

# How Happiness Happens

*"...Forgive one another as quickly and thoroughly as God in Christ forgave you." (Ephesians 4:32 - The Message)*

*"And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you." (Ephesians 4:32 - NKJV)*

Tenderhearted: malleable, soft, kind, responsive

Hard-hearted: cold, stony, unbending

## **Six steps to move from being hard-hearted to being tenderhearted:**

- 1) Decide what you need to forgive
- 2) Ask yourself why it hurts
- 3) Take it to Jesus
- 4) Tell your offender (if it feels safe)
- 5) Pray for your offender - "pray for those who persecute you" (Matthew 5:44)
- 6) Bury it in "The Moving On With Life Cemetery"

(NOTE: These steps are found in Max Lucado's book - How Happiness Happens)

*"Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me." (Psalm 51:10-12)*

## **Forgive and forget?**

*"Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression ... you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea." (Micah 7:18a, 19b)*

## **Devotional/Discussion Guide**

- Begin with prayer. If you are in a group, this is important and if you are by yourself, it is equally important. Ask God to guide your time.
- Think of examples you have seen, read about, or witnessed of people who have forgiven others and those who have not. What stands out to you about these people?
- How do you think a lack of forgiveness robs us of happiness? Has this ever happened to you? Share if you can.
- Today's Gospel reading is Matthew 18:21-35. Read it aloud if possible. Note a few things:

- The servant who was forgiven much could never have repaid his master but yet his debt was cancelled.
  - This same servant, however, couldn't extend the same forgiveness to a fellow servant who owed him much less. Why?
  - The first servant is then brought back before the king who has some harsh words and actions for him. What happens?
  - Jesus says at the beginning of the story that the "kingdom of heaven" is like this story. How so?
- Think about your own life. When has it been easy to forgive? When has it been not easy? When have you been tenderhearted and when have you been hard-hearted? Why?
  - Read the passage from Psalm 51 near the bottom on the other side. What does it mean to you?
  - Now read the passage from Micah at the bottom of the other side. What does this tell you about God?
  - Finally, read the Ephesians passage at the top of the other side. What does this mean to you? Who do you need to forgive?
  - Close your time with prayer. Pray not only for yourselves but for the needs of your group, family, this church and school as well please.