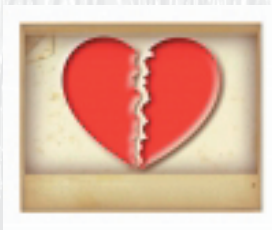


Me, Forgive?!

You will find that being a Christian will often stretch you beyond what you thought was possible. In fact, God frequently requires us to do things that we would never do on our own. One of these areas is forgive those who hurt us. You might be thinking that this is impossible. It is not impossible! You will see that God will not only help you to do this impossible task, but in doing so, He will bring healing and peace in your life.



We know that this theme is important to God because there are many important Scriptures in the Bible about it. The first mention of this in the New Testament is found in Matthew 6, verses 12, 14 & 15. In teaching us how to pray, Jesus said in verse 12, "And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors," ASV. Reading further, verses 14 & 15

Why we Forgive

say: "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." ASV

So we can see that God puts great value on us forgiving those who hurt us. What is the value? He forgives us in the same way that we forgive others.



There are two very important reasons why forgiveness is important to God. One is that God is concerned about the effect unforgiveness has on your life. The second reason is that God is also very much concerned about the person who offended you. After all, Jesus died for them as well! If you will remember these two things, to protect yourself and to be concerned for the welfare of the person who offended you, you will be able to handle this challenge much easier.

He gives Grace!

You have probably seen how unforgiveness has negatively affected someone you know. Something happened to them years ago, and they have never forgotten it and have never gotten over it. It affects them both physically and emotionally. Maybe they end up having to take drugs or medication in order to sleep. They sometimes lash out uncontrollably. If this event is mentioned, they quickly reach the boiling point. A bitter person makes things miserable for themselves and for others.

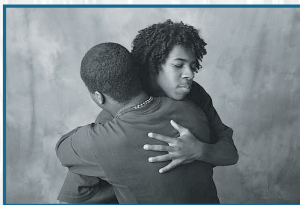
Naturally, God has provided an antidote for bitterness. It is called grace. Many people define grace as undeserved favor. While this is an accurate definition, grace is much more than that. Grace is also God's supernatural ability to work in our lives despite our weaknesses.



Decide to Forgive

It is important to reach out for God's grace immediately when something bad happens and not allow bitterness to step in. Call out on the Lord and ask Him for His help. Put your faith in Him by realizing that the bad event will not control your life. God and His loving help will. Ask God to forgive them. Pray for them and forgive them as well. Declare these things verbally. Refuse to dwell on it. Do not go around, repeating it to others. Do not let resentment set in. Walk and remain in forgiveness.

It is important to remember that your emotions are not the key. Your will is. You must make a decision to forgive and declare this to God. As you do these things, forgiveness will take root and you enable the grace of God to come in and take over.



It is remarkable what God can do in a situation that was so hopeless and hurtful. He can cause everything bad to turn around for our good. And He will too, as you are obedient to forgive.

There are other issues about forgiveness that must be discussed. For instance, to forgive someone does not mean that we should just ignore it and that there should not be any consequences. These issues will be covered in a later lesson. But why don't you take time now, though, to forgive anyone whom you have not yet forgiven. Stop and ask God to forgive you for holding a grudge. Tell Him you forgive them, and then do it. You will be glad that you did!

Forgiveness



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