

STARTING OVER

PART 4: Release It

INTRODUCTION

We all have mistakes in our pasts—financial, professional, academic, relational. Unfortunately, we tend to learn from our mistakes in the areas that matter least and repeat our mistakes in the areas that matter most. Sometimes that's because we avoid owning our parts of a mistake. It's easier to blame others.

But once you've taken ownership of your part of a mistake, what do you do with the part owned by others? How do you get past the stuff other people have done to turn your life upside down?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever wronged someone accidentally or on purpose, then owned your actions and asked that person for forgiveness? What do you think taking responsibility for your actions did for that person?
2. Talk about a time when you've seen a person unable to get past a wrong done to him or her by someone else. In what ways did that person's inability to move on affect him or her?
3. Read Ephesians 4:26. Do you tend to resolve your anger quickly or do you have trouble letting it go? How does that affect your relationships? How do you think it affects the quality of your life?
4. During the message, Andy asked, *"How long do you intend to allow the people who mistreated you to influence you?"* Talk about a time when you've given someone power in your life by holding a grudge against him or her (even if that grudge was warranted by what that person did to you).
5. What are some obstacles to deciding not to drag the wrongs others have done to you into your future? What would need to happen for you to overcome those obstacles?
6. Who is one person you need to forgive—not necessarily for his or her benefit but for your future? What can you do this week to take a step toward forgiving? How can this group support you?

MOVING FORWARD

To ensure next time is better than last time, release the past so the past can release you. Pardon others as God has pardoned you. Decide they don't owe you anymore. That's not easy to do, but when you wait on others to make the first move, you hand them the keys to your future.

CHANGING YOUR MIND

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.

Ephesians 4:31-32