

How to Forgive

Luke 6:36 Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

There once was an old banker who refused to pray the words, "forgive us our debts (sins) as we forgive those who are indebted to us." He joked, "Bankers don't forgive debts!"

However, as Christians we are better prepared to forgive others because of our Lord's example of forgiving us our sins; and worship regularly celebrates how God's forgiveness restores our lives.

Forgiveness is a gentle use of power. Obviously, when we are offended, the offending person or group owes us an apology. In effect, they are indebted to us until they seek forgiveness. Their debt is our power over them.

If we have an unforgiving heart, we will forever remind others about the debt they owe. They will never get off the hook. My, what power we have!

When I think of a serious hurt I received by another person in the past, I hoped that that person would finally come around and show genuine sorrow over their actions. It never happened. Instead, they became more ruthless.

As my anger grew, and with no justice in sight, I thought, "God are you on vacation? A couple of lightning bolts might be helpful right now." Of course, this did not help.

Keep in mind that forgiveness and reconciliation are two different things:

1. Forgiveness is possible without genuine remorse from the offending person.
2. Reconciliation means that both forgiveness was given and the other person repented and made amends for what they did.

We can offer forgiveness alone, but reconciliation requires the other person to act, and that may never happen.

"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." Matthew 5:7

When we let Jesus work within our hearts, we, the undeserving, receive His forgiveness. Jesus forsakes the power he has over us. We are not condemned. In stead, our debt to God is canceled.

So, what do you think?

Should we forgive a person who never repents or shows sorrow?

Yes, to heal ourselves and to follow Jesus' example!

When we refuse to forgive someone, we suffer because we are carrying around anger and resentment. The energy we extend being angry can cripple us; and worst yet, it can destroy our faith.

To hand over the offending person to God is to be released of the negative and self-destructive power of anger.

Therefore, forgiveness actually creates self-health. We are healed because we no longer are carrying around on our backs the huge monster of anger and resentment.

The reason people refuse to accept our forgiveness is because they do not wish to accept that they are guilty of offending us. If they consider themselves not guilty, there is no need for forgiveness.

May God help you in the challenging business of forgiving others.

God bless!

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