

Victory Christian Center of Hollywood
A Church appointed to Advance the Kingdom of God! June 30, 2013 Pastor
MC Griffin Campbell, M.Div. MA

Forgiveness is a Choice:

It pleases God and brings glory to Him: Unforgiveness is spiritual Poison-there is a price to pay if we allow it to linger in our heart.

Introduction: As Believers there is a price to pay when we do not forgive. Even though it is difficult- especially when we have experienced wrong by others. We must forgive. Clearly, forgiveness is a command from God. It pleases Him.

Know this: It will not come naturally. It is not easy. It is a process. It must be learned and practiced by Believers daily. Remember: There is a price. The price for unforgiveness is not worth it. We must obey God!

I. What is forgiveness

- (a) Pardon, absolve, or acquit another of an offense
- (b) Cancel a debt

The Bible defines forgiveness as:

- Remit or cancel a debt, to send away
- Let alone, leave, set aside

II. Forgiveness at the core involves a Choice

- (a) Choice is a matter of your will
- (b) This type of forgiveness rests on the power of God working in and through your life by the Holy Spirit

Power Point to Live by: Forgiveness is a decision to please and glorify God.

III. Forgiveness is done by Faith

"For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person-though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die-but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life." Romans 5:6-10:

(A) We forgive by faith, out of obedience to God's word. If you are having trouble forgiving-you are walking in direct disobedience to God's word.

(B) By Faith-Forgive: Since forgiveness goes against our nature, we must forgive by faith, whether we feel like it or not. We must trust God to do the work in us that needs to be done so that the forgiveness will be complete.

Power Point #1. : I believe God honors our commitment to obey Him and our desire to please him when we choose to forgive. He completes the work in his time. We must continue to forgive (our job), by faith, until the work of forgiveness (the Lord's job), is done in our hearts.

Power Point #2: The basic reason that Believers will not forgive is because of self interest. Self has been placed on the throne. Self has taken over and has become the "Master of the soul." Doing it "My way" is top priority.

Power Point #3: They refuse to forgive biblically because they do not realize the magnitude of their forgiveness from the Lord. But more important they do not realize what unforgiveness can bring into their lives.

Power Point #4: Unforgiveness is spiritual poison

Joyce Meyer states: Many people ruin their health and their lives by taking the poison of bitterness, resentment and unforgiveness. [Matthew 18:23-35](#) tells us that if we do not forgive people, we get turned over to the torturers.

Matthew 18:23-35 New International Version (NIV)

²³ “Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴ As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold^[a] was brought to him. ²⁵ Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.

²⁶ “At this the servant fell on his knees before him. ‘Be patient with me,’ he begged, ‘and I will pay back everything.’ ²⁷ The servant’s master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.

²⁸ “But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins.^[b] He grabbed him and began to choke him. ‘Pay back what you owe me!’ he demanded.

²⁹ “His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.’

³⁰ “But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. ³¹ When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened.

³² “Then the master called the servant in. ‘You wicked servant,’ he said, ‘I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. ³³ Shouldn’t you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?’ ³⁴ In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.

³⁵ “This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

IV. Take Note: Forgiveness is demonstrated like this:

- Forgiveness is offered because it is needed for your Victory, not because it is deserved.
 - Forgiveness is a purposeful choice that overshadows emotional responses that are often wrongfully used to legitimize the withholding of forgiveness.
 - Forgiveness is offered because God's grace, mercy and love are active in your life.
 - Forgiveness is ready to be offered before wrongdoers realize their need for forgiveness
 - Forgiveness covers sin in such a way that past sin is not brought up again in an accusing or manipulative manner.
 - Forgiveness is granted for any type of sin, from simple mistakes to the worst sins imaginable.
 - Forgiveness will always be granted to those who confess personal wrongdoing
 - Forgiveness provides the possibility for renewed relationship including to those that are considered hopeless or completely "dead."
 - The phrase "I'm sorry" can obviously describe how one feels but does not specifically indicate that a person is asking for forgiveness.
 - Biblical forgiveness does not remove all consequences that can result from sinful behavior.
 - The question "Will you forgive me?" and the response of "I forgive you" do not guarantee any beneficial results simply because these words are uttered. Biblical forgiveness is the "Start" of the journey to improve or restore a relationship, but it is only the beginning...not the finish line.
 - Those in a sinful relationship may ask, "Will you forgive me?" and hear the reply, "I forgive you," but those words do not provide approval for them to have further interaction or fellowship.
- Power Point: Other scriptural directives must be examined and followed before a relationship can be continued in any dimension after sinful behavior has been admitted and forgiveness.

To get a clearer picture, let look at these passages:

- "Abstain from every form of evil." 1 Thess. 5:22
- "Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Phil. 2:3-4
- "For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all therefore all have died, and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised." 2 Cor. 5:14-15
- "So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual up building" Romans 14:19
- "For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another." Gal. 5:13
- **Philippians 1:6**
And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns. (NLT)
- **Colossians 3:13**
Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. (NIV)

Example: Lewis B. Smedes wrote in his book, *Forgive and Forget*, "When you release the wrongdoer from the wrong, you cut a malignant tumor out of your inner life. You set a prisoner free, but you discover that the real prisoner was yourself."

V. How many Times shall I forgive

- **Matthew 18:21-22**

Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times. [\(NIV\)](#)

This answer by Jesus makes it clear that forgiveness is not easy for us. It's not a one-time choice and then we automatically live in a state of forgiveness. Forgiveness may require a lifetime of forgiving, but it is important to the Lord. We must continue forgiving until the matter is settled in our heart.

Power Point: Help us Holy Spirit to live a life of forgiveness pleasing You at all cost is our desire.

VI. What if the person we need to forgive is not a believer? Unbelievers are unable to fully understand or practice biblical forgiveness.

I Cor. 2: 14: "The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

Pray: Pray: Pray: I have found that daily continual [prayer](#) is one of the best ways to break down the wall of unforgiveness in my heart. When I begin to pray for the person who has wronged me, God gives me new eyes (Eagle eyes) to see and a new heart (a heart of understanding, which is wisdom, understanding and knowledge) to spiritually care for that person.

As I pray, I start to see that person as God sees them, and I realize that he or she is precious to the Lord. I also see them and myself in a new light

We are all guilty of sin and failure. We are in need of God's mercy, love and forgiveness. If God did not withhold his forgiveness from me, why should I withhold my forgiveness from anyone else?

Power Point: Holy Spirit help us to see with Eagle eyes and have a heart of understanding-wisdom, understanding and knowledge-knowing what to do, when to do it, how to do it, who to do it with and the courage to do it God's way. Help us break down the wall of unforgiveness in every area of our lives.

VII. The reason to forgive

A. The best reason to forgive is because Jesus commanded us to forgive. We learn from Scripture, if we don't forgive, neither will we be forgiven:

- **Matthew 6:14-16**

For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins. [\(NIV\)](#)

Power point: Forgiveness a Must for a Believer: We also forgive so that our prayers will not be hindered:

- **Mark 11:25**

And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins. [\(NIV\)](#)

Power Point: Why forgive? We forgive out of obedience to the Lord. It is a choice, a decision we make. However, as we do this "forgiving," we discover the command is in place for our own good.

VIII. How to ask for forgiveness: Examples

Note: When asking for forgiveness, a Believer must stay focus on Christ and be ready to explain the difference Jesus made in their lives (I Pe. 3:13-17).

1. Please forgive me-I'm sorry, I was wrong-I take full responsibility for it. It will not happen again.
2. Please forgive me for my wrong behavior/my wrong actions -they did not please God. I'm sorry-it will not happen again.
3. "I recognize that I have sinned against the Lord and you by (name the specific sins). It is my intention never again to repeat this action-this offense against you or anyone else. I repent and will change by doing the following (name the specific plan of action for change). I have asked the Lord to forgive me, and I want you to know that I want your forgiveness as well. Will you please forgive?"

Let's Pray

#1 Prayer during a time of pain, disappointment, hurt and unforgiveness: Heavenly Father, you are my Refuge and my Rock. You are in control of everything that happens in my life. I am your servant, called by your name. Thank you for giving me the helmet of salvation-my identity in your Son is secure. Nothing can separate me from your love. Thank you for forgiving and cleansing me from unforgiveness. Thank You for taking my pain and disappointment. I forgive others as You have forgiven me.

I put on your breastplate of righteousness. Holy Spirit, search out and bring into the light any area of unforgiveness, bitterness and resentment. I take up the shield of faith to stand against the works of the evil one. In Jesus' name, I stand on the truth of the Word of God: "The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work." (I Jn. 3:8) . Thank You Lord in Jesus name Amen.

#2. A Prayer of Deliverance from Rebellion and disobedience: Lord Jesus, I confess that I have been rebellious -doing it my way-walking in direct disobedient to Your word. I have sinned. I repent and ask for forgiveness, and Your mercy.

I admit, I have sinned against You. I ask for your forgiveness. I bind all evil spirits that is connected with rebellion in my life in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Cleanse, wash and bathe me with your precious blood that was shed on Calvary for my sin.

Lord, I must confess that I have been in rebellion toward-----(name of the person/ and what you did specifically). Thank you for forgiving me.

Heavenly Father, You have said rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft and insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry (I Samuel 15:23). I choose to turn from rebellion and turn to You. Cleanse my heart of all rebellion by Your Blood.

Today: I make a choice now to be submissive and obedient to Your Word in the name of my Lord Jesus Christ.

Heal my wounds of unforgiveness, bitterness, strife and resentment left by the enemy and fill me with your precious and powerful Holy Spirit-Thank You Lord for my Victory-in Jesus name-Amen.