



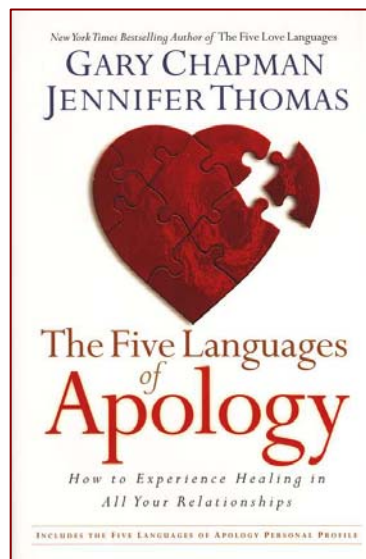
DEAN WELCH - TEACHER

**WOULD YOU
DEALLY
RATHER KISS A PIG?**
[APOLOGY LANGUAGE #3: MAKING RESTITUTION]

WEEKLY SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

NOVEMBER 16, 2008

LESSON #2 FROM THE *MASTERWORK* SERIES STUDY OF:



WOULD YOU REALLY RATHER KISS A PIG?

[APOLOGY LANGUAGE #3: MAKING RESTITUTION]

The handwriting was shaky. The stationery was lined, loose-leaf paper. The ink was black and the tone desperate. The note was dated February 6, 1974 and was addressed to the U.S. government. "I am sending ten dollars for blankets I stole while in World War II. My mind could not rest. Sorry I'm late." It was signed, "an ex-GI." Then there was this postscript, "I want to be ready to meet God."

This recruit was not alone in his guilt and in trying to apologize and "*make things right*." His letter is one of literally tons of letters that have been sent to the U.S. government since it began collecting and storing the letters in 1811. Since that time \$3,500,000 has been deposited in what is called the Conscience Fund. An average of \$45,000 per year is received. The biggest year was 1950 in which \$350,000 was collected.

One man writing from Brazil sent fifty dollars to cover the cost of two pair of cavalry boots, two pair of trousers, one case of KC rations and thirty pounds of frozen meat he stole from the army between 1943 and 1946. In some instances the amounts are small; only the remorse is **BIG**. One Colorado woman sent in two eight-cent stamps to make up for having used one stamp twice (which for some reason had not been canceled). A former IRS employee mailed in one dollar for four ballpoint pens she had never returned to the office. A Salem, Ohio, man submitted one dollar with the following note, "When a boy, I put a few pennies on the railroad track and the train flattened them. I also used a dime or a quarter in a silver-coating experiment in high school. I understand there is a law against defacing our money. I have not seen it but I desire to be a law-abiding citizen."

Anxiety over a thirty-year-old mistake? Regret over mashed pennies? A guilty conscience because of ballpoint pens? If the struggle to have a clean conscience wasn't so common, the letters would be funny. But the struggle is common. There are —

and always have been, and always will be — people in the world with moral compasses reliable enough that they can tell when they're off course. They want to *"make it right"* but don't quite know what to do. [How about you? Do you know how to "make it right?"](#)

Notice the title on the board this week! You may remember that last week as I introduced our study of Dr. Chapman's book *The Five Languages of Apology*, I asked how you, personally, felt about apologizing when you had done something wrong. Immediately, Dennis responded with, *"I'd rather kiss a pig!"* Really? Would you **really** rather kiss a pig? [Why do we struggle so with apologizing? Why is it so hard?](#)

[SHOW VIDEO CLIP OF [THE BEVERLY HILLBILLIES](#) WHEN GRANNY APOLOGIZES: <http://www.sermonspice.com/videos/16950/seeking-forgiveness>]
Is this a sincere and meaningful apology? Why or why not?

As we conclude Week Two of our study from *The Five Languages of Apology*, let's begin by reviewing all five. If you have your handout from last week, use it to refresh your memory:

THE FIVE LANGUAGES OF APOLOGY	
♥	EXPRESSING REGRET – "I am sorry."
♥	ACCEPTING RESPONSIBILITY – "I was wrong."
♥	MAKING RESTITUTION – "What can I do to make it right?"
♥	GENUINELY REPENTING – "I'll try not to do that again."
♥	REQUESTING FORGIVENESS – "Will you please forgive me?"

Today, we look at Apology Language #3: MAKING RESTITUTION. Open your Bible to **NUMBERS 5: 5-7 (NLT)** and follow along as I read this Old Testament passage about this week's "language:"
⁵ "Then the Lord said to Moses, ⁶ "Give the following instructions to the people of Israel: If any of the people—men or women—betray the Lord by doing wrong to another person, they are guilty. ⁷ They must **confess their sin** and **make full restitution** for what they have done, adding an additional 20 percent and returning it to the person who was wronged."

This passage clearly tells us that this is God talking to Moses! What two things did the Lord say the people must do in **verse 7**? [CONFESS THEIR SIN & MAKE FULL RESTITUTION]. Recall the first sentence of the memory verse last week from **JAMES 5:16 (NLT)**: ***16** Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.* We are to confess to each other and now we see in **verse 7** of **Exodus** we are to make full restitution. That's the reason, I think, that Drs. Chapman and Thomas included this as Apology Language #3—because clearly, many hold this particular language of apology near and dear to the heart. It's just not an apology without restitution.

This week while preparing for the lesson I came across a card that pictured a man in a greeting card store, like *Hallmark*, asking a clerk this question: *"Do you have a card that stops short of saying 'I'm sorry' yet vaguely hints of some wrongdoing?"* Isn't that just like us? Some of us would really rather kiss a pig, I think, than apologize—or utter words that closely resembled *"I'm sorry!"*

Most of feel deep down inside that when a wrong has been committed, it should be paid for. All of us have a sense of fairness and justice and underlying that, a great need to be loved. And we may ask the question, "How could they love me and do that hurtful action?" For this person, saying "I'm sorry" or "I was wrong" is not enough because they were so deeply hurt. They need to hear, "What can I do to show you that I still care about you?" Or, "What can I do to make it right?" Otherwise they doubt the other person's sincerity.

This week we had the opportunity to spend time in God's Word reviewing a great example of apology language #3 about making restitution. One man who recognized the need for restitution was Zacchaeus. We all remember his story. He was a crooked tax collector who financed his big house and opulent lifestyle by taking more taxes from his countrymen than he had to pay to Rome? But then he met Jesus, and Jesus went home and ate with him. Sometime between the soup course and dessert,

Zacchaeus found his plate piled high with forgiveness and grace. It turns out that God loves cheaters too. And who wouldn't be glad?

Well, if you were one of those Zacchaeus cheated, you wouldn't be glad. You'd remember, maybe, that because of him you'd lost your house. Or maybe you had an empty pantry. Or maybe your child had died of malnutrition. You wouldn't be glad, you'd be angry, because while your stomach growled and your children cried, Zacchaeus would still be sitting in his big house, enjoying the grace of God. Interestingly, before Jesus can even announce the forgiveness that has come to his house, Zacchaeus is making restitution. He gives half of what he has to the poor — victims of the inequity he's helped to create. He gives back money he's unjustly taken, with 400% interest. A lot of financial situations in Jericho changed that day because Zacchaeus understood what sin is and what grace demands.

Turn to **LUKE 19: 1-10 (NLT)** and follow along as we read his story: *¹Jesus entered Jericho and made his way through the town. ²There was a man there named Zacchaeus. He was the chief tax collector in the region, and he had become very rich. ³He tried to get a look at Jesus, but he was too short to see over the crowd. ⁴So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree beside the road, for Jesus was going to pass that way. ⁵When Jesus came by, he looked up at Zacchaeus and called him by name. "Zacchaeus!" he said. "Quick, come down! I must be a guest in your home today." ⁶Zacchaeus quickly climbed down and took Jesus to his house in great excitement and joy. ⁷But the people were displeased. "He has gone to be the guest of a notorious sinner," they grumbled. ⁸Meanwhile, Zacchaeus stood before the Lord and said, "I will give half my wealth to the poor, Lord, and if I have cheated people on their taxes, I will give them back four times as much!" ⁹Jesus responded, "Salvation has come to this home today, for this man has shown himself to be a true son of Abraham. ¹⁰For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost."*



Look at **verse 10** again. What was Jesus' purpose? If we would be like Jesus, what purpose would we adopt? It is not *"to witness as best we can."* I believe we can work together to take our world for God. *When's the last time you invited someone new to Sunday School? Think of the impact we could make in accomplishing Jesus' purpose if each one hear this morning invited JUST ONE person all year? And then, in turn if those people came to accept Christ and they invited ONE person to Sunday School and church. We'd run out of room. Whew!*

How did this dinner with Zacchaeus fit into Jesus' purpose of seeking and saving? [REMEMBER WHY HE CAME. HE MADE HIS MISSION CLEAR BY INVITING HIMSELF TO THE HOME OF A TAX COLLECTOR—TO SEEK AND SAVE THE LOST]

Why do you think Jesus selected Zacchaeus? Surely there were lots of people in the crowd that day who would have been honored to have Jesus over. What did Jesus see in this man that caused Jesus to pick him? Remember from Scripture that many in the crowd were unhappy with Jesus' choice of hosts. In **LUKE 15:1-22 (NLT)**, which is the introduction to the three parables about the lost coin, sheep and son, listen to these words: *¹Tax collectors and other notorious sinners often came to listen to Jesus teach. ²This made the Pharisees and teachers of religious law complain that he was associating with such sinful people—even eating with them!* Can you believe that the people grumbled because Jesus was spending time and eating with "sinners?"

What about Zacchaeus' attempt at restitution: Would you describe that as just enough or over the top? It was clearly over the top! Under the Old Testament law, most restitution was as nearly as possible matched to the actual loss (Lev. 24:18-21). If your negligence caused your neighbor's ox to die, you had to pay him the value of the ox (Exod. 21:33-34). Deliberate thievery was punished with additional restitution. Someone who stole money had to repay an additional 20 percent (Lev. 6:4-5; Num. 5:6-7). Certain thefts of animals (especially if the stolen animals were killed) required four- and five-fold restitution (Exod. 22:1).

Zacchaeus was determined to do far more than the law demanded. He showed by his deed that he was a changed man. *A modern day example of this is when our U.S. government has apologized several times to Japanese-American victims and during one of these apologies included payment of \$20,000 to each survivor. Listen to this letter from President George Bush (the first George Bush) written in October 1990 to the Japanese Americans. [READ ATTACHED LETTER]*

The secret to a good apology is that it must be done sincerely and truthfully. If your apology does not come across as sincere, it will not feel meaningful to the other person. As such, the desire to apologize must come from within you. I came across an unusual story about sincerity in apologizing: *Police in the village of Bidingen, Germany, got more of a result than they probably expected when they published an appeal in a newspaper asking anyone who may have witnessed a bicycle theft to come forward. After the theft, which occurred back in July, police took out the ad asking for anyone who might have seen anything or known anything to step up and help the investigation. They identified the bike and the location from which it was stolen, and they mentioned that the bike was worth 400 euros, or about \$500. Apparently the police got little direct response. However, the **victim** got a letter — a letter from the thief.*

The thief didn't identify himself in any way, but he wrote that he was very sorry for stealing the bike. He said that he would like to return it, but that he couldn't remember where he had left it. But he did the next best thing. Inside the envelope, with the letter, the victim found 400 euros (\$500). After the letter came to the victim, a Police spokesperson commented that the thief "may just have been a thoroughly honest person who saw the error of his ways." And he added, "You still get them you know."

It has to be a somewhat unusual experience for police anywhere to come across one who will write a letter of apology to a victim — especially when they haven't been caught. And it has to be even less common for a thief who no one has been able to

identify to pay someone back for what he's taken. Though it's not a word we use much, what that thief did is restitution. To make restitution is to make amends for a wrong done to another person, to take responsibility for the unjust action and to make up for it as much as possible.

In BSF this year, as many of you know, we are studying Moses and the Exodus—a great study. In a recent lesson, I was reminded of the insincerity of an apology in one particular encounter between Pharaoh and Moses. Right in the middle of the ten plagues, Pharaoh, wanting God to end all the terrifying thunder and hail, sent for Moses and Aaron to personally apologize to them. Turn to **EXODUS 9: 22-34 (NLT)** and let's review what happened with the Pharaoh's apology: *²²Then the Lord said to Moses, "Lift your hand toward the sky so hail may fall on the people, the livestock, and all the plants throughout the land of Egypt." ²³So Moses lifted his staff toward the sky, and the Lord sent thunder and hail, and lightning flashed toward the earth. The Lord sent a tremendous hailstorm against all the land of Egypt. ²⁴Never in all the history of Egypt had there been a storm like that, with such devastating hail and continuous lightning. ²⁵It left all of Egypt in ruins. The hail struck down everything in the open field—people, animals, and plants alike. Even the trees were destroyed. ²⁶The only place without hail was the region of Goshen, where the people of Israel lived. ²⁷Then Pharaoh quickly summoned Moses and Aaron. "This time I have sinned," he confessed. "The Lord is the righteous one, and my people and I are wrong. ²⁸Please beg the Lord to end this terrifying thunder and hail. We've had enough. I will let you go; you don't need to stay any longer."*

²⁹"All right," Moses replied. "As soon as I leave the city, I will lift my hands and pray to the Lord. Then the thunder and hail will stop, and you will know that the earth belongs to the Lord. ³⁰But I know that you and your officials still do not fear the Lord God." ³¹(All the flax and barley were ruined by the hail, because the barley had formed heads and the flax was budding. ³²But the wheat and the emmer wheat were spared, because they had not

yet sprouted from the ground.)³³ So Moses left Pharaoh's court and went out of the city. When he lifted his hands to the Lord, the thunder and hail stopped, and the downpour ceased.³⁴ But when Pharaoh saw that the rain, hail, and thunder had stopped, he and his officials sinned again, and Pharaoh again became stubborn."

The words sounded right but Moses saw through Pharaoh's charade. See, we communicate not just by words but also spirit to spirit. Moses could sense that Pharaoh didn't mean his apology; he wasn't really sorry. This is important as we look at the various languages of apology because we should never say "sorry" ... (a) just because someone makes you do it; (b) because this is what everybody expects from you; or (c) because your apology will get you something you want.

Apologies that are used to manipulate or just to be nice will get you nowhere. They are meaningless and empty to the ones you have offended and are now saying sorry to. *Remember the children's fable about the boy who cried wolf? What happened to him when the real wolf came?* Listen to the words from a former memory verse, **1 JOHN 1: 8, 10**: *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us ... If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.*

As we learned this week on Day Three, when we find out a particular person's expected apology language, the best way to repay that person is through their individual LOVE LANGUAGE. I hope you received the email I sent you on Tuesday in preparation for your Bible study on Wednesday about the five love languages and how to find yours. We did a study on these a year or two ago, but for those that missed it, here's a brief recap of each love language:

- A. WORDS OF AFFIRMATION- *I'm sorry that I... and MADE YOU FEEL...*
- B. ACTS OF SERVICE - *I'm sorry for being... I will HELP WITH...*
- C. RECEIVING GIFTS - *I'm sorry for... I was THINKING OF YOU...*
- D. QUALITY TIME - *I'm sorry for... Let's SPEND TIME TOGETHER.*
- E. PHYSICAL TOUCH - *I'm sorry for... Give me a HUG.*

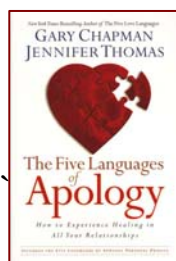
How would your individual love language affect the way you offer or want to receive an apology?

The Bible teaches that *"if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come"* (2 Cor. 5:17).

*During the compilation of the Oxford English Dictionary, managing editor James Murray received thousands of definitions from **Dr. William Chester Minor**. They were always sent in by mail and never brought in personally. Murray was curious about this brilliant man, so he went to visit him. He was shocked to find that Minor was incarcerated in an asylum for the criminally insane. Years earlier, while in a delusional state, Minor had shot an innocent man whom he thought had been tormenting him. Later he was filled with remorse and began sending money to support the widow and her family. Minor was imprisoned for the rest of his life but he found practical ways of easing the pain of his victims and contributing to society through his work on the dictionary.*

When the dishonest tax collector Zacchaeus heard Jesus' message of grace, he chose to return more than what he had extorted from others. *"Look, Lord, . . . if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold"* (**LUKE 19:8**). The gospel of grace stirred Zacchaeus to help those he had harmed. Have you wronged someone? What steps will you take to help make things right?

Let's Pray.



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NOVEMBER 16, 2008



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

A monetary sum and words alone cannot restore lost years or erase painful memories; neither can they fully convey our Nation's resolve to rectify injustice and to uphold the rights of individuals. We can never fully right the wrongs of the past. But we can take a clear stand for justice and recognize that serious injustices were done to Japanese Americans during World War II.

In enacting a law calling for restitution and offering a sincere apology, your fellow Americans have, in a very real sense, renewed their traditional commitment to the ideals of freedom, equality, and justice. You and your family have our best wishes for the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "G. Bush".

GEORGE BUSH
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

OCTOBER 1990