Choose Forgiveness or Destruction on the Road to Restoration

1. When one person offends another (the victim), the victim is naturally hurt and usually angry. Anger can be positive because it protects the victim from being vulnerable to repeated offense. Anger is also a clue that the victim is expecting some kind of repayment because the offender "owes" them.

5b. The offender may choose to re-offend, sending the restoration process back to the beginning, often with more to overcome (see dashed lines below). 6. Forgiveness, the offender's repentance, and a willingness to trust, might lead to reconciliation. Often the fully restored relationship is stronger than before the offense.

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2. The victim's initial response to their hurt is usually desiring some form of self-protection or payback.

OFFENSE

4. In the circle of decision (see shaded circle to the left), the victim can temper their anger with mercy instead of choosing to punish or take revenge. Alternatively, the victim can choose to abandon the relationship, neither punishing nor forgiving, but leaving the relationship on hold indefinitely.

Abandonment

Punishment\Revenge

3. Without mercy, the victim will attempt to control the offender. Punishment or revenge will ultimately end up in destruction (the removal of the offender). **3b.** But, it is never too late to forgive! (until Christ returns)

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Destruction