

INNER HEALING II: LEARNING TO FORGIVE

Bev Robinson

I. INTRODUCTION TO LEARNING TO FORGIVE

Forgiveness is a central theme throughout the Scriptures, both Old and New Testament. I know we all want God's forgiveness. It is so important that Jesus makes this following bedrock foundational statement with two pretty big "ifs."

¹⁴ "For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.¹⁵ "But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions. Matt 6:14-15 (NASB).

II. HOW DO YOU FORGIVE SOMEONE WHO HAS HURT YOU DEEPLY?

First forgiving someone does not excuse what they did to you. I believe we get the two confused in our mind. Does my forgiving let them off the hook? Absolutely not. They will have to reap what they have sown. They may not know they have to reap the results of what they have done. But our forgiveness of them turns them over to God and He can work with them in complete freedom without our hindrance in anyway.

Now you may think at the time you are walking in the hurt that is a good thing because you think, "Go get 'em God. Kick 'em in the gut. Smear them out. Make of them a greasy spot." You say, "Oh I wouldn't do that. That is not Christ like." Then I think you have not been hurt real badly or your emotions have been so severely damaged you don't remember how to feel.

III. YOU NEED COMPLETE HONESTY WITH GOD AND WITH ANOTHER PERSON

Once someone attacked me so severely that I used the statement that I felt like putting bombs under their car or snakes in their mail box. In the previous article I wrote this idea: God desires truth in your innermost being. God's truth is constant. But when we are hurt deeply we can't always see God's truth. Our truth can have a mixture of error and the error is what God wants to get out of all situations. When you get down to the complete honest "nut" of how you are feeling, good and bad, God can begin to cleanse or affirm your thoughts and get you started back on the right track. His track. He says, vengeance is His and He will repay. Not with smearing out or making a greasy spot, but only He knows someone's heart and knows how to orchestrate His vengeance. It probably won't be at all like we would do. That is why we are to leave it up to Him and just do what He says.

"Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath *of God*, for it is written, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY," says the Lord." Romans 12:19 (NASB)

IV. SO WHAT DO YOU DO NOW?

You act in accordance with Scripture. The Bible tells us the only thing we are to owe anyone is to love them. The first and second commandment speaks of loving God and each other, and in the beatitudes Jesus said we are to love our enemies. Look at these three Scriptures.

8 Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled *the law*. Romans 13:8 (NASB)

³⁶ "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?"³⁷ And He said to him, " **'YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART , AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL , AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND .'**³⁸ "This is the great and foremost commandment.³⁹ "The second is like it, '**YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.** Matthew 22:36-39 (NASB)

²⁷ "**But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,²⁸ bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.** Luke 6:27-28 (NASB)

V. THIS PARABLE TELLS THE IMPORTANCE OF FORGIVING

Jesus tells Peter and the disciples in Matthew 18: 21-35 (It would be good now for you to stop and read this passage.) This explains well the power of unforgiveness and telling the results of what will happen if we don't forgive. I don't know about you, but if I know what happens when I don't do what God tells me, it helps me sooner to get my act together.

To sum up this story in this Scripture; Peter asks Jesus, "How many times do you forgive someone? 7 times?" Jesus answers him by saying, "No you forgive 70 times 7." That means you keep forgiving into infinity. Then He illustrates with the story of the kingdom of heaven, the king and his servants. That you will be thrown into prison and the torturers come if you don't forgive from your heart.

Forgiveness is a choice you have concerning others who hurt you. And you are to choose to forgive again every time the incident comes up, even if you keep remembering the hurt. You don't have to feel like forgiving. You may even feel as I wrote before, like you want to put snakes in mailboxes and bombs under cars. But with an act of your will, you choose to forgive. We don't act on what we feel but instead, on what Scripture says we are to do.

Back to Romans 13:8. We all owe each other love. So you can cancel the debt owed to you. If the hurt is very deep you can only do this through Jesus. In fact, if it is shallow, you can only do it through Jesus. Without Him we can do nothing.

Ras talked once with a father whose wife left him with three young children. He asked the man and he could not forgive her. He asked the father, "Could you let Jesus do it through you?"

Let Jesus forgive through you. Then every time it comes to mind forgive again, even 70 times 7 times. It will eventually drop into your heart.

If we don't forgive, we are imprisoned and tortured in our minds, I suppose, on into eternity 70 times 7.

I pray for your freedom .

Next article: Asking for forgiveness.

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