



Forgiving Others
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Preview

Has someone ever hurt you so deeply that you had trouble forgiving them? You've tried. You think you have truly forgiven them. Then something brings all the hurt and resentment flooding back into your mind.

Praise

Does anyone want to share about a time they were forgiven for a wrong they had done? How did it make you feel when that person forgave you?

Parable

Have you ever wondered why we have so much trouble forgiving others? Why is it so hard to let go of hurts and bitterness? When someone wrongs us, it's easy to see the 'twig' sticking out of their eye (the wrong they've done to us), but we don't notice the huge beam protruding from our own (the wrongs we've done to others).

If you can, picture this: A child has a small stick that they are swinging around. Out of carelessness (and sometimes deliberate jabs), they occasionally hit and cause injury to others.

Another person walks into the room carrying a huge beam on their shoulder. This protruding beam can injure others as they turn and move if the other person doesn't see it coming and duck out of the way.

Whose piece of wood (sin) do you think will do more damage?

That 'beam' may be a grudge or bitterness or gossip, just to name a few.

The 'stick' could be unkind words.

Both can hurt, but that beam can cause far more damage than the little stick.

Present



Peter came to Jesus in Matthew **18:21-22** and asked, “Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.” Jesus wasn’t saying Peter had to forgive his brother only 490 times. He was reminding Peter that God has forgiven our every sin—many, many sins—sins that nailed Jesus to the cross. Some are worse than others, but all are sin. If God is willing to forgive us of every sin, we need to be willing to forgive others even if they haven't asked.

They may not realize they've done wrong.

They may be so bound by sin they can't do anything else but follow what has control of them.

They are slaves to sin (**Romans 6:16-20**).

They may feel justified in their actions.

They may not realize they are walking in the flesh and not in the Spirit.

That's why the Bible says to 'pray for those who spitefully use you' and to 'love your enemies', 'do good', 'bless and curse not.' Your prayers can make a difference...if not in their life, it will in you.

P_{ractice}

If someone does us wrong, we need to release it to God, forgive that person, and love them. Sometimes that’s easier said than done, but anger, bitterness, and hurt will only fester in our heart and mind making us (and others around us) miserable.

It will block us from hearing God's voice (**Psalms 66:18**).

If not let go of, it can even cost us our soul. Jesus put it plainly in **Matthew 6:14-15** when He instructed the people that if they did not forgive others for the wrong they had done against them, God would not forgive them for their sins either.

Unforgiveness affects more than self; it festers and agitates, causing the person to spread gossip and slander as well as a bad attitude. Attitudes ARE contagious!

Forgiveness releases not just the offender but it also releases you.

Forgiveness displays the heart of God: mercy and love.

Forgiveness makes you more Christ-like (**Luke 23:34**)!

P_{ray}

Let’s take a moment right now to ask God to forgive us and to give us a heart like His so we will forgive others. Repent of any unforgiveness, bitterness, and anger that may be festering in your



heart. Ask Him to help us to display mercy and love to others just as He has extended mercy and love to us. Ask Him to create a clean heart and renew a right spirit within each and every one present (**Psalm 51:10**).

Plus

Forgiveness is not easy, but it is something Christ has commanded each of us to do. This week I want you to think of someone you are having trouble forgiving. It may be a past hurt or it may be more recent. It may be someone at school or work who makes fun of you daily. As difficult as it may be, spend time every day asking God to help you to forgive them. Next, confess with your mouth in prayer, "Lord, I forgive [you fill in the name]." Finally, pray for them. (*You don't know what they are going through that is causing them to behave that way.*) Every time you see a tree, a lumberyard, or a piece of wood, think about the lesson of the stick versus the beam. Choose to lay down your stick, beam, or whatever weight of unforgiveness it is you're carrying. You will find your load will be much lighter as you become more Christ-like.