

Why We Must Never Forget Even When We Do Forgive

Working for over 30 years with couples attempting to recover from serious marital sin, I have often heard one of them say, “Why can’t you just forgive and forget?” or “You’re holding onto the past. Can’t we start with a clean slate?” or, “God says love keeps no record of wrongs.” or “That we’re to forget the former things. Each day is a fresh start.”

Christian counselors are also guilty of using these same phrases with their clients, usually when the one who has been sinned against feels stuck and is unable or unwilling to be silenced and continues to bring up past offenses or hurts in the counseling session.

We must never forget the past because...

1. The past is instructive. The past reminds both sinner and sinned against that sin is always painful and destructive to someone. Remembering helps both of them stay aware that they never want to return to where they’ve been. It also keeps them stay vigilant so they won’t slide back into the old habit patterns that created the problem in the first place.

Tom, one of my clients, reminds himself every day that he is an alcoholic. To forget would mean disaster. One wrong decision could wreak havoc on his entire present life that he has worked so hard to rebuild. He attends weekly AA meetings and joined a men’s discipleship group where he remembers what it was like to be lost, drunk, hopeless and helpless and what it feels like to be rescued by Christ. He never wants to go back to his old life. Remembering he’s an alcoholic as well as a new creation in Christ, helps him know what to do when the lure for just one drink sings her deceitful song.

2. The past is often still the present. John swears he’ll never hit Sally again and feels insulted that she won’t let go of her “irrational fear”. He wants her to reconcile and trust him again. It’s true that John has not hit Sally for over eight months. But John continues to demonstrate attitudes and actions that are rude, selfish, and inconsiderate. He is consistently unable to empathize with Sally’s feelings and unwilling to hear her “no”.

John has not allowed his past to instruct him (about himself) but Sally has learned something from it. John may have learned not to hit her again (due to his fear of legal consequences), but Sally knows John’s heart has not changed. He continues to minimize his offenses, refuses to follow the counselor’s treatment plan, and is still ruled by his own desires rather than by Christ. Sally can’t and shouldn’t forget the past because if she chooses to stay with John (or is told by her counselor she must), their past as a couple will continue to be her present reality.

John demonstrates no new history (fruit of repentance) to give Sally any other data points in which to rebuild safety or trust. To trust his words when his behaviors don’t match them is foolishness, not godliness.

First in a series comprised from:
<https://leslievernick.com/blog/must-i-forget-to-forgive/>

JOURNEY TO UNDERSTANDING - Caledonia

Childcare Provided

These classes will help bring clarity and validation to what you are experiencing.

In-person only: 4:30 pm, Fridays.

Location: Contact selah.empowers@gmail.com or Bridget Nash* for info.

Mar. 22: Self Esteem

* Bridget@openchaircounseling.com

FACILITATORS



Vicki Williams



Bridget Nash, MA LPC



Shari Murdock

See page 2 for more class options!

SELF AWARENESS & REFLECTION - Byron Center
Childcare Provided

These classes will help bring clarity and validation to what you are experiencing.

Online and In-person: 7-8:30 pm, Wednesdays.

Location and Link: Contact selah.empowers@gmail.com or 616-510-6305

Mar. 20: Karpman Drama Triangle
Mar. 27: Stink'n Think'n
Apr. 3: Boundaries

Apr. 10: Emotional Disengagement
Apr. 17: Codependency/Trauma Bonding
Apr. 24: Children's Devel./Trauma

JOURNEY TO UNDERSTANDING - Online Only

This class is intended to expand your skills when dealing with difficult relationships.

Online Only: 10 am, Wednesdays.

Link: Contact selah.empowers@gmail.com or 616-510-6305

Mar. 20: Verbal/Emotional/Psych. Abuse
Mar. 27: Legal Advisor Kendra Ortega*
* 9:30-10:30 am this day only
Apr. 3: Characteristics of Abusers -1

Apr. 10: Characteristics of Abusers - 2
Apr. 17: Trauma and the Brain
Apr. 24: Financial Advisor - Lisa Dean

GROWING STRONGER TOGETHER - Byron Center

Childcare Provided

This class focuses on growth and healing.

Online and In-person: 7-8:30 pm, Wednesdays.

Location and Link: Contact selah.empowers@gmail.com or 616-510-6305

This week we will be discussing **Chapter One** of *I Don't Know Who I Am Anymore, Restoring Your Identity Shattered by Grief and Loss* by Carole Holiday. We are looking forward to uncovering new, rich spiritual truths that will help us reclaim our value, identity and incredible worth as we work through this book. Great awakenings and discussions awaits.

If you need a copy please reach out to Shirley Ritsema at shirleyr@selah-empowers.org or receive it in class.

FACILITATORS



Shari Murdock



Misty LaFree, LLPC



Erica Terry, Intern



Vicki Williams



Carol Bosch, LMSW



Elisabeth Richards

Selah Childcare
Byron Center
Location only



Shirley Ritsema

Don't miss the next pages with more info from Selah!

Group Agreement: We ask that everyone read the Group Agreement attached to the email. Attending the classes means you have read and agreed to the group agreement.

Childcare: Please let us know ahead of time if you will need childcare, however, we know schedules change, so if you don't get a chance to let us know before class that will be fine, too.

Safe Environment: We want to provide a confidential and safe environment for everyone to share and receive support. We also recognize that some material covered in this group is sensitive and can be triggering. Please practice healthy self-care and let us know if you are feeling overwhelmed or need to speak privately.

How Can We be in Prayer For You?

In Selah online and in person classes, facilitators often extend the opportunity for participants to share a prayer request. These are anonymously passed along to a team of individuals who are committed to praying over Selah, it's leaders and most especially for Selah participants. If you have a prayer request you would like to submit, please feel free to do so by dropping an email to shirleyr@selah-empowers.org. Your email will be handled with confidentiality, care, and covered in prayer!



Selah is grateful to be partnering with these local counseling centers:



The services and products noted below are those that Selah Empowers has become aware that may be useful given certain situations but are not intended to reflect an endorsement by Selah.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES



HYGIENE PANTRY

3500 Byron Center Ave (616)528-4014
Wyoming, MI 49509 lighthousewy@gmail.com

To locate a food pantry near you search:
<https://www.feedwm.org/findfood/>



Serving Hudsonville, Jenison & Grandville
Search <https://lovewm.org/>
to learn more.



Also known as "Love Inc."
To find one near you search:
<https://www.loveinc.org/find-your-love-inc/>

SAFETY



Search "Addalock" portable door lock on Amazon



Search Monsin Wedge Alarm on Amazon

If one of these items would help ensure your safety but you cannot afford one, please reach out to Selah!



mi.gov/agacp ag-acp@mi.gov 313-456-0190