



WEEK 4

WORK FOR RESOLUTION

HAPPY START

There's a difference between luggage and baggage. Luggage is what we bring with us to go on a trip (hopefully to a happy spot). Baggage is what we carry with us as a result of living in a broken world. However, there are some similarities between the two. The longer the trip, the more luggage we bring; and the longer we've lived, the more baggage we tend to carry, whether it's a heavy issue resulting from something we've done or something done to us.

Our past is part of our story—we don't need to run from it, excuse it, dull it, or ignore it. But if we're not careful, it can weigh us down. Healthy people have figured out a way to not hold onto painful baggage for too long. They address it, knowing that carrying it around without resolution will keep them from soaring in life.

- ☺ When you travel, are you a heavy packer or a light packer? Explain why you do what you do.
- ☺ Is it easy for you to live free in the moment, or are you someone that thinks a lot about the past and/or the future? Why?

HAPPY NOTES



Watch this week's video now. Use the space below to take notes. (Or doodle—whatever works best for you!)

HAPPY FACT



Studies have shown that letting go of grudges, bitterness, and relational baggage can reap huge health benefits. Forgiveness can lead to:⁷



7. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/in-depth/forgiveness/art-20047692> and <https://www.care2.com/greenliving/7-proven-health-benefits-of-forgiveness.html>

HAPPY CHAT



READ EPHESIANS 4:31-32.

- ☺ What does the Apostle Paul tell us to do in this passage? What do you think he means when he says to “get rid” of these things?
- ☺ In your experience, is getting rid of bitterness and forgiveness a one-time decision or a long-term process? Explain.
- ☺ When it comes to unresolved conflict, there is always at least one other person involved. What have you learned about your responsibility (what you can control) and your limitations (what is out of your control) when it comes to addressing the other person?

NOW READ PHILIPPIANS 3:3-14.

- ☺ What are some of the past successes Paul mentions in this passage? What are some of his past failures that could have become sources of shame for him?
- ☺ What can we learn about Paul’s view of his past? How did his perspective on life help him not get stuck in shame?
- ☺ What should our goal be according to Paul? How should this goal shape the way we view our current struggles, hurts, relational baggage, and areas of shame?

- ☺ It’s easy to live in “avoidance-mode” because it’s hard to dig into tough stuff. However, we often don’t realize until later how much of an effect carrying past baggage has on us. If you are comfortable sharing, have you ever found incredible healing or relief once you decided to address something hard? What did you learn about the pitfalls of “avoidance-mode”?
- ☺ If you are honest, are you carrying around baggage with you—an area of shame, resentment, or guilt from something you’ve done or something done to you? If you are comfortable, share with the group. Are you addressing the baggage, or are you stuck?
- ☺ All of us struggle with feelings of guilt, resentment, bitterness, and shame, particularly around our past failures or weaknesses. What have you learned about actively addressing those feelings in a healthy way?

Close by praying. Ask God to remind you of His grace, presence, and power, particularly in areas of guilt, shame, and conflict. Pray for wisdom in how to address baggage so that it doesn’t weigh us down or get us stuck. Also, encourage each other to do the Happy Step (found on the next page) and the daily devotions throughout the week.

HAPPY STEP



SPADE EXERCISE

Far too often, we don't make time to care for our emotional well-being. The following tool is a way to exercise your emotional muscles. Set aside 15 minutes today to go through it as a way to explore some helpful and healthy self-care practices.

SILENCING: BEING STILL AND MINDFUL

Use the 15 minutes to be still and sit in silence. Allow the time and space to become mindful of what's going on in your emotional state. You might find it's hard to focus—that's okay, it takes practice. But try to re-focus back on what you are currently feeling.

PRESSING: LEANING INTO PAIN AND EMOTIONAL DISCOMFORT

If you're doing it right, sitting in silence will allow space for discomfort, even pain, to arise. This is why many of us don't sit still for too long or find distractions; we want to avoid the pain that tends to pop up in moments of silence. However, in these 15 minutes, when uncomfortable emotions or pain surface, press into it.

The SPADE tool was developed by Pastor of Counseling Ly Tran, LPC. For more information about this tool and other helpful resources, visit www.watershedinitiative.com/28-days.

ANCHORING: GROUNDING INTO TRUTH

Engaging pain can feel overwhelming and hopeless. When we press into pain, we need to re-anchor ourselves by thinking about what is true and what isn't. What is true and untrue about who you are, your relationships, and those you love? Many times, when we press into pain, we discover how much our emotions are driven by thoughts that are untrue.

DISCOVERING: BEING CURIOUS WHILE EXPERIENCING PAIN

There are plenty of things to learn when we lean into pain. Why do you feel the way that you do? What does that feeling say about how you see yourself or the others around you? When else have you felt that way, and is there a theme throughout your life when it comes to that feeling?

EXPRESSING: VERBALIZING INSIGHTS AND DISCOVERIES

This last part is the culmination of all the others. Something incredibly healing happens when you talk about what you've learned. So, after the 15 minutes of silence and pressing into pain are up, write down any new discoveries. Process any insights that surfaced. You may decide to talk with a loved one, close friend, or counselor. Either way, put your thoughts into words.

Take a few minutes to journal below what surfaced during the 15-minute SPADE exercise.



HAPPY DAYS



DAY 1

READ JAMES 1:19-20

Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.

REFLECT

Be slow to speak today. And ask God to help you address any anger you are carrying with you.

DAY 2

READ 1 PETER 5:8

Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

REFLECT

There is an enemy that wants us to think wrongly about ourselves and each other. Be alert!

DAY 3

READ HEBREWS 12:14

Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy.

REFLECT

What would it look like for you to strive for peace with everyone today?

DAY 4

READ 1 JOHN 1:9

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

REFLECT

We don't need to carry shame from our past. God is faithful! When we confess, He forgives.

DAY 5

READ ROMANS 12:19

Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord.

REFLECT

God is just. Trust Him today to right the wrongs in your life and our world.

REFLECTIONS:
