

Forgiveness



Forgiveness

Dealing with the past hurts and pains of our life is perhaps one of the biggest obstacles we face in terms of achieving the place of *peace* most of us are seeking. Emotions from the past creep up, invade our thoughts and hinder us from pressing forward to be all that we can be in this life.

Most of us have dealt with the disappointment and anger of being emotionally hurt by someone. Maybe you were disregarded, betrayed or abused and the pain still has some impact on you even though time has passed. The situation has power over you. Somehow, you can't let it go. You've tried—but you don't know how to erase the hurt and anger you feel.

This week's lesson focuses on the Bible principle of **forgiveness** and how we should forgive others, forgive ourselves and seek forgiveness from those who we have offended.

What does it mean to forgive?

Forgiveness defined:

- 1) To pardon or release
- 2) The act of excusing a mistake or offense
- 3) Ceasing to feel resentment or anger because of an offense committed

The Model Prayer

- Matthew 6: 9-15

- Forgive us *our debts*, as we also have forgiven *our debtors*
- If you forgive, you will be forgiven
- If you do not forgive, you will not be forgiven

Life Lesson: If you want God to forgive your trespasses against Him, you must forgive others who have trespassed against you.

We all need forgiveness from God, don't we?

*I want to **forgive**...but I can't!*

*To **forgive** means to cancel the debt.*

One of the reasons people have a hard time forgiving is that they have confused the meaning of the word. Some people might say that if you forgive someone that it erases the offense and you should then invite the person who offended you to be part of your life. This is a misconception. Depending upon the situation, it might be entirely appropriate for you to forgive and then keep your distance from that person. Forgiving someone means to *release* them from the debt they owe you. Consider this—let's say that a close relative owes you \$500 and years have passed and they still haven't paid you back. Their debt to you has caused tension in your relationship with them and so you decide to forgive them and cancel the debt. While they are *no longer indebted to you*, your act of forgiving them does not mean that you should loan them money again.

If someone has hurt you, of course you should forgive them, but you don't have to allow them to hurt you again. Let's take a look at the story of David and King Saul for biblical support of this notion.

David and Saul

- In this passage, we get a glimpse of how forgiveness works. David is a “man after God’s own heart”. David and King Saul were once very close friends. Saul was a mentor to David, but as David became more and more successful, Saul became intensely jealous. Saul then spends years of his life trying to kill David. David doesn’t understand why his mentor and friend is trying to harm him. He has a couple of opportunities to strike back at Saul and kill him, but he doesn’t because of his respect for the King. Watch how David responds when he has his chance to get revenge on Saul.
 - I Samuel 26: 9-11
- Later, Saul realizes that David has spared his life and he acknowledges his wrong doing and promises not to try to harm David again.
 - I Samuel 26: 21-24

David and Saul

- While Saul seems to have apologized, David is understandably wary of him. Saul has said, “Come back, David, my son”. But watch what David does next.
 - I Samuel 26: 25
- David goes his own way and Saul returns home. Despite Saul’s apology and his promise that he will not try to harm David again, you see that David does not trust Saul enough to “come back.” Saul has tried to kill David one too many times. I’m sure that David forgave Saul’s actions and canceled the debt, but he still separates from Saul so that he is not in danger again.

Do it for you!

Holding on to pain, hurt and anger does nothing but cause you stress! You are not hurting the other person by harboring these emotions. You are only hurting yourself. *Give yourself the relief you deserve* and forgive those who have trespassed against you.

Later in this lesson you will see scripture in the Book of Luke that says, “if they repent, forgive them”. So...what do you do if a person has offended you but doesn't repent? Based upon scripture that says “love your enemies,” it is clear that we should love those people who we are still at odds with. *Could it be that we should also forgive those people who haven't asked for our forgiveness?* Remember—you are forgiving them so that you can move on...

FORGIVENESS

is not something
we do for OTHER PEOPLE.

We do it for OURSELVES

-to GET WELL and

MOVE ON.

God forgives us...

- Colossians 2: 13-14
- Acts 10: 43
- I John 1: 9
 - He forgave us for our past sins so that we might have a chance to be saved. He will forgive us for sin in our lives if we confess and acknowledge it. What a wonderful, patient God we serve!

...and we should **forgive** others.

*Forgiving others leads to you having **peace**.*

- Colossians 3: 12-14
- Ephesians 4: 31-32
 - Forgiving others is essential if you want to please God. As Christ forgave us, we should forgive others.
- ...and how often should we forgive someone who has offended us?
 - Luke 17: 3-5
 - **We must continue to forgive when someone repents.**
Forgiving someone seven times in a day seems like a lot, but how many times a day do we trespass against God and His Law? How often do we need God to forgive us?
 - *Forgiving someone continuously is a very hard thing to do. The disciples seem to be acknowledging the difficulty of this by saying to the Lord, “Increase our faith!”*
 - *Remember that people are human. They will make mistakes that hurt you...and you will make mistakes that hurt other people. Don't be too hard on yourself or others.*

It's Time to Move On

Life really is short. If you are granted 80 years on this Earth and you've spent the last five years holding a grudge against someone, then you've spent a significant part of your life dealing with feelings of hurt, pain and anger. *Don't give another person that much power over you.* Forgiving them releases not only them from the debt they owe you, but it releases you from the stress of harboring those negative feelings. Don't continue to be stuck in a space of not being willing to forgive...it's truly time for you to move on with your life.

Final Thoughts

Sometimes, the person we need to forgive is *ourselves*. During this study, we have pointed to scripture that shows how forgiving God is to all of us. If God has forgiven you, why are you still down in the dumps about what you did? Did you confess and acknowledge your wrongs to God and ask the person you offended for their forgiveness? Have you repented and turned away from that sin or those actions? If you have, then you have done what God would have you to do. Make a commitment to do better. Forgive others, forgive yourself and ask for the forgiveness of those who you have trespassed against. The Bible says that when we forgive...God forgives us—and we all need His forgiveness.