

Introduction to Inner Healing III: Asking For Forgiveness

Bev Robinson

Forgiveness is a two way street. In your lifetime you will have to forgive many times and you will need to ask for forgiveness many times. With some it is easier to forgive and with others it is easier to ask for forgiveness. With others it is not easy to do either. Maybe we are all in that last category.

In the last article I wrote that, if you don't forgive, you will remain in prison and tortured to some degree until you decide to forgive as described in Matthew 18:

And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him. My heavenly Father will also do the same to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart. Matt 18:34-35 (NASB)

The following Scripture describes Jesus preparation of His disciples for the coming of the Holy Spirit. This shows His power in and on us to forgive sins.

Again he said, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you." Then he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, they are forgiven. If you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven. John 20:21-23 (NLT)

Have you noticed that the hardest person to forgive is our own self?

Someone stayed in our home once and left a little Scripture plaque. "A good marriage is the result of two good forgivers." This is powerful and has much truth.

How do you ask for forgiveness?

1. Ask God to show you where you are at fault.
2. Wait on the Lord for the right time and place
3. Don't demand forgiveness from the one you are addressing.

The first thing we often want to do when we are hurt is to blame someone. When people have come to me for counsel in their marriage, the first thing they want to do is tell how bad the other spouse has acted. If that person remains there, the marriage is doomed to failure. I tell them we can't fix your mate. Let's talk about you. It sometime takes awhile to see one's own part in what has happened. That must happen before anything can be resolved.

For sure, usually both partners have done and said things that are hard to forgive.

There is a Scripture somewhere that says you don't know the truth until you hear both sides of the story. So someone has to start somewhere in this process of forgiveness. Why not you?

ILLUSTRATION

Early in our marriage, Ras and I had some difficulties to work out. I was a very self-sufficient person. I left home at 15 and lived with a cousin my same age. We had very

little supervision. I worked my way through college and made my own decisions until Ras and I married when I was 21. I did not know how to talk things through since I had always thought my own things through and made my own decisions. I was head strong, but Ras was more head strong than I was.

When I heard someone talk about Ephesians 5 and wives submitting to their husbands, I had no idea what they were talking about except I thought, "Yes, I do that --- after I lose the argument."

There was a friend who always wanted me to take a course in something -- flower arranging, bread making or something else I had no interest in. She finally said, "If you don't go with me this time I won't ask you again." I knew I was about to lose a friendship. I didn't really know what I was getting into, but I went with her to a course on submission. I really had never heard about the psyche of a man and it was real eye opening and how important it was for him to lead and how important his work was to him. That was what God created him to do.

Ras and I were not in a good time of marriage. We were arguing a lot and having some big stand offs. We had recently bought a small horse farm in Tennessee and it required a lot of work. We raised beef and pigs, and all the pent up control and argumentation was pouring out of me. The course on submission I was taking was showing me how my behavior had helped cause some of our problems. Not all of them, but I saw that I was responsible for my part and I could not change him.

The first thing in seeking forgiveness is to ask God where you are at fault. God really convicted me of the things I had done wrong.

Second is waiting on the right time and place. Ras loved the beautiful Tennessee State Parks. I asked if I could pick him up after work and go to one. I had previously listed things on a legal pad that God had convicted me of. I wrote a couple of pages full. I started by saying I want to tell you some things I have done wrong in our marriage.

Third. Don't demand the other person's forgiveness. Because we were in such a bad place with each other, the first thing Ras said was, "You are right you have done some things wrong." But what he said didn't faze me because God had so done a work in my heart. I did not retaliate, and the next day he said "Well let me tell you why you have done those things," and he too began to asking forgiveness.

Much later when our children were teens, at a time when things got rough, we did the same with them, and instructed them to do the same with us and each other. They had seen us walk in forgiveness and our family was changed.

Do you need to ask someone's forgiveness?

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