

### Introduction:

The foundation of a great family begins with a deep, intimate marriage.

### Three skills for a great marriage:

- Skill #1: \_\_\_\_\_
- Skill #2: \_\_\_\_\_
- Skill #3: \_\_\_\_\_

### Forgiveness – What it’s not and what it is:

- Forgiveness is NOT a quick fix or an excuse to be a “doormat” by repeatedly accepting hurtful behavior without addressing the root issues
- Forgiveness IS a spiritual discipline that involves three distinct parts:
  1. It’s a \_\_\_\_\_
  2. It’s a \_\_\_\_\_
  3. It actually is \_\_\_\_\_

**The parable of the unforgiving servant:**

*<sup>21</sup> Then Peter came and said to Him, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" <sup>22</sup> Jesus \*said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.*

*<sup>23</sup> "For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. <sup>24</sup> When he had begun to settle them, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. <sup>25</sup> But since he did not have the means to repay, his lord commanded him to be sold, along with his wife and children and all that he had, and repayment to be made. <sup>26</sup> So the slave fell to the ground and prostrated himself before him, saying, 'Have patience with me and I will repay you everything.'*

*<sup>27</sup> And the lord of that slave felt compassion and released him and forgave him the debt. <sup>28</sup> But that slave went out and found one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and he seized him and began to choke him, saying, 'Pay back what you owe.' <sup>29</sup> So his fellow slave fell to the ground and began to plead with him, saying, 'Have patience with me and I will repay you.' <sup>30</sup> But he was unwilling and went and threw him in prison until he should pay back what was owed. <sup>31</sup> So when his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were deeply grieved and came and reported to their lord all that had happened. <sup>32</sup> Then summoning him, his lord \*said to him, 'You wicked slave, I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. <sup>33</sup> Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave, in the same way that I had mercy on you?' <sup>34</sup> And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him. <sup>35</sup> My heavenly Father will also do the same to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart."*

Matthew 18:21-35

**Three-part method for forgiveness:**

1. **Act:** Choose to forgive.
2. **Process:** Actively pray and bless the person with your words and actions.
3. **Accomplished:** The true test of forgiveness is when you can genuinely rejoice in the other person's success and well-being.

### Discussion Questions:

1. In what ways do you find yourself wanting mercy from God but demanding justice from your spouse?
2. What is one specific hurt you need to make a conscious decision to forgive? What tangible step will you take this week to solidify that choice?
3. How does shifting your prayers from "God, change them" to "God, bless them" impact your own heart during a conflict?
4. Identify one specific, practical way you will actively "bless" your spouse this week through your words or actions. (*especially if you don't feel like it*)
5. The next time you're tempted to use a superficial fix to smooth over a conflict, what is a different action you can take to begin the actual work of forgiveness?