

Abuse and Forgiveness

I. Definition:

***to not hold judgment, resentment, anger, bitterness against someone and to move toward reconciliation.

***to release the bitterness, anger, wrath and pain over to God and His justice

II. Introduction

A) Brief Testimony

B) Reality of pain: Asking you to forgive the person/people who hurt you is like asking you to fly! You can do it.

III. How we deal with pain/abuse.

Questions: Why did this happen to me? How could God let this happen? Is this my fault? Is this what I deserve?

Answers: God is not good/can't be trusted. No one can be trusted. I'm on my own. I can handle this. No one carries about me. I'm dirty. I deserve this.

- 1) "Forgive and forget" or just forget: **IT ALWAYS RESURFACES!** "If I don't think about it, talk about it, deal with it, it will just go away." Not real forgiveness.
- 2) Functional Saviors: Addictions (drugs, alcohol, cutting, etc.), multiple sexual partners (hetero/homo) (relationship savior), success (driven in school, work).
*****For some the pain/hurt/abuse becomes a "license" to give into every impulse. This causes more destruction.*****
- 3) Over guarding the heart: Lack of trust leads to a lack of hope which leads to a lack of love or at least the inability to show it. Either no relationships of any depth or at least no romantic intimacy.
- 4) Hebrews 12:15 "See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no "root of bitterness" springs up and causes trouble and by it many become defiled."
- 5) Overcome by EVIL: anger and bitterness poison from the inside out. This can look different based on the person.

- a) Numbness
- b) Withdrawal
- c) Lashing out in anger/wrath
- d) Hatred
- e) Wishing harm
- f) Seeking vengeance
- g) Victimized in the same manner as you were victimized. (Repeating the crime done to you)

IV. How can we forgive? What's our hope?

- 1) We are commanded to forgive fellow Christians that seek forgiveness.

Matthew 18:21-35 “Then Peter came up and said to him, “Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?” Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times.”

²³ “Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴ When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. ²⁵ And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. ²⁶ So the servant^[i] fell on his knees, imploring him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ ²⁷ And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. ²⁸ But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii,^[j] and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, ‘Pay what you owe.’ ²⁹ So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ ³⁰ He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt. ³¹ When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place. ³² Then his master summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³ And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?’ ³⁴ And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers,^[k] until he should pay all his debt. ³⁵ So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.”

Colossians 3:12-13 ¹² Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, ¹³ bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.”

Luke 17:3-4 “Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him, ⁴ and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, ‘I repent,’ you must forgive him.”

Matthew 5:43-45 “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’⁴⁴ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,⁴⁵ so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven.”

Romans 12:17-21 “¹⁷ Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. ¹⁸ If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. ¹⁹ Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but *rather* give place to wrath; for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,”^[a] says the Lord. ²⁰ Therefore “If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head.” ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

2) Identity in Christ:

- a) “...as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.” Jesus has forgiven us when we were enemies. When we could never even understand how deeply we have offended God.
- b) No condemnation, judgment, hell
- c) Total separation from guilt
- d) No longer enemies but family
- e) Restoration
- f) Reconciliation (right relationship)

**If God can forgive me, love me, accept me, seal me and claim me as His son then I can trust Him to empower me to extend forgiveness to others.

*****As a believer I don't have the **right** to not forgive or release the anger, wrath, bitterness and pain to Christ.*****

**As a forgiven child of God I have the ability and freedom to forgive (to release the angry and bitterness).

3) By trusting Christ with both our healing and His justice

- a) Our healing: Time does not heal all wounds but Jesus can!! Matthew 11:27-30 Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” Only God can handle our deepest pain and He

desires to take our burdens and grant us the power to overcome evil with good.

- b) God's justice: Hear your heavenly Father say as it were "Iv got you and I got this". Romans 12 **"Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord.**

V. What forgiveness is not...

- a) *Being glad about what was bad.* It's ok to be angry at sin. You are not expected to feel good about what happened. Anger against sin and its horrible consequences is fitting up to a point. But don't hold on to it in a vindictive way that desires harm for the person. You can hand it over to him who judges justly 1Peter 2, again and again, and pray for the transformation of the person. **Forgiveness is not feeling good about horrible things.** The pain of the event(s) may never leave completely in this life.
- b) *Excusing the person from serious consequences.* A murder, rapist, child molester, child abuser, ect. Can and should face natural/legal consequences for their crimes/actions. You can forgive someone in Christ and still press charges. You can forgive someone and never see them again for your own protection. You can forgive someone and have them arrested for the protection of others.
- c) *Biblical example* of a God forgiven believer experiencing serious consequences: David 2 Samuel 11-12.

VI. What forgiveness looks like... *When we strive against all thoughts of revenge; when we will not do our enemies mischief, but wish well to them, grieve at their calamities, pray for them, seek reconciliation with them, and show ourselves ready on all occasions to relieve them.* (Thomas Watson, *Body of Divinity*, p. 581)

- a) No desire for revenge: Trusting God with His vengeance (either through Christ sacrifice or their damnation) (Romans12:9)
- b) No desire for them to have a bad life: (1 Thess 5:14) **"See that no one repays another with evil for evil."**
- c) Desiring good for them. (Luke 6:28) **"bless those that curse you".**
- d) Not happy at their sufferings. (Proverbs 24:17)
- e) Love and Pray for them. (Matthew 5:44)
- f) When possible seek reconciliation. (Romans 12:18)

VII. The child of God who has been forgiven of their own sins and healed from the sins of others will be freed to experience amazing levels of intimacy with God and people. God delights in redeeming what seems to be too broke, dirty, far gone, hurt, angry, bitter.

- 1) You cannot handle wrath and vengeance. It will destroy you from the inside out. Holding bitterness toward someone is like drinking poison and hoping it will kill the person you hate. The good news is that Jesus is already victorious and if you will release it to Him He will heal you.
- 2) If you try to ignore the sin committed against you or solve it yourself it WILL rule over you but if you surrender it to Christ He will rule through you.
- 3) We may never get all our “Whys” answered but we will learn to see God’s glory in redeeming all things in our lives. Romans 8:28 “**And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.**”
- 4) We can take great joy in being used of God to teach these same things to someone going through similar situations.

****NOTE:** God is not commanding us to forgive people He has not forgiven or who have not asked for it. He is telling us to leave His justice to Him. This is for our own good and protection. If we try and stand in the place of judgment against someone we will be overcome by evil and will be consumed by anger, wrath, bitterness and hatred. Giving place to wrath and trusting that vengeance is Yahweh’s to wield will free us to be healed by Him.

*****Note:** I must tell the students that when they know their identity in Christ and trust Him for their healing they can RELEASE the anger (wrath), bitterness, condemnation toward their enemy. They can trust God with that person’s judgment (in Christ or before Christ). When this RELEASE happens the healing will go to new levels as love for God and people deepens. Anger directed at the sin and pain may remain but the poison of bitterness is removed evidence by a desire for the enemy’s own reconciliation with God.

VIII. The other side of healing

- a. A Greater Love for Jesus because of a greater knowledge of His redeeming love.
- b. A Greater Love for people.
- c. A greater sensitivity to and discernment of the pain, needs and motives of others.
- d. You are not destined to repeat what was done to you!!

IX. Your new identity

- a. Your pain does not define you.
- b. Your anger does not define you.
- c. What was done to you does not define you.
- d. JESUS CHRIST and Him crucified, raised and exalted above all is WHO defines you. You are in Him and He is in you.

Revelation 7:17 **“For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”**