

Why Unforgiveness Is Not Worth It

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Please turn off your cell phone.

Nelson Mandela who has probably suffered unjustly at the hands of others as much as almost anyone in modern history, and lived to talk about it, made the statement; "Resentment is like drinking poison and then hoping it will kill your enemies." Bitterness and unforgiveness are too costly for us to indulge. It keeps us from being the person God made us to be.

People are imperfect; they make mistakes, they sin, they sometimes do or say things that hurt others. You cannot get through life without experiencing the pain of being hurt or disappointed by someone you love and counted on. How you handle those situations is a big part in demonstrating whether your life is reflecting the teachings and actions of Jesus or not. Sometimes we misjudge people and blame them for things they are not responsible for. It is human to hold a grudge; it is Christ-like to forgive. The only way we can maintain unity among ourselves is to forgive one another. The only way I can keep growing in Christ is to forgive those who have wronged me.

1. Forgive others because you want God to forgive you.

Matthew 6:14-15, 14 For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins. NIV

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

Who comes to mind that you need to forgive?

2. Forgive people who have wronged and offended you because Christ has forgiven you.

Ephesians 4:31-32, 31 Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. 32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. NIV
Colossians 3:12-14, 12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 13 Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. NIV

Tell us about how Christ has forgiven you and what that has done in your life.

3. Forgive if you don't, you give the enemy a foothold.

Romans 12:19-20, 19 Never take revenge, my friends, but instead let God's anger do it. For the scripture says, "I will take revenge, I will pay back, says the Lord." 20 Instead, as the scripture says: "If your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them a drink; for by doing this you will make them burn with shame." 21 Do not let evil defeat you; instead, conquer evil with good. GNT

Ephesians 4:26-27 And "don't sin by letting anger control you." Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, 27 for anger gives a foothold to the devil. NLT

Take a moment and write down the names of people that you struggle to forgive.

4. We forgive because when we do, we are set free.

Luke 6:37 "Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. NIV

Judge = to try, condemn, **Condemn** = pronounce guilty, declare unfit for use **Forgive** = relieve, release

Ask God to help you release those you have not forgiven.

5. If you are struggling to forgive someone begin to pray for them ask God to bless them and do good things for them.

Luke 6:27-28, 27 "But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, 28 bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. NIV

6. It requires love to forgive.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7, 4 Love is patient. Love is kind. Love isn't jealous. It doesn't sing its own praises. It isn't arrogant. 5 It isn't rude. It doesn't think about itself. It isn't irritable. It doesn't keep track of wrongs. 6 It isn't,

happy when injustice is done, but it is happy with the truth. 7 Love never stops being patient, never stops believing, never stops hoping, never gives up. GWT

Ask God: "Help me love those that I have something against."

7. How do you know that you have unforgiveness and bitterness in your heart?

When their name comes up you can't say anything good about them.

You can't quit talking about what they did to you.

When you think about them, or hear someone say something about them you get angry.

You want revenge, you want them to suffer.

In one way or another you are still stuck in the aftermath of what you feel they did that harmed you.

It keeps coming back up after you felt like you had moved on.

Is there someone like this in your life? Can we pray for you that God will help you release them?

8. Jesus' illustration of unforgiveness and its effect on all involved.

Matthew 18:21-35, 21 Then Peter came to him and asked, "Lord, how often should I forgive someone who sins against me? Seven times?" 22 "No, not seven times," Jesus replied, "but seventy times seven!

23 "Therefore, the Kingdom of Heaven can be compared to a king who decided to bring his accounts up to date with servants who had borrowed money from him. 24 In the process, one of his debtors was brought in who owed him millions of dollars. 25 He couldn't pay, so his master ordered that he be sold—along with his wife, his children, and everything he owned—to pay the debt. 26 "But the man fell down before his master and begged him, 'Please, be patient with me, and I will pay it all.' 27 Then his master was filled with pity for him, and he released him and forgave his debt.

28 "But when the man left the king, he went to a fellow servant who owed him a few thousand dollars. He grabbed him by the throat and demanded instant payment. 29 "His fellow servant fell down before him and begged for a little more time. 'Be patient with me, and I will pay it,' he pleaded. 30 But his creditor wouldn't wait. He had the man arrested and put in prison until the debt could be paid in full.

31 "When some of the other servants saw this, they were very upset. They went to the king and told him everything that had happened. 32 Then the king called in the man he had forgiven and said, 'You evil servant! I forgave you that tremendous debt because you pleaded with me. 33 Shouldn't you have mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you?' 34 Then the angry king sent the man to prison to be tortured until he had paid his entire debt.

35 "That's what my heavenly Father will do to you if you refuse to forgive your brothers and sisters from your heart." NLT

Let's have a discussion: *What spoke the most to you in these verses? What do you need to do to obey the truth in these verses?*

Prayer of Forgiveness. Father I confess to you that I have held bitterness and unforgiveness in my heart toward _____. I have felt unjustly wounded by them, but I know that I need to forgive, release, bless and put them in your hands. Help me to let go of my demand for justice toward them and trust you to take care of both me and them. I forgive, release _____ and choose to show mercy to them and free them to be who they are. I bless them, refuse to speak ill of them, and ask that You bless and prosper their lives. I remove any shame and rejection that my offense has put on them. Please forgive me for being offended at _____ and for not releasing and forgiving him/her. I admit that I have struggled with forgiving them. I am asking You to cleanse me of all bitterness, resentment, grudges or judgments that I am holding against them.

Keep blessing them until your heart is free, if it is not working find more and more ways to do it!