

who created it. “Renewed” is a verb denoting action. What is the action? Literally it is “to restore to the original quality. What is that original? “The image of the One who created.”

You need to realize your Christian life began a renovation project that is not yet finished. This Greek word only occurs in 2 Corinthians 4:16 and Colossians 3:10, both times referring to God ever-transforming the believer – by *renewing* “the new man.”

Finding yourself locked in a repeating conflict cycle is like trying to move forward with the emergency brake on—lots of commotion but no motion. Others can advise, encourage, or push but until we release the brakes we will get nowhere. The brakes may be our pride or fear or anger or just poor habits of resolving conflict.

### **Let go of your “Trophy Hurts”**

Quarreling never opts for forgiveness. It always chews on the wrongs, slights, and grievances; it cherishes those “trophy hurts” from which we find justification for our obnoxious attitudes, sour facial expressions, curt rejoinders and forever frowns.

Proverbs 17:19, “One who loves wrongdoing loves strife.”

Proverbs 20:3, “Avoiding strife is an honor for a person, but any fool will quarrel.”

Proverbs 26:21, “Like charcoal to hot embers and wood to fire, so is a contentious person to kindle strife.”



### **Lesson Six: Speaking Forgiveness vs Rock Collecting** **Dalraida Church of Christ**

**John L. Kachelman, Jr.**

*“Be kind to one another, compassionate, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.” (Ephesians 4:32)*

Dr. Carney Looney, a Christian counselor, has said that most of us carry around what amounts to a sack full of rocks. Each rock represents a bitter resentment, an unforgiven grudge, an unresolved conflict with people. We save these, polished and ready, for just the right moment. Here is how they work...A husband and wife come home from a party— “How could YOU say such a STUPID thing?! I was mortified!” (She just lobbed a rock at him). “O yeah! What about that AIR-HEAD remark you made at church?” (Now he has just reached inside his sack and tossed a retaliatory rock.) Not to be outdone he reaches and pulls out the prize rock, “Okay, YOU asked for it! What about that time 15 YEARS AGO that you ...” And so, it goes on until the battle is over and they are emotionally exhausted and beaten. But they still have enough energy left to go around and pick up the thrown rocks and put them back into their sacks (and now they have a few extra to add!) Ready for the next round. How do you think they feel? Carrying around a sack full of rocks, all day, every day? Miserable, I am sure. Bitter, I am positive. The burden of unresolved conflict, of unforgiving spirits weighs them down!

### **Too many will not let go of their “trophy hurts”!!**

Jesus offers us “rest” (Matthew 11:28, 29). By surrendering to the Lord’s care and trusting in His will, we enjoy the blessings of Proverbs 3. Among these blessing is “sweet sleep.” (Proverbs 3:24). Those who will not “let go” of

resentments will be constantly thinking about the historic and memorable hurtful incidents and planning how to “get back.” They have a “trophy case” of historic resentments. These have no rest; only turmoil. In contrast with the blessed these “lay awake” focused on their irritations (Psalm 36:4).

One of the greatest disappointments in the Lord’s Church is the inevitable conflict that is present. Some conflict is good as it distinguishes between the godly and ungodly (1 Corinthians 11:19). However, most conflicts breed bitterness, nurse hurts and foster an unforgiving spirit (1 Corinthians 6:1-8).

### **The forgiveness principle stated (Matthew 18)**

God designed a two-way “forgiveness principle” to direct our lives. We are forgiven by God for horrible sins we have committed; then we extend forgiveness to others (Matthew 18:21-22). Jesus told a parable to illustrate the two-way forgiveness principle. He also highlights the language involved in the forgiveness principle (Matthew 18:23-35).

This is how God responds to our sins. This is how God responds to our small-hearts when we refuse to give forgiveness. God’s forgiveness has conditions that most ignore (Hebrews 8:12; Matthew 5:7 6:14-15; James 2:13).

There are reasons why we should give up our “rock collections.” When we follow these biblical guidelines, we will speak from our hearts the language of forgiveness; we will find rest; and, we will relish God’s forgiveness in our lives. The grateful heart causes us to offer forgiveness just as Jesus extended it to others.

We must never forget the fear of God’s wrath—because of His mercy I am saved from wrath (Romans 5:9), but He will not show mercy to the merciless (Hebrews 10:31).

### **Letting go of your Trophy Hurts**

First, resolve to be peaceable, not quarrelsome (Proverbs 17:19; 20:3; 26:21).

Quarreling never opts for forgiveness but it always chews on the wrongs, slights, and grievances; it cherishes those “trophy hurts” from which we find justification for our obnoxious attitudes, sour facial expressions, curt rejoinders and forever frowns. It is interesting to observe how some are genetically predisposed to embrace their “trophy hurts.” These are families whose pattern is criticism and conflict. Quarrelling’s chief culprit—PRIDE (Proverbs 13:10). BUT such is a personal choice!

Second, resolve to accept your responsibility in the conflict.

It is hard to admit wrong. Some will never admit their wrong, never apologize for their part of the problem and always demand you own the entire issue.

Proverbs identifies such a person is “vexing.” (1 Corinthians 6:7). Some are so controlled by selfish pride they cannot acknowledge any personal blame. So when faced with such a character, you do what you can do; you say what you can say and leave it to the Judgment Day where all will give an account for the words they have spoken! (James 5:16).

Third, resolve to accept each other “as is.”

Accepting another’s quirks and silliness is frustrating to some people. Here is a fact of life—you do not have to understand every detail about every situation—some are beyond understanding.

You do not need to become OCD in demanding “WHY?” some do certain things. Their vulnerabilities are different from your faults and you will never understand “WHY?” they do what they do.

If they have sinned, then the “Why?” is that Satan found their weakness and exploited it, just as he does with you!

If you think that your weaknesses are not exploited by Satan and consequently you commit daily sins, then read again Luke 18:11; Romans 15:7.

Fourth, resolve to be generous in forgiveness.

Consider God’s mercy toward you. You are not the “ideal” character. Consider God’s attitudes toward the unforgiving person (Ephesians 4:32).

Jesus is clear.

- ◆ Forgiveness is NOT an optional extra—it is essential! (Matthew 5:23-25).
- ◆ Remember—if you want generous forgiveness from God, you MUST be generous in forgiving others!

### **Purging the Rock Collection**

A Delaware Indian chief named Tedynscung was told of Christ’s “Golden Rule.” “It’s impossible. It cannot be done,” he said. Then he added, “If the Great Spirit that made man would give him a new heart, he could do as you say, but not (otherwise).”

God DOES offer each of us a “new heart.”

2 Corinthians 4:16, “Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer person is decaying, yet our inner person is being renewed day by day.” The older we become the MORE “renewed” our inner-person will become!

Colossians 3:8-10, “(Y)ou ... rid yourselves of all of them: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth. ... since you ... have put on the new self, which is being renewed ... according to the image of the One