

- 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. Find the audio message on our website under the Resources tab. ([www.DivineDesignDiscipleship.com](http://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. SING

Singing is helpful in connecting emotionally to the truth.

Listen to the songs from this week's playlist to aid you in taking today's principles from your head to your heart.

This playlist and our master playlist for the Expectations series can be found on our Divine Design Discipleship YouTube channel. (Be sure to subscribe to our channel!) Our 2020 playlist is also available on Spotify. See the handout provided with your notebook for instructions on how to access these resources.

## IV. PRINCIPLES

These principles will help you recognize and develop biblical expectations:

### A. CONSEQUENCES

- Relational strain resulting from unmet expectations has harmful consequences when left unresolved:
  1. Disconnection with Others
    - Because of the differences in people and their expectations, there is great opportunity for offense: Lk 17:1-- He said to the disciples, "It is impossible that no offenses should come
    - "'Offense' is either the cause of anger, displeasure, etc., or a sin. In Scripture we have the special significance of a stumbling block, or cause of falling." (ISBE)
    - As offenses and unresolved expectations build up, eventually interpersonal connection will rupture: Mt 12:25-- Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand.
  2. Enemy Encroachment
    - Whenever we don't deal with our negative emotions and attitudes in a relationship it gives ground to Satan. (Eph 4:27)
    - Disconnection makes room for the enemy's Spirit of Separation (SOS). It tempts us to build walls vs. wholeheartedly relating: Pr 18:1 AMP-- He who [willfully] separates himself [from God and man] seeks his own desire, He quarrels against all sound wisdom.
    - Characteristics of SOS:
      - ✓ Pushing God or another person away from you
      - ✓ Putting conditions on how or where you'll connect with the other person
      - ✓ Defending your viewpoint, way, agenda, attitude
      - ✓ Difficulty seeing the other person's viewpoint
      - ✓ Refusing to deal in honest, healthy or mature ways
      - ✓ Unwilling to let God use the situation to do His internal work in you
  3. Disconnection with God
    - Offense and separation violate God's call to love others unconditionally: Rom 8:5-8 JBP-- The carnal attitude sees no further than natural things. But the spiritual attitude reaches out after the things of the spirit. The former attitude means, bluntly, death: the latter means life and inward peace. And this is only to be expected, for the carnal attitude is inevitably opposed to the purpose of God, and neither can nor will follow his laws for living. Men who hold this attitude cannot possibly please God.
    - The Lord takes relational unity so seriously that He makes maintaining it a top priority: Mt 5:24-25-- If you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.
- Insights:

## B. CAUSES

- Jesus used a parable to help us see the things that get in the way of lovingly and healthily resolving the relational strain of unmet expectations: Mt 18:21-25 NLT-- Then Peter came to him and asked, "Lord, how often should I forgive someone who sins against me? Seven times?" <sup>22</sup> "No, not seven times," Jesus replied, "but seventy times seven!" <sup>23</sup> "Therefore, the Kingdom of Heaven can be compared to a king who decided to bring his accounts up to date with servants who had borrowed money from him. <sup>24</sup> In the process, one of his debtors was brought in who owed him millions of dollars. <sup>25</sup> He couldn't pay, so his master ordered that he be sold—along with his wife, his children, and everything he owned—to pay the debt. <sup>26</sup> "But the man fell down before his master and begged him, 'Please, be patient with me, and I will pay it all.' <sup>27</sup> Then his master was filled with pity for him, and he released him and forgave his debt. <sup>28</sup> "But when the man left the king, he went to a fellow servant who owed him a few thousand dollars. He grabbed him by the throat and demanded instant payment. <sup>29</sup> "His fellow servant fell down before him and begged for a little more time. 'Be patient with me, and I will pay it,' he pleaded. <sup>30</sup> But his creditor wouldn't wait. He had the man arrested and put in prison until the debt could be paid in full. <sup>31</sup> "When some of the other servants saw this, they were very upset. They went to the king and told him, everything that had happened. <sup>32</sup> Then the king called in the man he had forgiven and said, 'You evil servant! I forgave you that tremendous debt because you pleaded with me. <sup>33</sup> Shouldn't you have mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you?' <sup>34</sup> Then the angry king sent the man to prison to be tortured until he had paid his entire debt. <sup>35</sup> "That's what my heavenly Father will do to you if you refuse to forgive your brothers and sisters from your heart."
- We can see from this text at least 2 reasons that we fail to seek peace and reconciliation in our horizontal relationships:
  1. Cognitive Dissonance
    - The servant could see that he gained his freedom from prison but did not see that he was also set free from his obligation to repay what he owed.
    - Cognitive dissonance is "discomfort that results from holding two conflicting beliefs, values, or attitudes." It keeps us from seeing our situation clearly. (Kendra Cherry)
    - Like the servant, we can have a mismatch in our stated situation and what we really believe. We sing *Amazing Grace* while feeling guilty and the need to work harder.
    - Coping with these conflicting beliefs and expectations often leads us toward defensive mechanisms such as justifying ourselves and blaming others.
    - LISTENING EXERCISE: *Lord, how deeply am I able to receive Your love and grace toward me? How am I still working for Your acceptance and approval?*
  2. Debt-Debtor Syndrome
    - Not understanding to the core that we are forgiven and free leads to the faulty expectation that we must attempt to work off our debts.
    - The debt-debtor syndrome was illustrated in our parable: the unforgiven don't forgive, the unloved don't love, and the unaccepted don't accept.
    - The ones who don't realize the enormity of the mercy they've received have the capacity to make unreasonable, even impossible demands on other people.
    - Their response to the inner messages of accusation and condemnation is to become accusing and condemning in their horizontal relationships.
    - LISTENING EXERCISE: *Holy Spirit, please search my heart and reveal where in my relationships I am holding the expectation that someone owes me.*

- Insights:

### C. COMPONENTS

- To resolve conflict over unmet expectations, we must first have a thorough grasp of the expectations set forth in Scripture for authentic forgiveness.
- Jesus exemplifies the components of true forgiveness in the parable (v. 27):
  1. Compassion
    - To be moved to feel sympathy or have pity (Strong's G4697)
    - We don't have room for compassion in our hearts if we are harboring negative emotions.
    - Grieving the hurt we've experienced (real or perceived) makes way for God to bring His comfort: Mt 5:4-- Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.
    - Those who've been given compassion are then able to give it away: Mt 10:8—Freely you have received, freely give.
  2. Release
    - To free fully; to release, let go or dismiss (Strong's G630)
    - Being willing to let go of our negative feelings makes it possible for God to release His love in us: Eph 4:31-32 JBP-- Let there be no more resentment, no more anger or temper, no more violent self-assertiveness, no more slander and no more malicious remarks, Be kind to each other, be understanding. Be as ready to forgive others as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you.
    - Others don't have to participate for us to release them in love: Mt 5:43-44 MSG-- I'm telling you to love your enemies. Let them bring out the best in you, not the worst. When someone gives you a hard time, respond with the supple moves of prayer, for then you are working out of your true selves, your God-created selves. This is what God does.
  3. Forgiveness
    - To give up a debt, abandoning any claim on what was owed (G863)
    - Carrying around the burden of a debt owed us causes us to live in bondage to other people's actions and attitudes.
    - When we make the choice to forgive in obedience to God, we're:
      - ✓ Naming the wrong.
      - ✓ Calculating what it cost us.
      - ✓ Intentionally choosing to cancel the debt.
      - ✓ Forgiving because we have been forgiven.
      - ✓ Being set free from our past or having lives conditioned on the actions of others.
      - ✓ Making a faith choice knowing that the feelings will eventually follow.
    - We can expect the Lord to free us from bitterness, hardness of heart, and the torment of bondage when we forgive (v. 34): Gal 5:1 AMP-- It was for this freedom that Christ set us free [completely liberating us]; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery [which you once removed].
- Insights:

## D. CONVERSATIONS

- If there continues to be relational strain after working through forgiveness privately with God, it probably means that a conversation is in order. Confirm that in prayer!
- Scripture calls us to go to the other person whether you have offended someone (Mt 5:24-25) or whether they've offended you: Mt 18:15NLT—If another believer sins against you, go privately and point out the offense. If the other person listens and confesses it, you have won that person back.
  
- Here are some strategies\* to consider when you go to negotiate unmet expectations:
  1. Don't Delay
    - Jesus tells us not to wait to pursue reconciliation. This prevents escalation, inertia, and bringing up dated issues: Mt 5:25 NLT—Settle your differences quickly.
  2. Choose a favorable time and place
    - Select a time and location with few distractions: Eccl 8:6 NIV-- For there is a proper time and procedure for every matter, though a person may be weighed down by misery.
  3. Be alert for defensiveness
    - Our minds are hardwired for defensiveness. Resist the temptation to criticize, judge, retaliate, or exact vengeance: Is 53:7 AMP-- He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He did not open His mouth [to complain or defend Himself]
  4. Don't make excuses
    - Take responsibility for anything you did or didn't do that negatively impacted the other person (even if you think it is a tiny part of the problem!): Mt 7:3—Why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye?
  5. Be appropriately vulnerable
    - Negotiating relationships is risky, especially when you initiate the conversation. Your willingness to admit your part can be disarming to the other person: Lk 10:3 TV—I'm sending you out armed with vulnerability.
  6. Don't over- or under-apologize
    - Excessive apologizing takes the focus off the issues and away from the hurt party: Phil 2:4 TV-- Get beyond yourselves and protecting your own interests; *be sincere*, and secure your neighbors' interests first.
    - A lame apology doesn't take ownership for the actual offense ("I'm sorry your feelings were hurt" vs. "I'm sorry that I \_\_\_\_\_," specifically naming the hurtful thing.).
  7. Don't force or rush to resolution
    - Keep this conversation about understanding the differences and disconnection between you: Lk 6:35 MSG--I tell you, love your enemies. Help and give without expecting a return. You'll never—I promise—regret it.
    - Be willing to make reparation if it is warranted and don't press the other person to forgive you at this time: 2 Pt 2:8-9 MSG-- He's giving everyone space and time to change.
  8. Do ask clarifying questions
    - Seek to understand the viewpoint of the other party. Be curious, asking for more details if their sharing is vague or incomplete: Pr 18:2 NLT-- Fools have no interest in understanding; they only want to air their own opinions.

9. Be appreciative

- o Thank the other person for their contribution to the conversation and their willingness to invest in you and the relationship: Ps 141:5 AMP-- Let the righteous [thoughtfully] strike (correct) me—it is a kindness [done to encourage my spiritual maturity]. It is [the choicest anointing] oil on the head; Let my head not refuse [to accept and acknowledge and learn from] it; For still my prayer is against their wicked deeds.

10. Leave the door open

- o Resolution may take more than one conversation. Invite the other party to further discussion in the future: Pr 15:23 NLT-- Everyone enjoys a fitting reply; it is wonderful to say the right thing at the right time!

\* *Some of these strategies were adapted from “Why Won’t You Apologize?” by Harriet Lerner.*

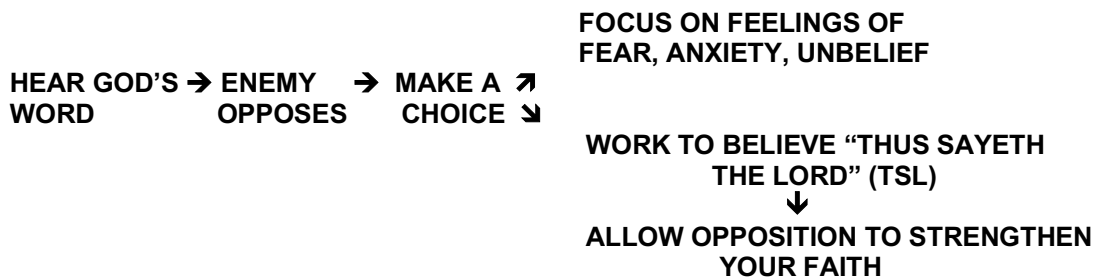
- These guidelines give you a great chance of a positive outcome. However, most importantly, go expecting the Spirit to be working through you: 1 Jn 4:12 NLT--If we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is brought to full expression in us.
- Insights:

II. CONTINUE TO PRACTICE

- Study “Tools & Techniques: Forgiveness” for more biblical principles on this huge topic.
- Use the handout “Tools & Techniques: Be Renewed” to recalibrate your expectations.
- Refer to “Tools & Techniques: Listening to God” to help you grow in intimacy in your relationship with the Lord and find biblical guidance for this important practice.
- With these mindsets as our starting point, we can expect to R.I.S.E. above our circumstances as we deeply know the truth and are set free:

<b>R.</b>	<b>I.</b>	<b>S.</b>	<b>E.</b>
Relational	Internal	Surrendered	Eternal

- Refer to this continuum to help you make a choice whenever storms threaten your peace:



- Use the handout “Tools & Techniques: Spiritual Blessings” to help you connect to the wonderful things you can expect from God as He does His internal work in you.
- Developing a relational mindset could be depicted this way:

**EXTEND FAITH INCREMENTALLY → GOD PROVES TRUSTWORTHY → DEVELOP CONFIDENT & ACCURATE EXPECTATIONS IN GOD**