

**Read: 2 Corinthians 2:5-11**

## Love, Even When It Hurts

### **2 Corinthians 2:5-8**

If anyone has caused grief... The punishment inflicted on him by the majority is sufficient for him. Now instead, you ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. I urge you, therefore, to reaffirm your love for him.

*In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

In the game of hockey, a player who breaks the rules is sent to the penalty box. A penalty is generally two minutes long. After the penalty has been served, the player can be restored to the team in good standing. The goal is that the player will learn the lesson and join his team again while keeping the rules.

In today's devotion, a dear friend of Paul had been sent to the penalty box. He broke one of God's rules and didn't care that he did it. He needed to be given a talking to. It wasn't about winning a debate or proving, "I'm right and you're wrong." Paul really loved him. He had to confront him because he wanted him to thrive and believe in Jesus. But before that could happen, he had to scold him and tell his friend that what he did was wrong and had hurt a lot of other people too. Paul knew it would be a very painful conversation. It made his heart ache.

Remember the last time someone really hurt you? Was it someone at home or a friend at school? How did you respond? Did you try to ignore what happened and hope it would just all go away? Or did you hurt them right back and humiliate them? Ignoring sin never works. And hurting someone because they hurt you is always wrong. Love hurts. And it hurts when we must face sin.

But something wonderful happened while Paul's friend was in the penalty box. He learned his lesson. He was sorry for what he did, promised to obey the rules, and asked if he could rejoin the team again. But that's so hard, isn't it—to let someone back after they've really hurt you? When Paul's friend came out of the penalty box, Paul reminded the rest of the team, "Now, forgive and comfort him, and reaffirm your love for him." The goal of the penalty box is not just to punish even when you are in the right. The reason a parent grounds a child or takes a privilege away for a time is not because they hate you or to simply cause you pain. They love you so much. The goal is a genuine change in you that says, "That was my bad, and I'm sorry. I want to keep the rules."

When someone comes out of the penalty box and is sorry for what they did, forgive! Love! Don't hold it over them. Don't keep bringing it up. Be like Jesus and forgive the naughty and the rude because at Jesus' cross, God forgave all of your sins. And may God's mercy replace your pain with peace and your hurt with love.

*The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.*

### **Questions for the Younger Children**

- Why was Paul's friend put in the penalty box?
- When Paul's friend came out of the penalty box, what did Paul remind the rest of the team?

### **Questions for Elementary Age Children**

- Why do you find it so hard to forgive someone who has hurt you?
- Give two things you learned today about forgiveness.

### **Questions for Middle School and Above**

- Name someone you need to forgive. Talk out what happened that led up to it.
- What is the result of unforgiveness? Why should believers forgive?

### **Closing Prayer:**

Lord Jesus, sometimes it's really hard to forgive and forget when I've been hurt and sinned against. But I know that you have forgiven me time and time again. Give me a heart that finds joy in forgiving. Amen.