

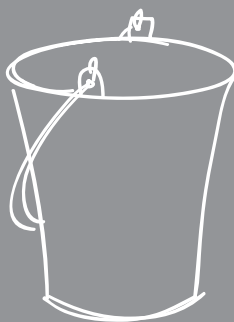
# (un)hurt



The Healing Power  
of Forgiveness

**DAVID SNAPPER** with  
**CHELSEY L. HARMON**

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Grand Rapids, Michigan

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# Foreword

Welcome to (Un)Hurt! Since 2001 when I first developed and began leading workshops on forgiveness, people have asked me many questions about forgiveness. Every week in grocery stores, clothing stores, and throughout the community, I have had the opportunity to explain how to forgive.

For example, one day a young woman I didn't know wandered into my study at church to explain that her boyfriend had kicked her out of his apartment. She told a story that included a decade of being dumped by three boyfriends, rejected by her father, and intimidated by her father-in-law. Alone in the world, she drove into our church parking lot, hoping to find help. After listening to her tale of hurt and rejection, the word that came to me regarding her situation was "shame"—a heartbreaking form of hurt. The following is a paraphrase of the conversation we exchanged that day:

"Are you ready to be done with the hurt you carry because of your shame?" I asked.

"Yes, I would give everything to not have to bear this shame and hurt," she replied.

"Everything?" I pressed. "Would you give everything?"

"I would give everything to not have this hurt," she said with sincerity.

"Would you be willing to forgive?"

"Who do I need to forgive?" she asked. She sat quietly, rocking gently in my great oak rocking chair, blankly watching the Washington rain drip from the gutters.

“I’ve been abused by many people, and I must forgive them,” she finally offered. “But it’s me. I have to forgive me.”

I gave her a copy of the material contained in this workshop and explained the basic concepts of the Christian faith. She left my office knowing there was hope for her situation.

The next day, while I was waiting at the pharmacy, the clerk asked how my day was going. Since she knows me, she asked what I was working on. The conversation quickly turned to (Un)Hurt. An elderly woman sitting next to me blurted out, “Yes, hurts last for decades! Do you do this workshop in a church? Will you advertise in the newspaper? How do you do this?” Before I could answer, her prescription was ready and she went on her way.

People want to share their hurt, and they are looking for help to ease their pain.

The reality is that everyone has been—or will be—hurt at some time in their life. The question is this: Do you know what to do with your hurt? Do you even know whom to forgive? And, more to the point, do you know *how* to forgive?

Forgiving is unnatural. For me, the learning process was painful and slow. With the help of many people, significant research, and a commitment to going beyond the trite “I forgive you,” I discovered forgiveness in a whole new way. I was finally freed from the painful emotions that had tormented me for so long. I learned what Jesus meant when he instructed his followers to forgive when someone sins against us.

It was a glorious gift, a liberating and life-changing decision, filled with power and joy.

On the day I had learned how to forgive, several truths became a reality in my life. I discovered that

- not understanding forgiveness left me trapped in emotions that were eroding the joy in my life. I wanted to forgive but did not know how.
- forgiveness can be taught and learned in a way that is life-changing.
- I can help others by teaching forgiveness from the Bible in a way that empowers anyone who is willing to forgive.
- Forgiveness is a great blessing from God. It is a gift to be able to finally put aside hurts that threaten to ruin lives, through the power and enabling of the Holy Spirit.

### **The Purpose of This Study**

The purpose of (Un)Hurt is to help you take these four action steps:

- identify the cause of your hurt
- quantify the magnitude of the debt owed to you by the person who hurt you
- choose to forgive that debt
- replace the debt/hurt/shame with the grace of God.

By the end of this journey, you will be equipped to experience the joy of forgiving and being forgiven.

God didn't make this complicated. You really *can* forgive. But what (Un)Hurt cannot do is undo your past. The hurts of your past are part of your present and your future. All of your life experiences, good and bad, have come together to make you who you are. Our goal is to help you accept your past and reduce or eliminate the pain it caused by forgiving the hurts that, if left unforgiven, will continue to hinder your future.



As you begin this journey, remember that (Un)Hurt *is* a journey, not a quick fix for your pain, hurts, and suffering. Though you may experience immediate peace and healing from learning how to forgive, we cannot promise that everyone will.

During this journey, you may also find that your hurts go deeper than you thought. If that is the case, please ask for help. Your small group and (Un)Hurt facilitator are probably not professional counselors and may not be equipped to help you work through your experiences and emotions. So if you find yourself overwhelmed, speak with your facilitator or pastor, or contact a reputable counseling agency. Ask others to pray for you as you work toward the healing God has in store for you.

Furthermore, if you find that a member of your small group is making you uncomfortable with what they are sharing, speak in private with your facilitator.

### **A Special Word about Emotions**

Some people worry that when they express their hurt, their emotions will boil over either in rage or in hopeless sobbing. Remember these important truths as we journey together:

1. Your emotions won't hurt you; they are a blessing and a gift from God. It is your fear of your emotions that may hurt you. Relax—you and your emotions are welcome in (Un)Hurt.
2. You won't embarrass your friends or group members if you share. People who know and love you will not be surprised or upset by your emotions, and your story may help someone else in the group who is struggling.

3. You are in a safe and secure environment. Even during small group discussion, you will never be asked to share anything against your will.
4. If you do get emotional, congratulations! Allowing honest emotions to be exposed to daylight is healthy. Whether you choose to express yourself in the privacy of your own home or in your small group, it is good to name your hurts. That's part of the healing and forgiving process.

### **How to Use This Study**

The (Un)Hurt workbook is your permanent reference tool. The workbook provides space for taking notes during the video presentations and will guide you in individual and group work. At the end of each session, there are At Home assignments meant to guide you in reflecting on the journey of forgiveness.

You will spend time working on your own throughout this process, since each session includes time for personal reflection and study. If you are committed to the process, your time will be greatly enriched. Be sure to bring something to write with, and if you know you like to write, bring extra paper to each session.

Small group discussion time will provide an opportunity to make new friends, enable you to learn from others, and give you space to share what God places on your heart regarding your progress on the road to forgiveness. You will not be asked to divulge anything you are not prepared to share, but you will find the small group session to be of great value.

The DVD video presentation during each session is essential to (Un)Hurt. The lessons will inspire and encourage you as you hear biblical accounts and my own story, and as you gain

a vocabulary to use on your journey toward forgiveness and healing.

### **God Is With You**

Perhaps the deepest issue we face is this: what will we do with our shame?

God has a magnificent answer for you. When you hear and know in your heart how God has dealt with your hurts and shame, that God's grace really is sufficient to cover the price of your sorrows, and that God has not abandoned you, you will understand that he has experienced every hurt with you and has taken them upon himself. He has been with you all the time. God takes your shame away. God has suffered; God knows and cares about your suffering. God is with you.

You have my greatest respect and affection. Anyone who ventures into the journey of (Un)Hurt has the courage of a hero of the faith.

David Snapper, Pastor  
Anchor of Hope Church  
Silverdale, Washington

# Guidelines for Participation

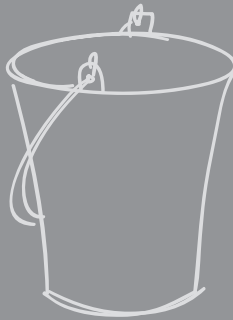
These rules are designed to create a sense of security, safety, and trust among members. Discuss them at the beginning of your first session, and take time to review them when you gather in your small groups.

1. **(Un)Hurt will start and end on time** out of respect for everyone involved. The facilitator will keep you moving along through each section. Please be on time for the sessions, and if you are going to miss a session, let the facilitator know.
2. **Commit to this journey.** Each week includes work that you are accountable for—even if the only person you are accountable to is yourself. Doing the At Home assignments and the individual activities is important. Bathe this time in prayer.
3. **It is always your decision to share.** Though each session includes small group work, you may choose to pass when it is your turn to share. If you find it difficult to share with the group, make sure you spend time writing your answers out at home. Also, be sure to listen intently as others share.
4. **Be honest, but consider the other people involved in your story.** You can work through your hurt without divulging all of the details of the original event. This is especially important to keep in mind when talking about people involved in the incident (including the offender). More important than the facts and details is your journey of discovery, your feelings, and your movement toward forgiveness.

5. **Don't squelch your emotions.** We hope that you experience the whole range of emotions, from tears to laughter. Even if it's uncomfortable, work hard to identify what it is you are feeling and why you are feeling it.
6. **Respect your fellow participants.** Maintain the utmost confidentiality by not repeating anything said by someone else in an (Un)Hurt session, and by making sure that everyone who wants to share has ample opportunity to do so.
7. **Resist the tendency to judge others.** You are here to listen to your fellow group members as they share their feelings and past, not to fix one another's problems or to decide whether somebody did something right or wrong. As difficult as this may seem, this also applies to the people who have hurt you and others.
8. **Your facilitator is here to help.** If you run into any problems or have any concerns that you do not feel are appropriate for your small group, then speak privately with your facilitator. He or she is here to support you on the journey.
9. **Ask for additional help if you need it.** If you encounter an issue that feels like it's too big to work through in this workshop, ask your facilitator or pastor to refer you to a trusted professional counselor.

# Session 1

## Bucket of Hurt



## Part 1 Introductions

As you embark on this journey, get to know your fellow participants as you take turns introducing yourselves.

## Part 2 Video: Bucket of Hurt (23 minutes)

*As you watch the DVD segment for Session 1, follow along in this workbook. Here you'll find the session outline, important definitions and quotes, and space for note-taking.*

### Introduction

Forgiveness is a spiritual discipline. That means that as we practice it, forgiveness and healing will meet resistance in our lives. David offers this prayer as we start our important journey:

Compassionate God, thank you for providing the way to forgiveness through your Son, Jesus Christ. We have tried to resolve the hurts in our lives on our own, but we know we can't do it without your guidance and without your grace. Thank you so much for the promise of peace that passes all understanding when we put our faith and our trust in you. Help each one of us to open our hearts and minds to you as we walk through your path of forgiveness. Amen.

## **David's Bucket of Hurt**

Do you have a bucket of hurt?

### **Definition of "Hurt"**

A hurt is anything that comes into your life that changes your view of yourself, or your view of the rules of the world, from a realistic view to an unrealistic view.



## **Velcro® and Points of Vulnerability**

How does a hurt change my view of myself?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

### **Three Choices for Dealing with Hurts**

1. Let them grow unmanaged in the hope of collecting on the debt owed to me.
2. Attempt to manage them, contain them, and keep them small.
3. Uproot them entirely through forgiveness.





In a week, how many times do you mention your bucket and its contents in conversation?

Do you joke about your bucket? Does it make you angry? What other emotions does your hurt cause you to feel?

In what places or situations are you most aware of the contents of your bucket?

How has your hurt changed your view of yourself?

How has your hurt changed your view of the rules of the world?

How do you ease the burden of your bucket of hurt?

3. Which of the three choices for dealing with hurt (letting it grow unmanaged, attempting to manage or minimize it, or uprooting it through forgiveness) do you usually employ? Why?

**Small Group Discussion** (15 minutes)

*In a small group of three or four, work through the following:*

1. Share one point of vulnerability that you can identify as a direct result of your bucket of hurt.
2. Which of the minimizing statements that David shared do you hear most often? What other minimizing statements you have heard from others?
3. How do minimizing statements make you feel? What effect do they have on your relationships, conversations, and attitudes?
4. Have you ever made a minimizing statement to yourself? Why? Did it help? Why or why not?

**Individual Work** (15 minutes)

*Working on your own again, review the six ways that hurt changes your view of yourself. Circle whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements, and write why in the space provided.*

**I'm uniquely vulnerable to future hurt.** Agree / Disagree  
(Example: I am extra-sensitive about crude jokes.)

**My hurt becomes my identity.** Agree / Disagree  
(Example: I think of myself as a victim.)

**My hurt cannot be removed.** Agree / Disagree  
(Example: I believe that my future relationships are tainted by what has happened to me.)

**I try to manage or cope with my hurt.** Agree / Disagree  
(Example: I live to just make it through today, trying to forget yesterday, not thinking about tomorrow.)

**I have become a fearful person.** Agree / Disagree  
(Example: I don't go out alone at night because I worry about my safety.)

**I seek to cover up my hurt.** Agree / Disagree  
(Example: I eat food to avoid talking about my hurt.)

**Review** (3-5 minutes)

*Take a few minutes to review today's session by writing your thoughts below.*

1. What do you want to remember from today?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Write a short prayer to Jesus, asking for his help to examine your hurts and empty the bucket you have been carrying with you.

**Part 4 At Home** (4 minutes)

**Assignment 1**

*Before leaving, watch the video segment "The Prisoner in the Coal Bin." Over the course of this week, read the story below every day, visualizing the person you would like to forgive.*

Up until about forty years ago, many homes in the Midwest had a room in the basement where coal was stored for heating the home. A truck would drive up to the home and dump a load of coal through a window or chute in the side of the house into the coal bin room. There it was stored until it was used. Later on, as natural gas displaced coal, that room was often boarded up because it was dirty, covered with carbon, and practically unusable.

Think of that coal bin room as a room in your heart that you don't enter very often. In that room you're keeping a

prisoner—the person who hurt you. You keep that person imprisoned in your heart because you want to be protected and kept safe from what has happened to you before. You keep him or her there as a punishment for the harm done to you.

That person lives in the basement of the home of your heart. Sometimes you hear your prisoner calling out to you. Maybe in the middle of the night, you hear that voice and you wake up with your palms sweating and your heart beating and you remember the original hurt. You know that your prisoner is still in your life.

Take a trip down to that coal bin and start the process of letting your prisoner go free. Walk across the dark parts of the basement, over to that room, and stand in front of the door you've reinforced with solid oak wood, extra hinges, extra locks—anything and everything you've been able to find to keep your prisoner from hurting you again.

Instead of hiding from your prisoner, name your prisoner, see your prisoner, speak directly to your prisoner. Say, "Hello prisoner. I've hated you for far too long. But I'm tired of taking care of you. I'm tired of having you in my house. I'm going to set you free one day. Not today, but one day I will set you free. And when I do, you are going to leave my coal bin; you will leave my house. You will leave my neighborhood and my city, and you will never come back."

*On a separate piece of paper, journal about the process of visualizing your prisoner. What do you feel? What do you think about? What do you hope to do with your prisoner? What do you feel capable of doing now?*



## Assignment 2

*Read the paraphrased story of Tamar below (you can also find this story in the Bible in 2 Samuel 13). After you read, answer the questions in the space provided.*

King David had a large family that included a son named Amnon; his beautiful half-sister, Tamar; and Tamar's brother, Absalom.

Amnon was obsessed with his sister Tamar, to the point of making himself sick over her. She was a virgin, so he couldn't see how he could get his hands on her. Amnon had a good friend, Jonadab, the son of David's brother Shimeah. Jonadab was exceptionally streetwise. He said to Amnon, "Why are you moping around like this, day after day—you, the son of the king! Tell me what's eating you."

"In a word: Tamar," said Amnon. "My brother Absalom's sister. I'm in love with her."

"Here's what you do," said Jonadab. "Go to bed and pretend you're sick. When your father comes to visit you, say, 'Have my sister Tamar come and prepare some supper for me here where I can watch her and she can feed me.'"

Jonadab's plan worked, and Amnon got Tamar alone in his bedroom. But when she started to feed him, he grabbed her and said, "Come to bed with me, sister!"

"No, brother!" she said, "Don't hurt me! This kind of thing isn't done in Israel! Don't do this terrible thing! Where could I ever show my face? And you—you'll be out on the street in disgrace. Oh, please! Speak to the king—he'll let you marry me."

But he wouldn't listen. Being much stronger than she, he raped her.

No sooner had Amnon raped her than he hated her with an intense hatred. The hatred he felt for her was greater than the love he'd had for her. "Get up," he said, "and get out!"

"Oh no, brother," she said. "Please! This is an even worse evil than what you just did to me! What will I do with my shame?"

But he wouldn't listen to her. He called for his valet. "Get rid of this woman. Get her out of my sight! And lock the door after her." The valet threw her out and locked the door behind her.

Then Tamar went away weeping and in great sadness. She found her brother Absalom, but he did not comfort her. Instead, he said, "Now, my dear sister, let's keep this quiet—a family matter. He is, after all, your brother. Don't take this so hard." Tamar lived in her brother Absalom's home, bitter and desolate.

King David heard the whole story and was enraged, but he didn't discipline Amnon. David doted on him because he was his firstborn. Absalom quit speaking to Amnon—not a word, whether good or bad—because he hated him for violating his sister Tamar.

Two years went by and Absalom plotted his revenge. He put together a huge banquet and convinced King David to send all of his sons to the party. Then, waiting until Amnon let his guard down, Absalom gave the order for him to be killed. King David mourned for his son Amnon, and Absalom fled the kingdom.

—adapted from 2 Samuel 13, *The Message*

1. Who is guilty in this story? What are they guilty of?
2. What hurt went unresolved, and for whom?
3. What did their unresolved hurt cause them to do?
4. Who needed to practice the spiritual discipline of forgiveness?
5. What was done for Tamar? What do you think or feel about her role in the story?

# You can experience the healing power of forgiveness.

We all know we should forgive others, because Jesus told us to. But sometimes the hurt seems too big, or we just don't know where to start. That's where *(Un)Hurt* can help. In this practical, biblical workshop, pastor David Snapper guides you through four action steps:

- identify the cause of your hurt
- quantify the debt owed to you
- choose to forgive that debt
- replace the debt, hurt, and shame with the grace of God.

This workbook includes small group discussion questions, guidance for doing individual work during the workshop sessions, and at-home assignments that will help you understand how forgiveness works.

David Snapper has been pastor of Anchor of Hope Church in Silverdale, Washington, since 1984. For fifteen years he has been teaching individuals and leading workshops on how to completely forgive the people who caused hurt in their lives.

Chelsey L. Harmon is associate pastor of Christ Community Church in Nanaimo, British Columbia.