**Chapter 8**

**Redeeming the Roots of Shame**

Understanding Forgiveness Part 1



 The ultimate goal in the healing journey is to be able to leave the past behind along with the faulty messages we received that polluted our hearts and minds with the toxic effects of shame so that we can live the abundant life in Christ. However, leaving the past behind is never detached from forgiveness. That’s because to be free we must transfer Satan’s system of shame to God’s system of grace. How do we do that? It’s through the process of forgiveness. We must first accept God’s free gift of forgiveness, then extend forgiveness to others. It is the most essential ingredient in the healing process. Yet many people are shocked to come to terms with the fact that they have never truly accepted God’s forgiveness.

 As a group leader, you will begin to discern those in the group that have not fully accepted the free gift of forgiveness if they are very critical of self and others, or they may feel that they are not worthy of forgiveness. That’s because they lack grace. That’s why receiving our own forgiveness is so critical, for it is only through the forgiveness that we are reconciled back to God and experience the life-changing power of His grace. There is no true freedom without it. Encourage them in the truth of God’s Word. Jesus paid the price for all our sins by His precious shed blood for all our sins, past, present, and future - **TETELASTAI! IT IS FINISHED!!!** Make it a priority to pray for each other in the group.

The goal of the first part of this chapter is to help group members identify barriers preventing them from receiving the gift of forgiveness such as false guilt, unconfessed sin, anger at God, self-righteousness, etc. In other words, we will be focusing on our own sin. Next week we will focus on offering the gift of forgiveness to those who have hurt and sinned against us.

**Group Discussion:**

 The prayers on pages 166 and 167 may be used as a model for those who are struggling to receive God’s forgiveness or are ready to fully accept the gift of God’s forgiveness. This can also be a time that you pray for one another. The Self-Evaluation questions can also be used for group discussion. This is sensitive material, so please encourage group members to use discernment in sharing especially questions regarding confession of hidden sin.

**Self-Study:**

If you are struggling with receiving forgiveness, you can use the prayers on page 166 and 167 as a model prayer to ask God to unlock the barriers to forgiveness.

Answer the Self Evaluation questions on page 167 and ask God to counsel you in these areas and confess anything that is hidden that must be brought from darkness to light.

**Spiritual Growth:**

2 Timothy

Daily Psalm & Proverb Reading

Meditate on Hebrews 12:2, Colossians 1:13-14, Romans 5:8