

A Study Guide for

“Let it Go: Path to Peace”

Crosspointe Marriage | Class 6

***Vision:** To build strong marriages with a foundation in Christ.*

***Mission:** Mentor, encourage, and support marriages through Biblical teaching and guidance.*

Ice Breakers

- **The Environment You Are Building:** Think honestly about the hurt you have quietly stored over the years. What kind of environment is that creating for you? Is it peaceful? Does it make you a pleasure to be around? Does it lift you or your marriage up?
- **That Couple:** Have you ever met a couple where one wrong word felt like it could set everything off, as though they were trapped in something that would surely end badly? Have you ever taken a long look at your own life and realized that couple might be you?
- **A Term Worth Knowing:** Had you heard the phrase “hurt locker” before? Before you read any further, picture a locked metal box holding every offense you have never resolved. What do you imagine is inside yours?

Key Scripture Passages

- **1 Peter 3:1–7** – Peter calls wives to a conduct that reflects Christ and to an inward beauty, the “hidden person of the heart” with a gentle and quiet spirit that is precious in the sight of God. He calls husbands to dwell with their wives with understanding and honor, and he names both spouses “heirs together of the grace of life,” so that their prayers are not hindered.
- **1 Peter 3:8–12** – Be of one mind, compassionate, tenderhearted, and courteous. Do not return evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but bless instead, because you were called to this so that you may inherit a blessing. Refrain your tongue from evil, turn away from evil and do good, and seek peace and pursue it.
- **Psalms 34:11–14** – The passage Peter quotes. David teaches that whoever desires life and good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from deceit, depart from evil, do good, and seek peace and pursue it.
- **Ephesians 4:25–32** – Paul tells us to put away lying and speak truth, to be angry without sinning, and to refuse to let the sun go down on our wrath. No corrupt word should leave our mouths, only what builds up. Bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, evil speaking, and malice grieve the Holy Spirit and must be put away, replaced by kindness, tenderheartedness, and forgiveness “even as God in Christ forgave you.”
- **Hebrews 12:15** – A warning to watch carefully that no root of bitterness springs up and causes trouble, defiling many. Bitterness left in place never stays contained to the person holding it.
- **2 Peter 1:3–4** – God’s divine power has already given us everything we need for life and godliness. No person can supply the acceptance, identity, security, and purpose that only Christ provides.

The Big Picture

Something happens to us when we allow hurt to get stored in our hearts. Ask yourself what kind of environment that storage is creating. Is it peaceful? Does it make you a pleasure to be around? Does it lift

you or your marriage up? Stored hurt creates a very closed and troubled life. It builds a mental and spiritual prison that seems like there is no escape. In our last lesson we learned that the heart is a storehouse and that whatever you keep storing eventually comes back out. This lesson looks squarely at one thing many of us have been storing for years: hurt.

“Hurt locker” is a military slang term for a state of severe physical or emotional pain, a place of ultimate damage, or being trapped in a dangerous situation you cannot easily escape. The phrase first appeared in print in the mid-1960s, describing troops facing heavy combat pressure in the Vietnam War, and it gained global fame through the Academy Award-winning film *The Hurt Locker*, which follows an American bomb squad in Iraq and captures both the danger of an exploding bomb and the deep mental trauma the soldiers carry. Sports writers borrowed it for an athlete who is badly hurt or a team having a rough time. A marriage hurt locker is the collection of unresolved hurts and offenses a couple carries until they become emotionally explosive, making it difficult to experience the peace and restoration God desires for their marriage. We all have a place in our hearts and minds where we store the hurt that occurs in our lives, and most of us have a special one reserved just for the hurts in your marriage. Some of what is in there is baggage we brought with us, hurt our spouse never caused, picked up because we asked people to give us the acceptance, identity, security, and purpose that only Christ can supply. The rest is marriage-specific: unmet expectations, broken trust, harsh words, pride, unforgiveness, bitterness, resentment, disappointment, comparison, and keeping score.

Every marriage has sparks. An argument, a sarcastic comment, a forgotten commitment, stress, money, the kids, a bad day. Those sparks are real, but the spark is not what destroys marriages. The spark only matters because of everything already stored inside the locker. A healthy marriage is not one that never has sparks; every marriage has disagreements, misunderstandings, and moments of frustration. Couples who pursue peace simply stop filling the locker and continually disarm the bombs before the next spark has a chance to ignite them. That disarming never happens by avoidance or by ignoring the hurt. Like anything else God tells us to do, peace has to be sought and pursued intentionally. Peter shows us how: treat your spouse with honor because the two of you are heirs together of the grace of life, refuse to return evil for evil, bless instead, and seek peace and pursue it. Paul shows us what has to go: bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, evil speaking, and malice, all of which grieve the Holy Spirit because they make peace impossible. This class is not about the easy idea of “letting things go.” It is about actively pursuing peace, and it ends with good news. Your marriage does not need to be lifted up. God has already established it in a way that, done His way, could never be lifted higher. You only need to choose His way and be set free.

Group Discussion Questions

- Stored hurt creates a closed and troubled life, a kind of mental and spiritual prison. What environment has your stored hurt been creating at home, and where does it feel like there is no escape?
- If your marriage hurt locker were opened and its contents laid on the table today, what would honestly be inside? Do you have a separate locker reserved just for the hurts in your marriage?
- Some hurt is baggage that came with you and was never due to your marriage. Which of the four basic needs (acceptance, identity, security, purpose) have you been asking a person to supply that only Christ can give?

- Look at the common contents of a locker: unmet expectations, broken trust, harsh words, pride, unforgiveness, bitterness, resentment, disappointment, comparison, keeping score. Which two or three are actually stored in yours, and which one have you never named out loud?
- What usually sets off the hurt you are storing? Compare the size of the spark to the size of your reaction. What does that gap reveal about what is already in the locker?
- Peter does not say “treat her well so she will treat you well.” He says treat her well because she is your co-heir. In your last disagreement, were you trying to win an argument or protect a relationship God Himself has joined and blessed?
- Paul lists bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, evil speaking, and malice as things that grieve the Spirit because they make peace impossible. Which one is still stored in you, and which pursuit (initiating reconciliation, forgiving, releasing offenses, refusing retaliation, choosing blessing, removing bitterness) is God asking you to begin?

Closing Challenge

- Take an honest inventory of your locker. On your own, write down every unresolved hurt or offense you have been storing, including the ones you have never said out loud. Do not edit the list to make it look better.
- Separate the baggage from the marriage hurt. Mark which items came with you before the marriage and which your spouse actually had part in, and bring the first group to Christ rather than to your spouse.
- Name your sparks. Identify the two or three things that most reliably set you off, and agree together on what each of you will do differently the next time one shows up.
- Disarm one bomb this week. Choose a single offense and take a concrete step: forgive it, initiate the reconciliation, release it, or refuse the retaliation you have been rehearsing.
- Trade the question you have been asking. Instead of “How can I get my spouse to bless me?” begin each day with “How can I become God’s blessing to my spouse today?”

Personal Action Steps

- Read 1 Peter 3:1–12 slowly, then read Psalm 34:11–14, the passage Peter is quoting. Ask God to show you which command you have been skipping.
- Write out what is in your own hurt locker. You do not have to show it to anyone. Bring the list to God and ask Him which item He wants dealt with first.
- Identify the need you have been outsourcing. Ask which of the four (acceptance, identity, security, purpose) you keep demanding from your spouse, and read 2 Peter 1:3–4 until it stops being a verse and starts being your anchor.
- Hold your heart against Paul’s list in Ephesians 4:31: bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, evil speaking, malice. Name what is still there and confess it rather than storing it.
- Practice refusing to let the sun go down on your wrath for one week. When something is unresolved at the end of the day, address it or release it before you sleep.
- Choose blessing in one specific place. Pick the offense you are most tempted to repay and decide in advance what blessing you will give instead.

- Memorize 1 Peter 3:11 and pray it before hard conversations, especially in the moment when you feel the spark and want to reach for the locker.

Memory Verse

“Let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it.” – 1 Peter 3:11 (NKJV)

Main Themes

Theme 1: Down in Your Heart

This lesson begins with a question rather than a lecture: what actually happens when we allow hurt to get stored in our hearts? Look at the environment it creates. Is it peaceful? Does it make you a pleasure to be around? Does it lift you or your marriage up? For most of us the honest answer is no. Stored hurt produces a very closed and troubled life. It builds a mental and spiritual prison that seems like there is no escape, and the walls go up so gradually that we mistake them for normal. The previous lesson taught us that the heart is a storehouse and that whatever is repeatedly stored becomes the treasure we draw from. This lesson simply asks what happens when the thing being stored is pain.

Personal Reflection

- What environment has your stored hurt been creating in your home over the last year?
- Would the people closest to you say you are peaceful and a pleasure to be around, or guarded and easily set off?
- Where does your situation feel like a prison with no escape, and what would you have to admit before you could start looking for the door?

Theme 2: The Hurt Locker

“Hurt locker” is a military slang term meaning a state of severe physical or emotional pain, a place of ultimate damage, or being trapped in a dangerous situation you cannot easily escape. It first appeared in print in the mid-1960s, describing troops under heavy combat pressure in the Vietnam War, and it reached a wider audience through the Academy Award-winning film *The Hurt Locker*, which follows an American bomb squad in Iraq and portrays both the physical danger of an exploding bomb and the deep mental trauma the soldiers carry. Sports writers use it for an athlete who is badly hurt or a team having a very rough time. A marriage hurt locker is the collection of unresolved hurts and offenses that couples carry until they become emotionally explosive, making it difficult to experience the peace and restoration God desires for their marriage. We all have a place in our hearts and minds where we store the hurt that occurs in our lives, and most of us keep a special one reserved just for the hurts in our marriage.

Personal Reflection

- If your locker were opened today and everything laid out where your spouse could see it, what would be inside?
- Do you keep a separate locker just for your spouse’s offenses? What does it say about your heart that this is the one you keep most carefully?
- Which stored hurt is closest to becoming explosive, and how long has it been in there?

Theme 3: Baggage You Brought With You

Not everything in the locker was put there by your spouse. Some hurt came with you. This is exactly why the relationship with Christ from Class 1 matters so much: nobody in this world can give you what you need for acceptance, identity, security, and purpose. Those four needs are real, and God intends to meet them Himself. Yet because we keep trying to get them from the people around us, we collect wounds along the way, and then we carry that collection into marriage and hand our spouse a bill they were never able to pay. Naming this baggage is not an excuse. It is the first honest step toward taking the right needs to the right place.

Personal Reflection

- Which of the four needs (acceptance, identity, security, purpose) have you handed your spouse to carry?
- What hurt did you bring into your marriage that your spouse never caused, and how often does it still color how you read their words?
- What would change in your marriage this month if you truly believed that God has already given you everything you need for life and godliness?

Theme 4: Naming the Marriage Hurt

Once the baggage is separated out, there is still the marriage-specific hurt to face. The most useful way to do this is privately and in writing, because the point is honesty rather than accusation. The usual contents are familiar: unmet expectations, broken trust, harsh words, pride, unforgiveness, bitterness, resentment, disappointment, comparison, and keeping score. Reading a list like that is easy. Writing your own is not. But nothing gets disarmed while it is still unnamed, and every item you refuse to name stays armed in the dark.

Personal Reflection

- Which two or three items from that list are genuinely in your locker right now?
- Which one have you never named out loud, even to God?
- What do you fear would happen if you brought it into the light, and what might actually happen instead?

Theme 5: It Only Takes a Spark

Ask any couple what sets off their stored hurt and the answers come quickly: an argument, a sarcastic comment, forgetting something, stress, money, the kids, a bad day. They are all right, and those things really are the spark. But the spark is not what destroys marriages. The spark only matters because of everything that has already been stored inside the locker. A healthy marriage is not one that never has sparks. Every marriage has disagreements, every marriage has misunderstandings, and every marriage has moments of frustration. The difference is that couples who pursue peace stop filling the locker and continually disarm the bombs before the next spark ever has a chance to ignite them. That disarming does not come through avoidance or through ignoring the problem. Those only bury the explosives deeper. Just like anything else God tells us to do, peace has to be sought and pursued intentionally.

Personal Reflection

- What sparks set you off most often, and how does the size of your reaction compare to the size of the spark?

- Have you been disarming, or have you been avoiding and ignoring while telling yourself you were being patient?
- What would intentionally disarming one bomb look like for you in the next seven days?

Theme 6: Heirs Together

Peter grounds the pursuit of peace in identity before behavior. He encourages wives to live in a way that reflects Christ, so that even an unbelieving husband may be influenced by respectful and godly conduct, and he insists that true beauty is not primarily outward appearance but the “hidden person of the heart” with a gentle and quiet spirit that is precious to God, pointing to Sarah and the holy women who trusted Him. He then commands husbands to dwell with their wives with understanding and to give them honor as fellow heirs of the grace of life, so that their prayers are not hindered. The Greek word behind “heirs together” is *sunklēronomos* (soon-klay-ron-OH-moss), a co-heir. Peter does not say, “Treat her well so she will treat you well.” He says, “Treat her well because she is your co-heir.” Your relationship with your spouse should be shaped more by your shared identity in Christ than by your current conflict or hurt. When couples remember they are co-heirs of God’s grace, the goal shifts from winning arguments to protecting a relationship that God Himself has joined and blessed.

Personal Reflection

- Is your marriage currently being shaped more by your shared identity in Christ or by your current conflict?
- In your last disagreement, were you trying to win or trying to protect?
- Peter warns that how a husband treats his wife can hinder his prayers. What does that tell you about the link between your marriage and your walk with God?

Theme 7: Called to Blessing

Peter goes on to describe what a peace-pursuing marriage looks like in practice: be of one mind, have compassion for one another, love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous, and do not return evil for evil or reviling for reviling. Instead, bless, “knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing.” He then quotes Psalm 34, where David explains that the one who wants to love life and see good days must keep his tongue from evil, turn away from evil, do good, and seek peace and pursue it. Being called to blessing means we are called to bless instead of retaliate, to bless by guarding our words, to bless by speaking truth, to bless by doing good instead of evil, and to bless by seeking and pursuing peace. Blessing is not merely something we receive from God. It is something we are called to become for others. In marriage that changes the question entirely. Instead of asking, “How can I get my spouse to bless me?” we learn to ask, “How can I become God’s blessing to my spouse today?” Peace is not found by avoiding conflict. It is found by pursuing it God’s way.

Personal Reflection

- Which question have you actually been living: how to get your spouse to bless you, or how to become God’s blessing to them?
- Where have you returned evil for evil or reviling for reviling in the last month?
- What would guarding your words look like in the specific conversation you have been dreading?

Theme 8: What Grieves the Spirit

Paul addresses the same territory in Ephesians 4:25–32. Put away lying and speak truth, because we are members of one another. Be angry and do not sin, and do not let the sun go down on your wrath or give place to the devil. Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, only what is good for necessary edification, so that it imparts grace to the hearers. Then comes the warning: do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God. We grieve the Spirit when we store bitterness (resentment or hostility), distress (sorrow or sadness), anger (ongoing resentment), wrath (rage), and malice (ill will or a desire to harm). The Spirit is grieved because these things make peace impossible. Paul's remedy is not management but removal: put them away, and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you. All of this tells us plainly that peace is not passive. It does not just happen. It must be sought out and pursued throughout your life, through initiating reconciliation, forgiving, releasing offenses, refusing retaliation, choosing blessing, and removing bitterness. That intentional pursuit and your daily choices are how you gain peace in your marriage.

Personal Reflection

- Which item on Paul's list is still stored in you: bitterness, distress, anger, wrath, or malice?
- Where have you let the sun go down on your wrath, night after night, until it became the normal state of your home?
- Of the six pursuits, which one is God asking you to start, and what is the first step you will take?

Theme 9: Set Free

The lesson closes with a word about sovereignty, which means supreme power and independent authority: a nation's right to self-governance, freedom from external control, and complete control over its own territory and laws. Congressman Tom Cole once said, "We are not needing to be lifted up; we are needing to be set free." That applies directly to marriage. According to the Bible you have the supreme authority to live out your marriage according to God's sovereign will. Your marriage is a covenant union with God, and it does not need to be lifted up, because God has already established it in a way that, if done His way, could never be lifted higher. Nothing needs to be added to His design. You simply need to choose to do it His way and be set free. His way is the path to peace.

Personal Reflection

- Have you been asking God to lift your marriage up, or are you willing to be set free by doing it His way?
- What part of God's design for your marriage have you understood for a long time but never actually chosen?
- If you pursued peace God's way for the next six months, what would be different about your home?

The Big Idea

Letting it go is not the same as letting it slide. The hurt stored in your locker will not quietly disappear, and no amount of avoiding or ignoring will disarm it. Peace is something God tells us to seek and pursue, which means it is a decision you make and then keep making. You empty the locker by forgiving, blessing, and reconciling instead of storing, and you do it because your spouse is your co-heir of the grace of life rather than your opponent.

If Peter were speaking in today's language, it might sound something like this:

"Remember who you are. You're God's family now. Care about each other's pain. Love each other like brothers and sisters. Don't let your hearts become hard. Stay humble. When someone hurts you, don't give them back what they gave you. Give them what Christ gave you instead. That's what God's children do. If you want to experience the kind of life God intended, guard your words. Refuse deception. Turn away from what destroys relationships. Chase peace with everything you've got. God sees every injustice. Leave judgment to Him, and spend your energy pursuing peace."

This class is not about the easy idea of "letting things go." It is about actively pursuing peace. Notice how each pursuit directly disarms a bomb in the hurt locker:

- Offense is disarmed by forgiveness.
- Judgment is replaced with grace.
- Pride gives way to humility.
- Assumptions are replaced by understanding.
- Retaliation is overcome by blessing (1 Peter 3:9).
- Division is healed through reconciliation.
- Bitterness is removed so peace can take root (Hebrews 12:15; 1 Peter 3:11).

Letting it go happens when:

- You stop pretending the locker is empty and take an honest inventory of what you have been storing.
- You separate the baggage you brought in from the hurt your spouse actually had a part in, and you take the first group to Christ.
- You look to God, rather than to your spouse, for acceptance, identity, security, and purpose.
- You accept that every marriage has sparks and stop treating disagreement as proof that something is broken.
- You disarm the bombs before the next spark instead of avoiding or ignoring them.
- You treat your spouse with honor because they are your co-heir of the grace of life, not because they earned it.
- You refuse to return evil for evil and ask instead how you can become God's blessing to your spouse today.
- You put away bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, evil speaking, and malice so the Spirit is not grieved and peace becomes possible.
- You stop asking God to lift your marriage up and start choosing His way, which is where you are set free.

Let it Go: Path to Peace