle incest with her grandfather. And none of the men knew about the others when she was a teenager. She took up karate. I look back at her and said so that no man would ever try anything like this with you again. She said you got it. I shared briefly with her what I'm sharing with you. I looked over and the tears were just flowing down this woman's face and I said would I be allowed to know what you're thinking. She said Bob Stone you have taught me something major tonight. What did I teach you? She said I think this is what you're trying to say to me. I'm not gonna be able to forgive. Like the Bible talks about if I've got a broken. Shattered. Crushed. Bleeding Heart is that what you were trying to get across to me. Yes lady that's exactly what I was trying to get across to you.

Otherwise you're gonna be like the wounded dog that I told about the first day I was here. That bites its master when the master tries to help the dogs not thinking about the love from the master is he. He's thinking about his own pain just like us oh she said I've sat in my pew at church I've heard some beautiful messages on forgiveness and I've responded one of these two ways one would be I wish he'd hurry up and get through. I can't stand this convicting message I want to get out of here. I said what's the other response you've had? That's what I need in my life and I pray a prayer. But I realize tonight. Those prayers have come from my lips not my heart. End of story.

The next night. Her husband walked up to me and said I don't know [Audio Cuts Out] wall that's gone up so high that when these people look at each other on the human level they don't see each other anymore. They see all the hurts and all the wrongs in that wall. Now. Father I don't have the kind of forgiveness that's needed here but you do and as an act of my will I ask you to

reproduce the forgiving spirit that Jesus had in the cross in my life. Right now or whenever you're ready now can you picture this the wall. Comes crashing down when you forgive no circles. You've dealt with them scripturally no wall. Mama. There's some beauty on the way.

All right I got two more things I want to bounce off you. One would be. I went out in the backyard. Remember our backyard in Alabama. We're on it kind of a mountainous area. It goes from about here to the edge of that bleacher there. So it's about twelve feet then it drops down and there's that romantic creek that flows by our place. All right now the kids in our neighborhood if they're not too careful they get too close to the edge of that thing and they fall down the hill and the creek takes. I don't know where all these kids are in their neighborhood. They've been missing.

You know they're downstream someplace see. And so now I get out my demon possessed sledgehammer the one that crushed my two fingers here. See when I was splitting firewood and I hadn't touched it for two years in fact I wouldn't even walk by it in the garage. And so now I need to pound this post in the ground out in our backyard. So I grabbed that sledgehammer got the four by four posts lined it up just exactly where I wanted just tapped it real lightly to make it indentation in the ground. Oh this is cedar this four by four post. And if I hit that thing it's just going to shatter the top of it because cedar is soft see so dumb. Bob Stone reached over in the woodpile grabbed this one by four piece of oak and put it. Not on the four by four post like this.

I put it like this. Have you ever messed up when you're in a hurry? Man I grab that sledgehammer and with that board on top of the post aimed right toward me I swung and went. And hit. That a little off center and that board came right back and hit me right in the face. I couldn't believe what had happened to me. All of a sudden the trees started waving to me. Now that. I am going to faint for the first time in my life. That doesn't sound very manly you know. And so I got down on one knee because I didn't want to roll down that hill and end up with all those little kids. That are missing in our neighborhoods. And so. I fainted and went right out and must have been just a few seconds because I woke up and this.

Left I was swelled shut already. Boom. And I looked down on my t shirt with my right eye. And the result is whites the red stuff going down the front of me. Oh I have done it again. So. I kind of steadied myself by the woodpile and I my wife name is Ruth. That's why I call her that. And so she was in the house. This is Monday on our sacred holy day off. And so do you ever try to holler when you're hurt. So I grabbed a hold of the woodpile and I called to her. Ruth. Ruth.

She couldn't have heard me as you stand right over there right. So Boy I took a deep breath and I went Ruth! And she was in ironing you see and she heard my little melodic voice and she told me this later she said oh I knew what he wanted. He wanted me to go down in his shop and get him probably the four foot level so I could put it on that post and see if it's clumsy. She had this all figured out. And when she came out of that house and around that shrub where I was she just stopped cold. And just stared at me just sweetheart. Don't move. And I thought my face must be gone you know. Good night. I guess I could see her with my one eye and the way she was staring

at me and she said I'm gonna go in and turn off the iron and get the keys and we're gonna go back to the hospital again and we're gonna see the folks there.

And so anyway long story short I had four broken bones in my face. One of them was my orbital bone. You know the orbital bone. Does it hold your eyeball in place? See so that one was broken and so they had to wait four days for the swelling to go down and then they went made an incision in my mouth and went up and set three of those bones. Is that about time to eat No. And so then they put this tube up my nose. With a weather balloon on the end of it and blew the balloon up underneath my orbital bone to make it go back in place so that my eye wouldn't be down here. See you someplace eh. And so. So now the doctor after I get out and get ready to get out of the hospital he says now I don't want you running I don't want you yelling I don't want you lifting anything heavier than an average sized book. I want you quiet. I don't want you going up to the office in counseling. I don't want you traveling. I want you quiet now what am I going to do. I can't see out of my one eye you know. So I was half ken and so. I thought well I can I can hear.

And so I sat on a lazy board chair and I listened to Matthew Mark Luke and John and I'm going to Acts and Stephen's being stoned and something hit me harder than that board father. That is why they're stoning him. Hold not this sin against their charge. What a gorgeous attitude and for the first time in my life I saw the parallel. Have you seen the parallel Father forgive them for they know not what they do. Good night I'd never seen the parallel. I expected Jesus to be forgiving. This is what it dawned on me it was 42 years old. It dawned on me for the first time I'd

been expecting Jesus to be forgiving because look who he was. God and Man at the same time. Oh but now look at over here folks. Stephen He's one of you and I.

With the same beautiful Godly attitude because of Christ in him. Here's what it said to me that day and I won't give you the other thing. Time's running out. I'll end with this any Christian that wants to have the forgiving spirit that Jesus demonstrated on the cross can have it do you want it. Have you forgiven everyone for everything whose names popped to your memory right now? Has it been grinding in there for months or years all the forgiveness that you need is available.

Father I thank you for the opportunity to share this and I want these students to know that I've applied these principles to my life. And I've experienced what only you can do. I am deeply grateful to you father and I so long. To see every single person in this gym this morning apply that same biblical truth and know what it's like to be able to say yes I have forgiven everyone for everything. The wall is down Free at last free at last thank God Almighty I am free at last. In his name I pray.

[Music begins]

Male Singer:

Block by block I have built this wall. Round my broken heart with Scars so thick and brittle. My feeling is all but gone. The wall goes higher every day. More than I can bear. It. Seems it's been so long since I've felt warmth of the morning sun. Take me now. Teach me how. Do with me what I could never do. Left on my own. Do that surgery in my heart. And then we'll work on

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the wall. To once again I feel the warmth. Of the golden morning sun. Take me now. Teach me
how do for me what I'd never do if I were left. Out on my own. Do. The surgery on my heart.
Then we'll work on the wall. Till once again I feel the warmth of the golden morning sun.

[Applause]