

The Heart of the Family

Forgiveness, Humility, and Blessing

Several years ago, I was overseeing five churches in the city where I lived. I was the pastor of the largest of the five churches and I had helped plant the other four churches in the network we had created. The pastors of each of these churches were personal friends of mine and I had worked with them for several years. I knew each of these men very well and we had a good working relationship together. This group of pastors met each month to share about personal issues and to pray together for our churches and for the network we were part of.

At one point, we, as a group of leaders, began to experience a season of tension and conflict in our relationships. This was not the first time we had experienced disagreements, but on previous occasions we had always been able to overcome our differences through prayer and communication. We had a strong commitment to one another and we enjoyed working together. We all loved the Lord and we had faithfully served him for several years.

When we encountered this particular conflict we assumed it could be solved through prayer and communication like before. We fully expected the Lord to help us find a satisfactory solution to this problem.

However, the more we met together to discuss and pray about the situation, the greater the conflict became. Our misunderstanding grew deeper and the division among us got worse. It seemed like we were getting nowhere in our discussions. My viewpoint was that the other pastors' attitudes were the source of our problem. I thought that they were not honoring me the way they were supposed to! I believed that they were being stubborn, disrespectful, and unteachable.

I tried to speak into their lives on several occasions, but they were resistant to my input and did not agree with what I had to say. Instead, their viewpoint was that I was the problem. They told me that I was the one who was stubborn and unteachable, not them. These pastors felt that I was not listening to their input and that I was not honoring their leadership positions.

As I said, the more we discussed this issue the worse it got. I kept thinking to myself, "Christians are supposed to be able to resolve their differences. We should be able to overcome this disagreement with the Lord's help. We are mature leaders. We all Love the Lord and want to do his will. Why can't we resolve this issue?"

This unresolved conflict went on for several months without any satisfactory resolution. Finally, one night as I was praying about this situation, I felt the Lord impressed me to offer to resign from my positions of church pastor and team leader. I thought this step could be a possible solution since the rest of the team believed that I was the source of our problem. So, at the next monthly meeting, I offered to step down from my leadership roles. The other pastors on the team thought that was a good idea and immediately accepted my resignation. My assistant pastor was

appointed to replace me.

I knew that this was the right thing to do, but the enthusiastic response of the other pastors to my offer to resign was hurtful to me. I began to experience a lot of turmoil in my heart during the days following my resignation. I went through some very deep dealings from the Lord over the next several months.

In the process, the Lord taught me three key principles that are essential in every relationship. These three principles describe what I call the “heart” of the family: **Forgiveness, Humility, and Blessing**. These three principles must be applied continuously in every family in order for its heart to be healthy.

Principle number one: The Power of Forgiveness

The Power of Forgiveness overcomes bitterness and it releases healing into our lives: emotional healing, relational healing, family healing, mental healing, physical healing and spiritual healing

My emotions, my mind, my spirit, my body and my relationships were all negatively impacted following my resignation. My mind was constantly reviewing the events that had taken place and as I did, it my angry emotions were stirred up. I thought, “This is not right!” “It isn’t fair!” “They mistreated me!” “They disrespected me!”

In my mind, I thought about what these men had said to me. I thought about what I had said to them. I thought about what I **should** have said. I thought about what I would say in the future if I ever had a chance again. These thoughts were continually going through my mind and I could not let go of what had happened.

Whenever I met these men at church after my resignation I would smile at them, shake their hands and greet them with, “It’s nice to see you.” However, in my heart it was NOT nice to see them. All I could think about was what they had done to me and how they had hurt me. I was not experiencing the joy and peace of the kingdom of God.

I spent a lot of time before the Lord over the next several weeks trying to understand what the problem was and how to overcome it. During one of these times, the Lord strongly impressed on my heart the phrase, “You need to forgive these men”. Initially, I dismissed this impression and thought, “Lord that’s not the problem. I know about forgiveness, I have preached about forgiveness, I know Christians are not to harbor unforgiveness in their hearts. I have already forgiven them. I am sure forgiveness is NOT the problem”.

However, this impression would not go away, so I continued to seek the Lord for further understanding. Then the Lord impressed upon my heart the phrase, “You need to forgive **the way I have forgiven you**”. The Bible uses that phrase in two passages.

Ephesians 4:31-32 “Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, *forgiving each other, just as in*

Christ God forgave you.”

Colossians 3:13-14 “Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. *Forgive as the Lord forgave you.* And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.”

I wondered, “What does it mean to forgive others as the Lord forgave me? What was different from the way I had forgiven these men than the way God had forgiven me? What was missing in my approach to forgiveness?” I was then led by the Lord to Psalm 103:12, which says, “As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.”

This scripture tells us that, when the Lord forgives us our sins, he removes them out of sight. They are no longer in the picture. They are gone. We can’t find them, even if we search diligently for them. They are removed “as far as the east is from the west”. They don’t affect our relationship with him any more. Our sins can no longer come between the Lord and us.

How far is the east from the west? Where does the east stop and the west begin? There is no way to measure that distance. You can measure north and south because there are definite points for reference. But you can’t measure the east from the west. God removes our sins to a place where they can never be brought up again.

Micah 7:19 says, “You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl (cast) all our iniquities into the depths of the sea.” Once again, the picture is one of removing our sins out of sight. They no longer affect our relationship with the Lord. The message in both these passages is that when God forgives us our sins, he chooses to forget about them and not bring them up again. They are forgotten! They are gone! They are buried in the bottom of the deepest sea.

Finally, in Isaiah 43:25 we read, “I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more.” God has a good memory. His memory works at least as good as yours and mine! God is not saying in this passage that he has a problem with forgetfulness and that he has a hard time remembering our sins. He can, in fact, recall every offense and sin we have ever committed against him if he so chooses. Instead, he chooses to forget them. They are no longer an issue to him and he doesn’t bring them up again, even though he could. He doesn’t allow them to affect the relationship any further. They are blotted out!

These scriptures pointed out the difference between my forgiveness and the Lord’s forgiveness. I had not let go of these pastors’ sins. I was still holding on to them. Their sins were not buried in the bottom of the sea. They had not been removed as far as the east is from the west. Every time I saw these men or thought about them, their sins were right in front of me. Their sins stood between these men and me. I remembered in painful detail the words they had spoken and the things they had done to me. I had not let go of their sins. Consequently my life and my relationship with these men was being adversely affected.

“Why have I not let go of these offenses?” I wondered. “Why am I still holding on to this hurt?” Then I realized it was because I felt that these men still owed me something. They owed me an

apology for the way they had mistreated me. But, as of yet, none of them had acknowledged any wrong doing on his part. Instead, they were moving forward with their lives as though everything was fine. They were preaching in the church services, they were expanding their ministries and they were going on with no apparent consequences for what they had done. Meanwhile, I was sitting in the services, wounded and suffering from all that had transpired.

“If only they would humble themselves and acknowledge their wrong actions to me,” I thought to myself, “then I would gladly forgive them”. Without their repentance, however, I was unable to release the offenses they had committed against me. The Lord challenged me to forgive these men even if they never acknowledged their wrongdoing. He challenged me to let go of these things, even if they never apologized to me. I thought, “Lord, if I do that then they get away free!” That didn’t seem fair to me.

Then I remembered that the essence of forgiveness is letting people go free. Forgiveness is pardoning them and releasing them from any payment they may owe us. It is no longer holding anything against them. It is letting go of the expectation of repayment of a debt. Forgiveness, as someone said, “Is giving up my right to hurt you for hurting me.”

Finally, after several days of wrestling with this issue, I freely and without conditions, released these men from any debt I felt they owed me. I let go of my expectation that they would acknowledge their sin and ask my forgiveness. This was not an easy step to take. It was one of the most difficult decisions I have ever made. However, once I made this transaction, I entered into a level of release and freedom that I had not experienced for several months.

Now, when I met those men at church and shook their hands, I discovered that it really was nice to see them. I was free! I was at peace. I no longer had any expectation in my heart. It didn’t matter anymore whether or not they apologized. Their debt was cancelled and their offenses had been buried in the bottom of the sea. I was finally released from my own bitterness. I experienced God’s healing power. I realized the Power of Forgiveness.

Someone has said, “Harboring unforgiveness, bitterness, or resentment toward someone is like taking poison and waiting for the other person to die!” How foolish! They will not die if you drink the poison, you will! The biggest impact of unforgiveness is on your own life and not on the person who has offended you. You are the one that needs to be released. You are the one that needs to be healed. So many families are destroyed because they violating this simple, but profound, truth. Forgiveness must be freely and continually expressed in our families.

One of the best known passages in the Bible on the topic of forgiveness is found in the Gospel of Matthew. Its where Peter asked Jesus how many times he must forgive someone. “Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, ‘Lord how many times shall I forgive my brother, when he sins against me? Up to seven times?’ Jesus answered, ‘I tell you, not seven times, but seventy times seven.’” (Matthew 18:21-24)

Have you ever wondered why Peter asked that question? Do you think he was just an inquisitive disciple looking for deeper insights on the topic of forgiveness? Was he looking for a good

sermon outline on forgiveness? I don't think so. I think Peter was struggling in his relationships with the other disciples. The Bible does not specifically tell us why Peter asked this question, but I think it is safe to assume that Peter was having some difficulty in his relationships with the other disciples. Remember, he had been living in a close, intensive relationship with these eleven other men for almost three years. They had spent a lot of time together eating, traveling, sharing finances and ministering to others. They were with each other daily.

Certainly they had conflicts and personality clashes as a result of the intensity of their lifestyle. Remember, also, that two of them were called "sons of thunder," which might have been descriptive of their explosive personalities. Their favorite topic of discussion was, "Who is the greatest?" They were competitive and self-seeking. Such an environment naturally leads to tensions and conflicts.

It is very likely that Peter had one of the disciples in mind when he asked this question. (Again the Bible does not tell us this specifically) This particular disciple may have already committed eight offenses in Peter's eyes! Peter might have asked this question because his endurance level had been passed. We often ask this very same question in our families, "How many times do I have to forgive my spouse? How many times do I have to forgive my father?"

Peter probably considered seven offences a reasonable limit for a repeat offender, especially since the customary limit in the Jewish culture at that time was three offenses. He most likely thought he was being generous, in the light of what the culture around him encouraged.

Jesus, however, confronted Peter's desire to limit the scope of forgiveness. His seventy times seven answer was not meant to change Peter's limit from seven to four hundred and ninety. Rather, he was declaring that forgiveness needs to be unconditional and without limits. Jesus shows us that forgiveness is not something we do for a period of time! It is a way of life.

Jesus then seeks to expand our understanding of forgiveness in the parable about the unmerciful servant. (Matthew 18:21-35)

The unmerciful servant was forgiven a huge debt (which was impossible for him to repay) but he, in turn, was unwilling to forgive a minor debt (which could have been repaid). This parable teaches us three very important principles about forgiveness. 1. At the point where we refuse to forgive someone, our relationship with that person breaks down. 2. When we don't forgive others we experience personal bondage (imprisonment). 3. When we refuse to extend forgiveness to others our relationship with the Lord suffers. We cut ourselves off from the forgiveness that he freely offers. A forgiveness lifestyle is essential to maintain a healthy life and a healthy family.

I want us to look at three distinct applications of a forgiveness lifestyle in our families. To understand these three applications I want to use the number 490 (70 times 7) as an illustration. First of all, you may have to forgive a family member for many different offenses. He doesn't repeat the same offense over and over. Instead, he hurts you in different ways each time. He is very creative! He may hurt you in 490 different ways. Jesus calls us to forgive others no matter how many different ways they offend us. There is to be no limit in regard to the types of offenses

committed.

Secondly, instead of sinning against you in a variety of different ways, someone may repeat the same offense over and over. So, in this case, instead of forgiving this person for 490 different offenses, you find yourself needing to forgive him 490 times for the same offense. It's relatively easy to forgive someone once or twice for the same offense. However, after three or four times most of us begin to lose our patience with that person. We feel he needs to learn what true repentance means. It means you stop doing this! We have a limit as to how many times we will put up with the repeated failures.

I am NOT saying that you are expected to put up with repeated abuse in a relationship. Actions that put you or other family members in danger are NOT to be tolerated. These abusive actions must cease or else you must seek protection for yourself or your children. You are not to allow someone to repeatedly abuse you and take advantage of you.

However, it is important to understand that in intimate relationships, such as marriage, there will be irritations that come up repeatedly. You and your spouse each have issues that you struggle with in your personal lives. We all have these issues. For some people it may be as simple as being on time for events. No matter how hard he tries, some individuals are always late. Lateness is his repeated offensive behavior.

For someone else, it may be the fact that he gets angry with people who are late. No matter how many resolutions he makes to be patient, he always reacts when his spouse is late. I have noticed that usually these two people marry each other. (The one who is repeatedly late marries a spouse who reacts angrily to a tardy spouse!) You may need to forgive your wife repeatedly (490 times) for being late. Your wife may need to forgive you repeatedly (490 times) for getting angry when she is late. It helps us to be more gracious if we keep in mind the fact that we all struggle repeatedly with something.

Thirdly, someone may commit only a single offense against you but it comes up in your emotions and memory 490 times. Each time this memory surfaces, it is as though the offense had just happened again. In the early years of our marriage I did something that hurt my wife, Violet very much. It only happened one time in our marriage. However, what I did was very painful to Violet and had a deep impact on her. I quickly realized the severity of the situation and I humbled myself, repented and asked Violet to forgive me.

We brought this issue to the Lord in prayer and Violet fully and completely forgave me, even though the wound was very deep in her heart. It appeared to both of us that the issue was cleansed, forgiven and forgotten. However, two days later, the memory of this incident flooded back into Violet's mind and her emotions were again deeply affected. She relived this incident all over again and she was not able to get free from its impact on her heart and mind. As soon as I was aware of what was happening, I asked Violet to forgive me. She spoke out her forgiveness and we brought the issue to the Lord again in prayer. As far as we could determine the issue was once again settled.

Three days later we went through the same thing again. In fact, this one incident kept coming back into Violet's mind and emotions for about two years. It didn't come up every day or every week, but it came up regularly and repeatedly. Something would be said or done that would stir up this issue and we would have face it again. This happened even though we had brought to the Lord many times previously. After about two years, the issue was finally settled and it has never come up again for either my wife or me. We can both testify that we have been free from the effects of this incident for over forty years.

What was it that finally settled the issue for my wife so that it never bothered her again? Was it a deeper level of forgiveness? Was it a progressive healing of this painful memory over time? Was it a deeper level of humility and brokenness on my part? The answer to this question is not clear, even to this day. We don't have a full understanding as to why it eventually cleared up after so many attempts to lay it to rest.

The most important thing is that it was eventually healed. If an issue is settled after one act of forgiveness then it is settled and there is no need to confront the issue further. If it is still not settled, even after 490 expressions of forgiveness, then it is still not settled. It needs to be addressed and processed until it is completely settled. Jesus message in Matthew 18 is that we must forgive as many times as is necessary. There is no limit to forgiveness. There is no point at which we can say, "I have reached the end of my forgiveness capacity. There is no more forgiveness left in me." Forgiveness is not something we do, it is a way of life.

Returning to the story of my breakdown with my ministry coworkers, there were some additional steps the Lord wanted me to take. As I mentioned previously, I experienced a great release and personal breakthrough when I genuinely and deeply forgave the men who had offended me. The peace of God returned to my heart and I was finally able to freely interact with them again. The barriers that had been in my heart were removed and I was genuinely glad to see them at the church services. In fact, the release I experienced was so great that I thought my journey was complete.

However, a few months later, the Lord challenged me with another step of healing and restoration. By this time I was no longer meeting with these pastors in their monthly meetings. In fact, I became involved in another ministry so my contact with them was now very minimal. It was at this point that I was challenged to take a step of humility.

Principle number two: The Power of Humility

The Power of Humility overcomes pride and releases God's grace.

James 4:6 tells us, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

I Peter 5:5-6 says, "All of you clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, 'God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.' Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's might hand, that he may lift you up in due time."

Over time, the Lord showed me that some of the things my coworkers had been trying to say to

me were, in fact, true. I was proud! I was stubborn. I was unteachable! But I had been so focused on defending myself and on pointing out their faults that I had not been able to see the needs in my own life. I was finally able to see the issues in my own life once I was no longer meeting with these men each month.

The Lord challenged me to meet with these men and to acknowledge my pride, my stubbornness and my defensiveness. The Lord directed me to ask these pastors for forgiveness. Initially I resisted this step because I thought, “If I go to these pastors and admit that I was wrong and that they were right, then they “win” and I “lose”. However, I finally yielded to the Lord and took this step of obedience.

One of the hardest things I had to admit involved a previous invitation to preach at the church I had resigned from. Prior to my resignation, I had been a very prominent leader in this church. I led the meetings, I preached regularly, I prayed for people and I had a very visible, public profile. After my resignation, however, I was never asked to preach, to pray or to lead in any visible way. I was given no public recognition whatsoever. This change had hurt me and was difficult to accept.

This situation went on for several months. Then I received a phone call from the pastor who was now leading the church asking me to preach on a Sunday morning. Both he and his assistant pastor were going to be away on vacation on that particular Sunday and they needed someone to fill in for them. I declined to accept the invitation, stating that I had other commitments and that I was not free to come.

However, I could have accepted the invitation if I really wanted to. My other commitment could have been changed. The real reason I turned down the invitation was that I was hurt. I thought in my heart, “If the only time they want me to come and speak in their church is when they are on vacation and they have no other options for a speaker, then forget it!” My pride had been wounded and I reacted to feeling rejected. I never told the pastor on the phone the real reason I had said no to his invitation. I just told him I couldn’t come due to previous commitments.

The Lord challenged me to be honest and vulnerable with these pastors when I met with them and to share the real reason I declined the speaking invitation. He wanted me to humble myself and to disclose the sinfulness of my own heart to these men. This step was a deeper level of obedience and humility than I had ever taken in his life. It was very difficult but I knew it was the right thing to do. So, I obeyed the Lord and opened my heart to these men.

I experienced a great release of God’s favor upon me as I took this step. However, I was quite surprised by the way these men responded. How do you think they responded when I took this step of humility? Do you think that they humbled themselves and asking forgiveness for what they had done also? That’s what we often expect will happen when we take a step of humility. However, that is not what happened in this instance.

One of the pastors responded by telling me that it had been very difficult to talk to me about these issues previously. But, since he felt that I had a different spirit this time, he proceeded to tell me

that there were, in fact, some additional issues that I needed to work on. I could hardly believe what I was hearing! Instead of responding in humility, this other pastor was actually telling me, “You have lots of other issues in your life that need attention!”

Thankfully, I had taken this step in obedience to the Lord without putting any expectations on these pastors. So, I graciously accepted this man’s input and didn’t defend myself or react in a negative way. Some people take a step of humility with wrong motives. He sees humility as a strategy rather than as a step of obedience. He has hidden expectations and is looking for a humble response from the other person. When he fails to get this response he is disappointed and feels like the step of humility didn’t work.

I have sometimes counseled a husband to go home and humble himself to his wife and ask her forgiveness for the failures in his life. Later he returns and reports to me that he humbled himself to his wife but that “it didn’t work!” How can genuine humility not “work”? Humility always “works” if it is genuine, godly, humility. This disappointed husband expected his wife to humble herself in response to his humility. When she didn’t, he was disappointed. Steps of humility must be taken, not to produce certain responses from our spouse, but rather because it is the right thing to do.

I left the meeting with these pastors, knowing I had pleased the Lord regardless of their response. The joy and peace in my own heart were a witness that I had done the right thing. The release I felt in my own life was so great that I thought, “Surely this must be the end of my reconciliation journey with these men.” However, there was one final step that still awaited me and it came several months later.

Principle number three: The Power of Blessing

The Power of Blessing overcomes revenge and releases God’s mercy.

By this time my life, I was actively involved in another organization and had almost no contact with people from the church I had resigned from. I was moving forward in this new ministry and my former church was moving forward under its new leadership. I was not giving much thought to what was happening in this previous church, although at times I heard reports from friends of mine who were still attending the church.

The Lord challenged me to help the pastors who had offended me to succeed in their ministries. He told me to look for ways to serve those who had hurt me in the past. My immediate reaction to this thought was, “But I don’t want them to succeed!” In fact, when I heard reports that this church was struggling and that people were leaving, inwardly I was happy to hear that news. I knew it was wrong to feel this way, but I had to honestly admit that I was glad for their difficulties.

I thought that the Lord was dealing with them for the way they had treated me. I knew in my head that it was wrong to take revenge and to rejoice in the church’s troubles. However, inwardly, I was hoping that the Lord would discipline those who had mistreated me. I wasn’t praying for mercy, instead, I was hoping for judgment. One of the most frustrating things in life is when

God blesses people that you think he should curse. God is a God of mercy. He calls us to be merciful as well.

I could identify with the struggle of the Old Testament's prophet Jonah. Jonah was commanded by the Lord to go to Nineveh and to preach this message, "Forty more days and Nineveh will be overturned." (Jonah 3:4) Instead of obeying the Word of the Lord, however, Jonah sought to flee from the presence of the Lord. Eventually, he repented and delivered the Lord's message to this wicked city. The result of his preaching was unprecedented. One of the world's greatest revivals took place in response to his preaching. The king repented, the people repented, everyone fasted and turned from their wicked ways. Nineveh's response was so deep and genuine that God "had compassion and did not bring upon them the destruction he had threatened." (Jonah 3:19)

It was the kind of response that any evangelist would be thrilled over. Jonah, however, was far from thrilled with this result. In fact, he "was greatly displeased and became angry." (Jonah 4:1) He told the Lord that this was the reason why he didn't want to come in the first place. "I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity". (Jonah 4:2) Jonah was so upset by what happened that he asked the Lord to take his life! He wanted to die! He didn't want these people spared. He wanted them destroyed. They were his enemies and he wanted God to judge them for their sins.

Jonah was unable to embrace the merciful, compassionate, heart of God for these people. He couldn't bless them and extend mercy to them. Jonah needed a heart transformation. He needed to be filled with the power of blessing. The power of blessing overcomes revenge and releases God's mercy. The Bible tells us, "Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy". (Matthew 5:7) It also says, "Be merciful just as your Father is merciful". (Luke 6:36)

As I repented and responded to the Lord, I began to discover ways that I could bless and serve those who had offended me. I committed myself to promote their ministries and to encourage people to attend their churches. I publicly commended the pastors of these churches and spoke well of them whenever I had the opportunity. As I took these steps of obedience I found a new release coming into my own heart and life. I was experiencing the Kingdom of God in my life. I found myself overcoming my natural desire to retaliate and to defend myself. Instead, I found myself filled with the compassionate and merciful love of God. I truly was experiencing the freedom that Christ came to bring. Finally, my journey of reconciliation was completed.

This testimony from my ministry life illustrates the power and the importance of The Power of Forgiveness, the Power of Humility and the Power of Blessing. These three principles need to be expressed in all of our relationships, especially our family relationships. The heart of the family is expressed by forgiveness, humility and blessing.

In response to this chapter, ask the Lord to show you what steps he wants you to take in these three areas.

1. Is he asking you to take a step of forgiveness? If so, take a few minutes and speak out forgiveness toward anyone who has hurt you in the past. Don't just speak out a general

prayer of forgiveness. Bring each offense to the Lord and let him release you from the pain of each individual memory.

2. Is he saying that a step of humility is necessary? If so, be willing to go to your spouse, your parents or your children and ask forgiveness for the specific things you have done that have hurt them.
3. Or is he encouraging you to extend blessing to someone who has offended you in the past? If so, speak out a blessing toward them. Look for ways that you can help them be successful. Whatever he shows you, do it. Your step of obedience will release God's blessing upon you and upon your family for generations to come.

Application Prayer

Father, reveal to me any areas of unforgiveness that still remain in my heart. Remove any roots of bitterness that have taken hold in my life. You have forgiven me so much and I want to respond with forgiveness to those who have hurt me and treated me in unjust ways. I give up any right of repayment that I have expected in the past. I fully release them and I cancel the debt they owe me. I pardon them in the way you have pardoned me.

Show me any steps of humility that I need to take to clear up offences in my family. I repent of defending myself and justifying my actions. Help me to overcome my pride. Show me the areas where I have hurt others and help me to express genuine sorrow for my actions.

Lord, I extend blessing to the members of my family. I commit myself to overcome insults and injustice by responding with acts of kindness. I determine to pray for those who have hurt me through their words and actions. I want to reveal your heart through responding in the way you did to those who mistreated you. In Jesus Name! Amen