

Forgiving Others

Holding onto unforgiveness, while understandable, nurtures two of the most damaging emotions: anger and depression. When we do not forgive the unforgivable, we ultimately hurt ourselves instead of making others pay. We become imprisoned in anger and depression. Holding onto resentment only provides the devil a foothold. Extend forgiveness to others, not because they deserve it, but because you need God's healing and peace. The offender will never be able to restore what was lost or undo the hurt, but God will heal your soul and change your life.

God Commands Forgiveness Because It Hurts You

Read the following verse. Who are the underlined characteristics describing? The person who hurt you? Or you, the one who was hurt?

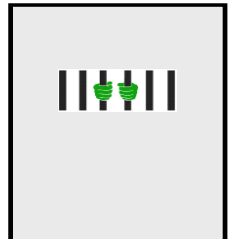
Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander
be put away from you along with all malice. Ephesians 4:31

Read the very next verse below. How does God say to "put away" bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, slander, and malice from the above verse? Why do we forgive others?

Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other,
just as God in Christ also has forgiven you. Ephesians 4:32

What is Forgiveness? (Check every statement below that is true forgiveness.)

- Forgive is forgetting.
- Asking God to forgive them.
- What's done is done, so forget about it.
- Act like it never happened.
- Turn the other cheek.
- Time heals all wounds.
- They didn't mean it or even know they hurt me.
- Going to the other person and telling them you forgive them.
- Restoring the broken relationship.
- The offender gets off Scot-free.
- Forgiveness is a teaching of Jesus that we need to learn.
- None of these are real forgiveness.



Read and Discuss Mathew 18:21-35, Especially Verse 27

Then Peter came and said to Him, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven. "For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. "When he had begun to settle them, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. "But since he did not have the means to repay, his lord commanded him to be sold, along with his wife and children and all that he had, and repayment to be made. "So the slave fell to the ground and prostrated himself before him, saying, 'Have patience with me and I will repay you everything.' "And the lord of that slave felt compassion and released him and forgave him the debt. Matthew 18:21-27

Debts and Inventories

<p>Physical Losses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of physical abilities, hearing, sight, etc. • Loss of physical pain or scars from abuse • Loss of health like ulcers, hives, hypertension, etc. • Loss of innocence or privacy, etc. • Loss of parents, family, friends, ability to trust, etc. • Loss of the ability to have children <p>Material Losses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of money, resources, support, etc. • Loss of home, possessions, assets, etc. • Loss of reputation, opportunity, or advancement 	<p>Emotional Upheaval (Feelings)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confusion, uncertainty, doubt, etc. • Fear, anxiety, shame, etc. • Anger, depression, inner turmoil, etc. <p>Mental Upheaval (Lies/Beleifs)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I am no good, not good enough, worthless, etc.</i> • <i>I am not accepted, liked, likable, etc.</i> • <i>I am dirty, ugly, the problem, etc.</i> • <i>I am a failure, stupid, dumb, can't succeed, etc.</i> • <i>I am not safe; I must earn love, blessings, etc.</i> • <i>I am not loved, lovable, cherished, wanted, etc.</i>
Offender's Name	Offender's Name
Debt(s) Owed	Debt(s) Owed
Flesh Patterns (How you coped with losses.)	Flesh Patterns (How you coped with losses.)

Forgiveness is a choice, not a feeling. You likely will never *feel* like forgiving. Nor does forgiving remove unwanted memories. It will heal your heart so that the memory does not torment or anger you anymore. Forgiveness is an act of faith and obedience enabled by the indwelling life of Christ.

Forgiving others is God's way to release you from the pain, lies, and bondage to bitterness and anger. In exchange, God will give you His peace.

I can do all things through God who strengthens me. Philippians 4:13

Prayer

Father God,

I choose to forgive (*offender's name*) for (*list debts owed*). I choose to release (*him/her/them*) into your hands and pray that you bless them according to their needs.

Also, I choose to stop trying to protect myself, get revenge, or to meet my needs through (*list flesh patterns*).

Jesus, take all the pain and bitterness from the hurt and loss unto Yourself and exchange it for your peace. Thank you, Jesus, for taking back the lost ground from the offense and lies and renewing and cleansing my mind, will, and emotions. Amen.

Continue in Forgiveness

- Jesus said to forgive "seven times seventy." (Matthew 18:21-22)
- "Bless those that curse you, pray for those who mistreat you." Luke 6:28-33