

## Small Group Guide: "WHAT CAUSES HURTS IN RELATIONSHIPS: People That Drive Me Nuts"

**Opening Question:** If you could have any superpower to help manage difficult relationships, what would it be and why?

**Opening Prayer:** *Heavenly Father, we come before You with open hearts, eager to learn about nurturing our relationships according to Your will. Help us to understand and apply what we learn today. May our discussions bring us closer to each other and to You. In Jesus' name, we pray, Amen.*

### Key Takeaways:

1. Difficult relationships are common and need to be addressed with wisdom and God's love.
2. It's important to separate our emotions from others' projections; refusing to be easily offended is key.
3. Forgiveness should be prompt. Holding onto hurts only harms ourselves.
4. Avoid engaging in negative emotional games by recognizing manipulation attempts.
5. True, healthy relationships require a balance of grace and truth to foster growth and reconciliation.

### Discussion Questions:

1. **Read Proverbs 12:16.** What steps can we take to become more prudent and less reactive when annoyed?
2. **Read Colossians 3:13.** How does this passage guide us in forgiving others? What does forgiving "as the Lord forgave you" look like in today's context?
3. **Read Matthew 22:15-18.** How does Jesus model for us the way to deal with those who try to manipulate or trap us?
4. **The "Hot Potato" Analogy:** Pastor Dan said that when someone acts out, "they're telling you what is in them, not what is in you." How does this perspective change the way you view conflicts?
5. What practical steps can you take to prevent being overwhelmed by someone else's emotional responses?
6. **Forgiveness vs. Reconciliation:** Pastor Dan made a clear distinction between forgiveness (releasing the hurt) and reconciliation/trust (letting someone back into your life). Why is this distinction so important? How have you confused these in the past?
7. **The Balance:** The sermon emphasized that healthy relationships require BOTH grace and truth. What happens when a relationship has:
  - Grace without truth?
  - Truth without grace?
  - Neither grace nor truth?
8. How can we lovingly set boundaries with difficult individuals while still showing them Christ-like grace?

**Practical Applications:**

1. Spend time in prayer each day this week, asking God to help you forgive someone who has offended you in the past.
2. Identify someone in your life who tends to be demanding or difficult, and practice refusing to be offended by their behavior this week.
3. Reflect on a relationship in your life that may be unhealthy and consider what boundaries need to be set.
4. Journal about a recent conflict and explore your own emotional responses to better understand your triggers.
5. Commit to one action this week that extends grace to someone else, inspired by the grace bestowed upon us by God.

**Closing Prayer:** *Father, thank You for guiding us through today's discussion and reminding us of the love and forgiveness You freely give us. Help us to apply these teachings in our lives and navigate all our relationships with grace and truth. We seek Your wisdom and strength as we strive to reflect Christ in all that we do. In Jesus' name, we pray, Amen.*