

Small Group Study Guide



April 17, 2016

Shaking off the dust

OPENING PRAYER

Gracious God, we are humbled when we think of how you showed your love and forgiveness in Jesus' life and sacrifice! Yet, we hold on so tightly to our own perceived wrongs and hurts. Guide us in learning how to forgive, how to put down the weapon of anger we wield. Help us to learn that holding our anger tightly within our hearts only poisons ourselves, not the one with whom we are angry! Guide us as we strive to bring about forgiveness for those who have hurt us. Help us to understand that, in turn, we will bring about healing for ourselves. Amen.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

Galatians 6:2-5

2Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ. 3For if those who are nothing think they are something, they deceive themselves. 4All must test their own work; then that work, rather than their neighbor's work, will become a cause for pride. 5For all must carry their own loads.



INTRODUCTION

The first step to finding peace in a relationship is to repent if you've done wrong or to forgive if you've been wronged. But no matter how badly you want peace, there are some relationships that may never be fully restored. It takes two willing parties in order to have peace in a relationship. The good news is that you can find peace *about* a relationship when you can't find peace *in* the relationship?

Some relationships become challenging when we continually feel like we need to go further but the more we reach out the further the other party moves away. In these situations it's important for us to set boundaries. The apostle Paul reminds us that God holds us responsible for helping to carry others' burdens. He doesn't hold us responsible for carrying others' loads. When we carry another person's load, we rob that person of experiencing the outcomes of his or her decisions. So establish boundaries in your relationships and be accountable to someone. Then you can find peace about the relationship.

QUESTIONS

- 1) Do you find it more challenging to give help to others or to receive help from others? How do you think that tendency has affected your relationships?
- 2) During the message, Pastor Eric asked, "When does my continual extension of assistance become irresponsible?" Have you ever had to wrestle with this question in a relationship? If so, what happened?
- 3) Was there ever a time when someone helped you carry a burden. How did that experience affect your relationship with that person? How did it affect your relationship with God?
- 4) Was there ever a time when you learned a valuable lesson because of negative consequences. What might your life look like now if someone had helped you avoid those consequences?

FINAL APPLICATION

Is there a "bad blood" relationship in your life in which reconciliation seems impossible? If so, what can you do to begin to set healthy boundaries in that relationship? How can this group support you?