**Exercise #4**

 **Couple Assignment on Forgiveness**

You have just listened to my video teaching on Forgiveness. The reality is that I have only just scratched the surface. I have no way of knowing the issues you are dealing with but I do want to give some practical guidance on “**Moving forward with Forgiveness.”**

First here are some Candid Questions for Review:

1. Are you both doing the communication exercise with the 3x5 cards? You can vary it up, add to that list and think of all sorts of ways to express positive affirmation for each other.
2. How about with listening? Have you practiced your listening skills? Remember that is where you verbalize back to your partner what you have heard them say. Of course the next part becomes obvious; “ How have you responded to what you have heard your partner asking you to do?”
3. What about areas of conflict that need to be resolved? Have you taken the initial steps to plan a time and date to discuss those thorns in your relationship?

 Now why did I repeat all of that? Because, when those three areas are a regular part of your relationship it will make the area of Forgiveness easier to navigate. I liken it to when I go to the Chiropractor. Before he adjusts me he puts a vibrating massage machine on my back to loosen the muscles before he makes the adjustment.

 Choosing to forgive is like having a major adjustment. Your saying; “ I am not going to be held captive by feelings of bitterness or pain. I am choosing to forgive even if my partner doesn’t change. I am not going to let anger control me any longer.

(Warning: This is not for Wimps)

A practical exercise to start you both moving forward.

1. Give careful thought to one or at the most two issues that you need to forgive your partner for. Tell them specifically what you are forgiving them for and that you are now encouraging them to move out from the shame or blame that they may be feeling.
2. Once you have heard what it is that you are being forgiven for – express your sincere sorrow for the pain you have caused. You should say something like this; “I am truly sorry for the pain (name what it is that you have done) that I have caused you – it was wrong what I did, how I spoke and the way that I have perpetuated your pain. Please forgive me.” Moving forward this is what I intend to change to demonstrate that I am truly repentant. I am not perfect but will not make excuses for my behavior any longer.

Your action list demonstrating changed behavior for your spouse.

1. I will stop doing \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. I will start doing \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. These will be the ways you will recognize that I am serious about what we have discussed.

 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

After each of your have shared your list it is important that you give words of hope and reinstatement to each other. A hug or kiss is important at this point rather than a cold shoulder. For those of you who practice prayer as part of your relationship – this is a good place to pray for the emotional healing for the pain that has been caused.