

START AGAIN

WEEK FOUR: RELATIONALLY

CONNECT

This week we conclude our series taking a look at the things that impact us the most in life. We all know that we can't start over, to go and make changes in our past, but we do have the ability to **start again**. This week we'll look at our how we can start again **relationally**.

- How old were you when you had your first "Best friend"? What made that relationship special?
- How old were you the first time you thought you were "In love"? What did you do to make that relationship special?
- Do you remember when you had your first "Enemy"? Why did you dislike them so much? Did you forgive them, or did you want revenge? Had you been friends? Did you become friends again?

DISCOVER

It takes work to keep relationships healthy. In a healthy, God centered relationship, we have a part, the other person has a part, and God has a part to keep the relationship growing and healthy. We know God will always do His part. We also know that there will be times that we, and the other person will both sometimes fail in doing our part. When that happens, forgiveness must be a ready part of the relationship. To start again in a relationship though, you must know that forgiveness:

- Is NOT forgetting
- Is NOT letting someone get away with hurting you
- Is releasing your pain to God, and giving over to Him the idea of revenge from your control and letting Him handle it
- Is releasing your hurt and pain to Christ on the cross

Perhaps holding a grudge is what is keeping your relationship from healing or moving forward - it's time to forgive. While you can't get back what you lost, or go back and start over to before the pain occurred, but you can start again with forgiveness, and move forward, with God, in a healthy relationship from here. It means things won't go back to the way they used to be, but they can heal and move forward into something better than it was before

(i.e. We can't go back to the time before Jesus was on the cross, but we have something even better because of what happened on the cross.)

- Take a look at these passages about forgiveness from the Bible, Ephesians 4:31-32; Romans 12:19 and answer a few questions together.
- According the Ephesians passage, why is it so important that we forgive one another?
- In the Ephesians passage it says that we should forgive because we have been forgiven by God through Christ. What impact, if any, does this have on your view if forgiveness in your relationships?
- What is “righteous anger” from the Romans passage?

GROW

- Is there a relationship in your life that you want to start again with? What part of the Ephesians passage will be the most difficult next step?
- What are some healthy ways you can let go of your anger?
- What would it look like if ‘forgiveness’ was your ‘weapon’ of choice in all disagreements within your relationships?
- How can your small group pray for you and encourage you as you start again in your relationship?