

Mark 11:24-26

²⁴ Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. ²⁵ And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. ²⁶ But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.

The Seven Myths

Seven myths concerning forgiveness:

- ❖ They need to ask me to forgive them
- ❖ I do not need to forgive God
- ❖ I am supposed to feel like forgiving
- ❖ One time is good enough
- ❖ The offender has to be living
- ❖ The pain will immediately go away
- ❖ The relationship will be restored

They need to ask me to forgive them-

Obadiah 1: 3-4; Luke 1:51-52, 11:37-43, 18:9-14; 1 Cor 1:29; 1 Tim 3:6; 1 Pet. 5:5

People withhold the forgiveness they need to give because of PRIDE. Pride brings self-righteousness. "I am not taking the first step. They hurt me. I will forgive them when they ask me. They haven't asked me yet, so they must not want it yet." These words drip with pride. The need to forgive is in you. You have been offended; you need to forgive. Forgiveness is about you. If you have a headache, take Tylenol or some type of headache medicine- If you have been offended, then take forgiveness!

Some rhetorical questions-

Did Jesus wait? Did He see more value in waiting for people to come to the cross and apologize? Now really- When is your enemy going to apologize? The angry mob and the vindictive priests were never going to ask Jesus for forgiveness when He was upon the cross at Calvary.

Matt. 5:43-44, 46; Matt. 18:15; John 15:1-13; Rom 5:1-10; 1 John 3:16; Luke 10:25-37

We must forgive. Is the issue time? Jesus knew he did not have much time left. We think we have years to spare. Jesus self-concept and immediate purpose gave Him a clear mind, while often our thinking is clouded.

Mark 13:32 But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.³³ Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye **know not when the time is.**

The truth is we do not have much time either. Offer unrestrained forgiveness. It is your gift to give!

I do not need to forgive God-

“Why would I need to forgive God? He is a good God and would never do anything to hurt me.

God is a good God, but he will certainly hurt you!

Amos 3:6, Isa 45:7

God does not create moral evil (Jas 1:13), However He does **author the situation** that causes us pain. It is by His hand and He is in control (Heb. 12:2). The goal is personal growth which there is no one better at making that happen than God.

The patriarch Job-

Job suffered a depth of loss that is irreconcilable. Money, houses, and camels are all soulless commodities that can be replaced. His children were not.

Job 42:15-many Christians rejoice that Job was given three of the most beautiful daughters in the land. However, how do you replace a loved one? To lose three daughters by requirement of death, in order to gain three others-seems like great pain. Job received a double blessing of everything, but still walked around gravestones that carried his name.

This verse brings rejoicing-

Job 42:12 So the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses.

This verse deserves as much intellectual reflection as verse twelve-

Job 42: 11 Then came there unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house: and they bemoaned him, and comforted him over all the evil that the LORD had brought upon him: every man also gave him a piece of money, and every one an earring of gold.

Matt 5:45; 1Peter 4:1-9

Job was a portrait of our humanity-he had some self-righteous issues. He felt the pain in the process of growth. Our humanity often defines what is good or bad by the level of pain it brings. God does not.

In general a physician's process to remove a boil-

A boil can bring great pain, however the process to remove it may be more painful than just leaving it and enduring it. The doctor cuts the skin, lances the boil, and drains the fluid. This is very painful, but just the start. Next the doctor begins to press and push against the wound, that the core may come out. One patient commented that the pain of removing a boil is so intense that they would have chosen to live with the daily pain of keeping the boil.

This idea will never work for the long haul- a boil untreated can bring infection and require far more serious procedures up to removal of a body part.

1 Cor 10:13; Jer 29:11

Due to the pain that is suffered by the healing process, we may think it's worth not going through it-but God doesn't. God is the Great Physician and will never require of us what we are not able to handle. He will never order a surgery if He knows that we will not survive the process. God is all-powerful and He is good. He deserves all the credit and even more so credit for all things- the sun and the rain. He is Lord of everything and it is this very attribute which enables Him to bring eternal good out of temporal evil. When you begin to trust Him-you will begin to forgive Him.

I am supposed to feel like forgiving-

Gal. 5:14-26; Eph 4:31-32; 2 Cor 2:10-11

You don't have to feel it. Forgiveness is a decision empowered by the spirit of God. Not an emotional act, but a spiritual one. Does anyone think that Jesus felt like speaking forgiveness while His blood soaked the rough timber of a cross? He was God- but He was a man as well. Feelings had to be disengaged in order for Him to maintain His inner wholeness.

You may want feelings to go away so that you can ultimately forgive. The converse is true. We have to forgive so that feelings will ultimately go away.

One time is good enough-

Matt 18:21-30; Luke 17: 1-10; Col 3:13; John 3:17, 19-21

James 4:17 *Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin*
Satan's only real strength is deception. He can hinder our growth by influencing us to do the wrong things or by trying to prevent us from doing the right things. Forgiving is one of the right things.

There is some who have the opinion that I did it once, and they will let us know when things change. Like a husband who tells his wife one time that he loved her. Maybe on their wedding day, and when things have changed he will let her know. Until then what he said once is what stood. This is faulty reasoning in respect to giving forgiveness, because things have changed. In every act of forgiveness we change. God can call you to a deeper level of forgiveness and ask you to forgive again.

An interesting thought- Would God allow us to be hurt again and again just to teach us how to forgive? We need to get this right the first time.

Forgiving is giving up your right to punish the offenders. We let them go. When they hurt us again...we let them go. We take our hands from around their neck, we lay down the gavel. We should forgive till this process is complete.

"A forgiveness thermometer"- When you can enter a room where the person that offended you is and expend all your energy making them comfortable and at ease, you are getting really close to the level of forgiveness that God would expect of you.

The offender has to be living-

The main reason that people don't have to be living for you to grant forgiveness because it is not about them, it is about you. As long as you are breathing the healing power of forgiveness can work.

- They don't have to ask
- They don't have to be sitting in front of you
- The prisoner you set free is you.

The pain will immediately go away –

2 Cor 12:1-10; 1 Pet. 2:18-25

Consider this: Someone walks up to you and pops you in the mouth. They begin to apologize profusely and explain that occasionally my arm just flies out in random movements. They ask you to forgive them. You understand that the action was not personal and you grant them forgiveness.

Here is the question that dispels the myth: When you forgive them does your face stop hurting?

The sting does not go away, it may soften over time. We cannot harbor unrealistic expectations. Saints in part, have an ideology that develops-if I do right, then God will do right... and remove my pain. God will do right, but probably won't remove your pain. Paul prayed three times for his pain to be removed-Jesus responded "And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor 12:9).

The relationship will be restored –

It would be nice if all of our damaged relationships would be restored after extending our forgiveness. However, this may not happen due to the fact we do not have control over the offender. They can refuse your act of grace and never speak to you again.

They may choose not to forgive, and there is not much you can do about it.

A universal principle: You can only change yourself. No one else.

We have control over our own actions. Also, we need the Spirit of God to give us wisdom and direction to do what is best. If the once broken relationship is restored-then count it a blessing. Just remember the person's response is not in your power.

Forgiveness is foundational to the message of the New Covenant and stands as the defining aspect of Jesus' salvational doctrine.

Matt. 6:9-15; Mark 11:24-26; Matt 18:21-35

Granting forgiveness is not optional

Granting forgiveness is non-negotiable

Granting forgiveness cannot simply remain under consideration.

Granting forgiveness is commanded.