

# Small Group Sermon Series: God Shapes us through Small Groups

1. Vision for Christian Community: Why we gather as Small Group
2. Connect: How do we grow and love one another in small group
3. Authentic community: Embracing Vulnerability and suffering together
4. The Transformative Power of Healthy Correction



# **Navigating Messy Relationships with Jesus as our Model**

Colossians 3:13

Ephesians 4:31-32

YM CT

23 February 2025





Think of an occasion where you have received an unkind word, been misunderstood, or ill-treated or excluded in some way.

**How did you feel?**





# RAGING CALIFORNIA WILDFIRE





## Wildfires can be useful:

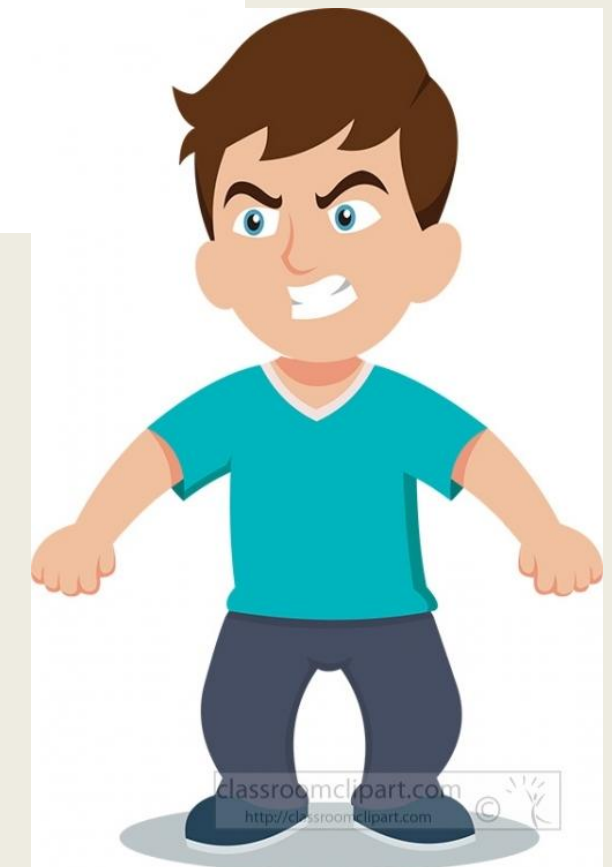
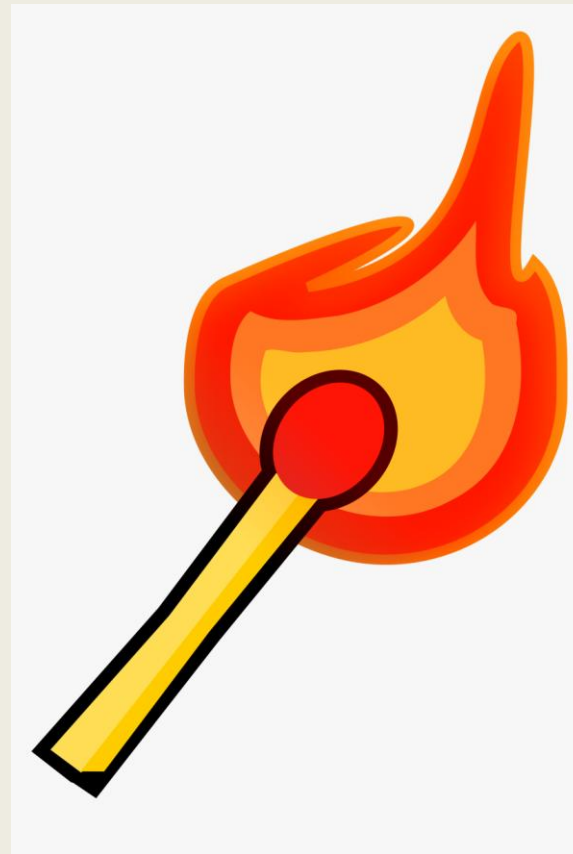
“Logs, leaves, ... pile up on the forest floor. Fire reduces this material to mineral-rich ash, releasing and recycling nutrients into the soil. Fire also creates openings in the forest. Sunlight penetrates these gaps, warming the soil and stimulating new growth from seeds and roots.”

"The Role of Fire", Parks Canada

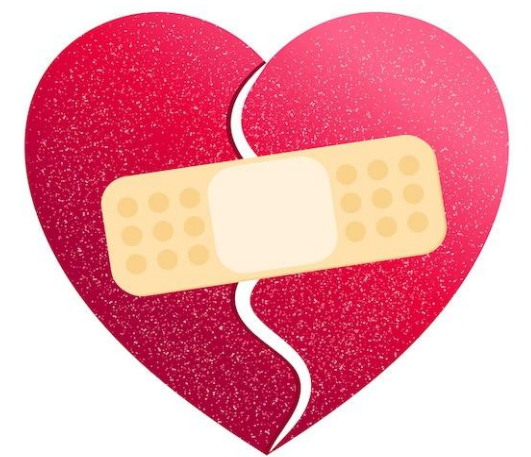
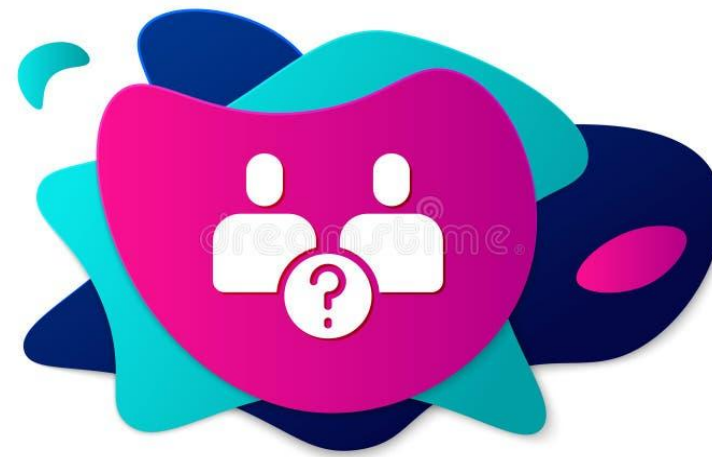
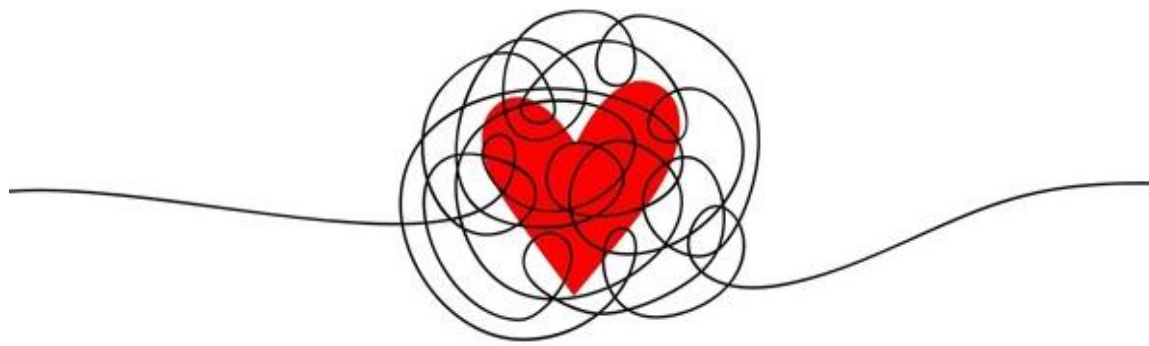
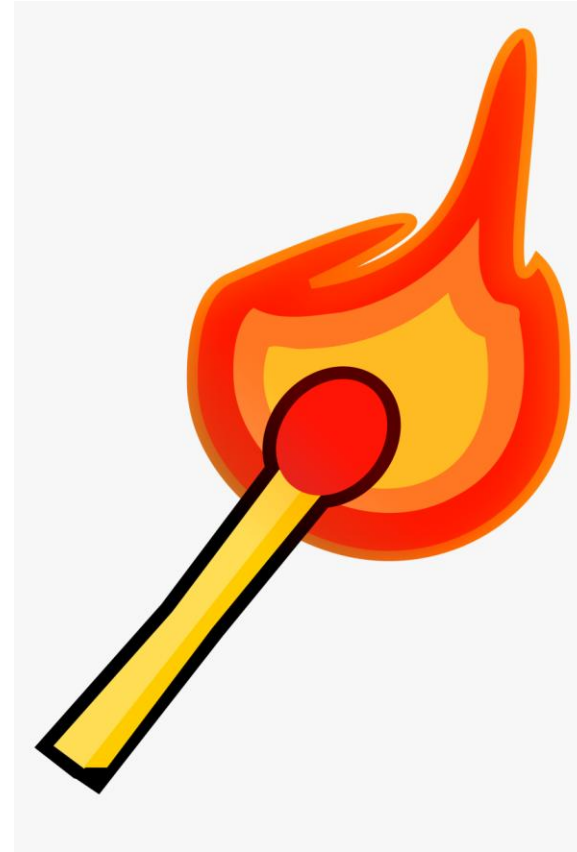
RAGING

CALIFORNIA WILDFIRE





**Misunderstanding**  
**Hurts**  
**Mis-hearing**      **Conflicts**  
**Miscommunication**





# 1. Embrace Forgiveness in Messy Relationships

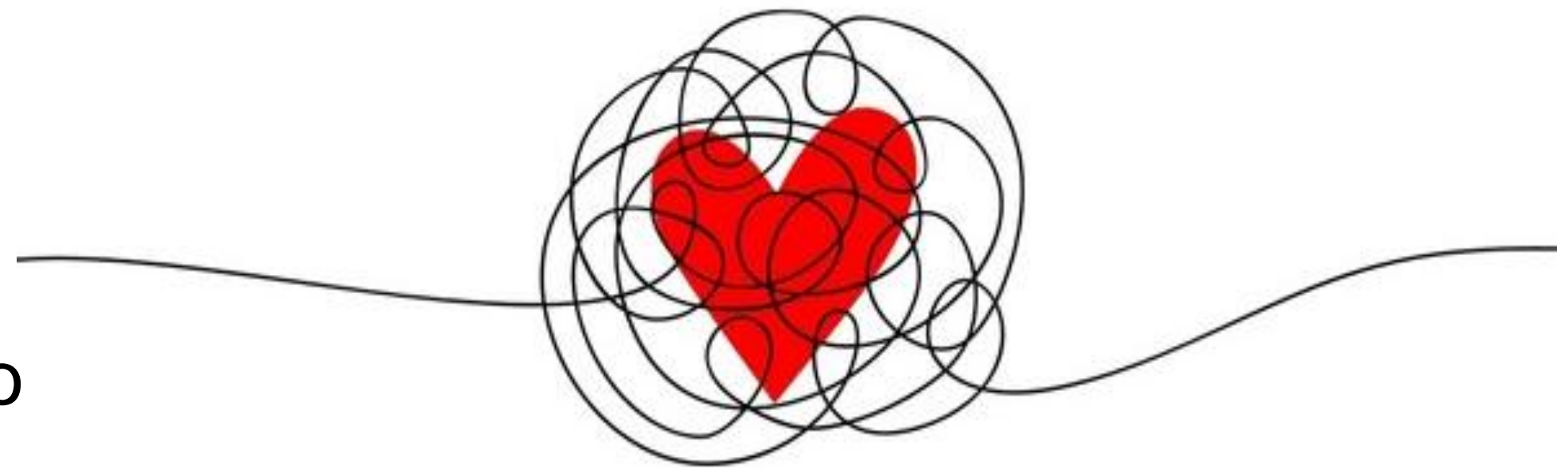
- Call to Bear with One Another and Forgive

"Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you." (Colossians 3:13)

- "Bear" or "forebear" - endure, suffer with, to sustain with
- "forgive one another" - to pardon or rescue

- Practice Bearing and Forgiving

- Accepts people – in present, imperfect
- Offers opportunity to give and to receive grace
- Leads to reconciliation





# What Does it Mean to Forgive?

- Not condoning sin
- Releasing resentment
- Trusting God for justice

"Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord."  
(Romans 12:19)
- Focus on Jesus our Example
  - Jesus came to live with His enemies

"While we were still enemies, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8)
  - Reconciled us to the Father





## 2. Extend Kindness and Compassion in Messy Relationships

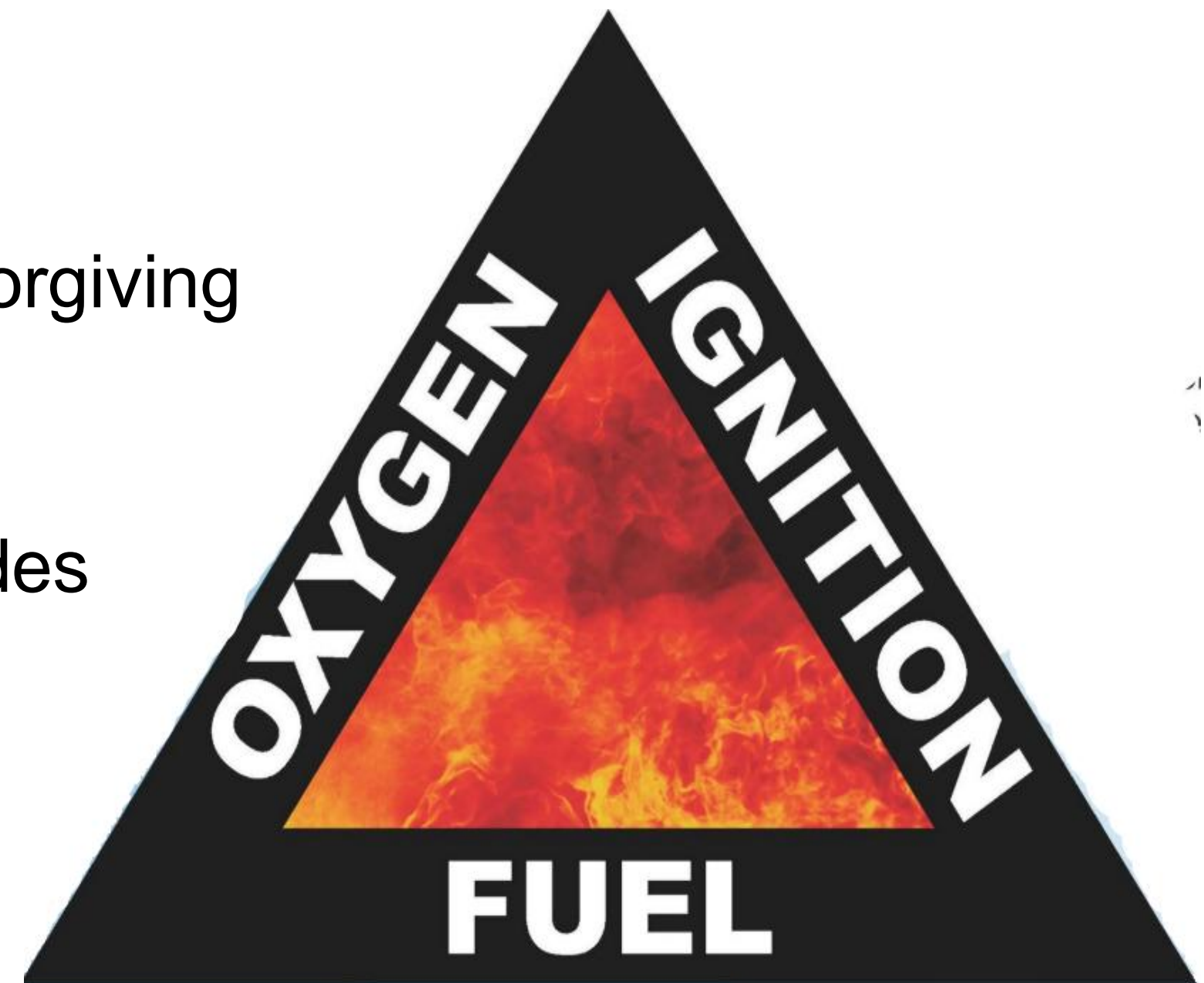
- Fuel for Fire that Destroys

"Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice." (Ephesians 4:31)

- Fuel for Fire that brings Life

"Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."  
(Ephesians 4:32)

- Replace Toxic Responses with Godly Attitudes
- Kindness - charitable, considerate
- Compassion or tenderhearted
- Forgiveness





### **3. Live Out God's Grace in Messy Relationships**

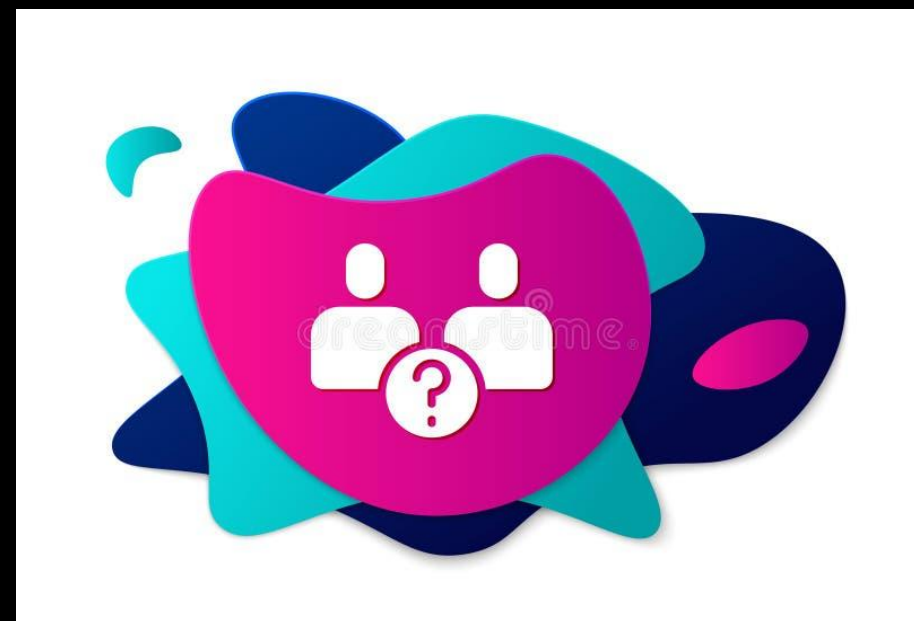


- **Extend Kindness with Healthy Boundaries**
- **Resolve Conflicts Biblically**



# What Healthy Boundaries Look Like?

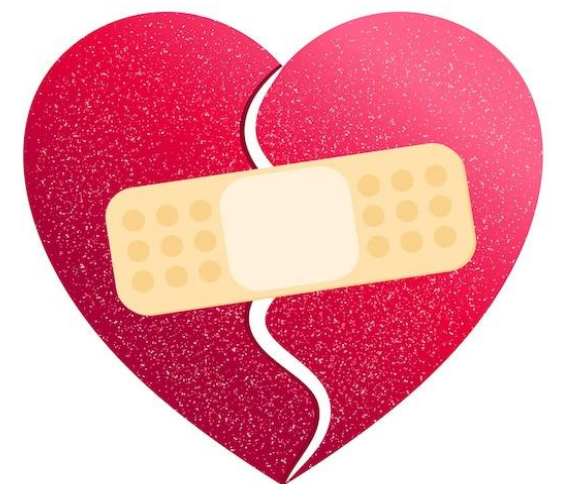
- **Physical Boundaries:**
  - What is appropriate and what honors God? Healthy Correction
  - Respect and not impose your norms and preferences on others
  - Foster relationships in a group setting, seek accountability e.g. connect groups
- **Emotional Boundaries:**
  - Build trust gradually, do not rely on a relationship to fill a void only God can fill
  - Seek to experience real friendship and relationship with God first and foremost
- **Spiritual Boundaries:**
  - Pray for each other
  - Keep your faith journey personal, not secret, but real to yourself
  - Do not let a relationship distract you from your relationship with God



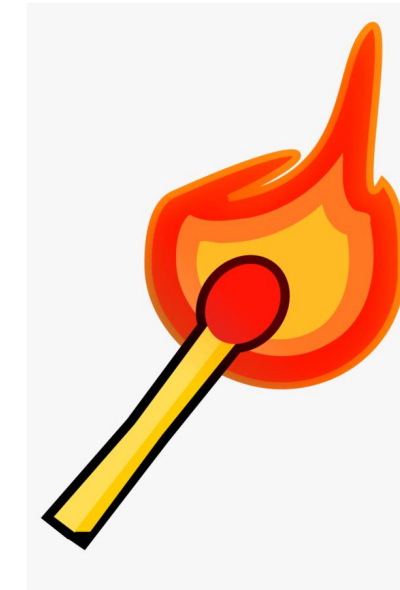
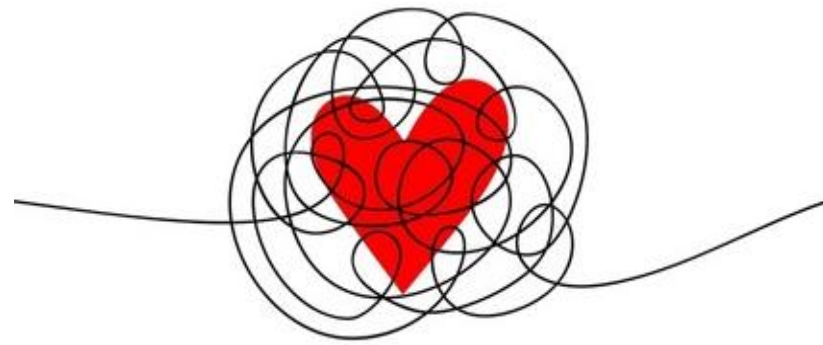


### 3. Live Out God's Grace in Messy Relationships: **Resolving Conflicts Biblically**

- Confront in Love:
  - “If your brother or sister sins, [or sins against you,] go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over.” (Matthew 18:15)
  - Address issues privately and humbly. (Healthy boundary, Healthy Correction)
- Seek Reconciliation:
  - The goal is not to win an argument but to restore the relationship.
- Pray for Healing:
  - Ask the Holy Spirit to soften hearts and guide conversations, especially our own heart.







- **Bear with one another, embrace forgiveness for one another**
- **Extend kindness and compassion to one another.**
- **Live out God's grace to one another**

# Broken Relationship





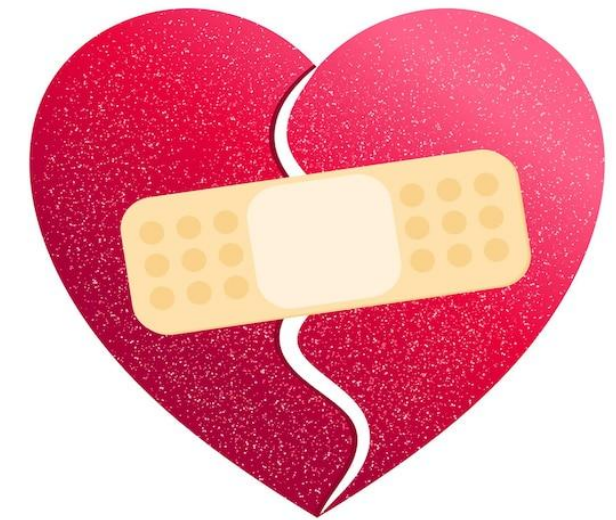


# When Hurt Feels Unbearable

- Bring your pain to God. He is the ultimate healer
- Remember that forgiveness doesn't negate justice; it leaves room for God to act (Romans 12:19)

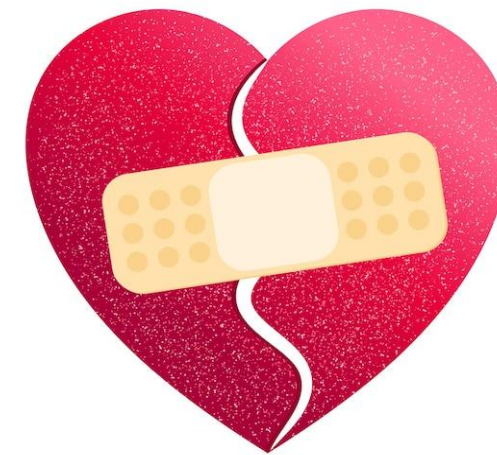


- Let His love and grace be your guide in navigating relationships



let's  
pray

# Heart's Desire





# Discussion Questions

## 1. [Understanding]

- [Lower] How does the bible encourage us to build relationships/friendships? Which verse from the bible encourages to build relationships/friendships?
- [Upper] What is the key to unravelling messy relationships? What does the bible say is the key to building and keeping relationships, resolving conflicts and keeping healthy boundaries?

## 2. [Sharing]

- [Lower]
  - Share your experience and challenges of:
    - » making friends in a new or existing environment; or
    - » keeping friendships where there is misunderstanding or differences of interest or conflict, and how you were able to resolve it, or how you could have resolved it.
  - What are some relationships that are important to you? How do you keep those relationships fresh and meaningful, like how do you build healthy boundaries or how have you extended kindness and forgiveness (give us an example)?
- [Upper]
  - What sort of struggles or conflicts have you encountered in your relationships, friendships, community, and how have you tried to resolve them?
  - Share an occasion where you have or have observed a broken friendship / relationship – how did you feel, do you feel there was something you could have done better or different in that situation?

## 3. [Application]

- What steps can **you** take to develop a forgiving heart?
- What steps can **we** take as a community to develop a forgiving culture?
- What steps can **we** take to be a community that builds and encourages one another to bear, to love, to extend kindness?