

Letting Go of the Past to Embrace the Future

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(Colossians 3:13) bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.

If we focus on the right things, we will see success in life. Conversely if we focus on the wrong things in life, it will destroy our life.

What we focus on is very important.

You will never do what is important to you until you see the **value** of it.

If you are not willing to let go of your past, you will not embrace what is there in the future.

“If we really want to love, we must learn to forgive.” – **Mother Theresa**

Simple Quiz

1. A person should not be forgiven until he asks for it. T/F
2. When I have forgiven I have minimized the pain caused by the offense. T/F
3. Forgiveness includes restoring trust and reuniting a relationship. T/F
4. You haven't really forgiven until you've forgotten the offense. T/F
5. When I know someone else is being hurt, it is my duty to forgive the offender. T/F

All five of the above statements should be **false** according to the Bible.

So what is true forgiveness? So why must you forgive and how do you forgive?

What is real forgiveness?

1. Real forgiveness is unconditional.

You offered it up whether or not the person asks for it or not.

None of us were asking Jesus to forgive us. But Jesus gave His life up for us without us asking.

Forgiveness is always your initiative. In fact you always have to give forgiveness whether the person ask from you or not.

So forgiveness is something you give out of grace.

2. Forgiveness does not minimize the seriousness of the offense.

You are actually cheapening forgiveness if you are using forgiveness to just minimize the seriousness of the offense.

When it is forgiveness, learn to treat it with respect.

(Proverbs 26:18) Like a madman who throws firebrands, arrows, and death,

(Proverbs 26:19) Is the man who deceives his neighbor, And says, "I was only joking!"

Do not joke about it when you are asking for forgiveness. So do not hurt your neighbor and end up only saying you are joking. So do not treat forgiveness as a joke.

3. Forgiveness isn't resuming a relationship without change.

Forgiveness is what you give as the person who was offended and give it by grace.

But resuming the relationship is the other party who has to do to mend the broken relationship.

There must be **three things** the offender must do.

3.1 Repentance

"I know what I did wrong to you, I will change. Please forgive me."

3.2 Restitution

Example, if you burn down someone's house, you cannot just say you are sorry about it. That is not enough. You need to restore what you have destroyed.

3.3 Rebuilding Trust

Rebuilding trust takes a very long time. Trust can be broken overnight and it takes a long time to be rebuilt again.

You do not need to trust the person you forgive immediately.

Trust takes time to rebuild.

Therefore forgiveness is based on grace. Not because the person deserves it. In fact no one does.

4. Forgiveness isn't forgetting what's happened.

It is true you sometimes just cannot forget a hurt.

To forget something, you need to refocus on something else.

Forgiveness requires you not to keep on looking at the situation.

5. Forgiveness isn't your right when you weren't the one hurt.

You can't forgive people who didn't hurt you. It is the person who was hurt.

You cannot represent the person to ask for forgiveness.

So why must you forgive those who hurt you?

1. God forgiven you.
2. Bitterness and resentment will destroy your life.
3. If you do not forgive you will not be forgiven.

You will never embrace the new until you have let go of the old. Do not hold on to the old offenses. If not you are holding captive to your future.

Renew is to replace or repair something that is broken or worn out.

Stop blaming everyone around you and start looking at yourself to wonder how to make the change.

Take **responsibility** of your own life.

Life is 10% "what happened" & 90% how we react to it.

So when God deals with you, He takes away all the excuses and blaming so you can begin to accept responsibility to your actions to renew your mind.

You need to take time to reflect what you are giving values to. Values become a guiding factor in your life. You will not do something until you see the value in it.

So what are values?

1. What's most important to you.
2. What you stand for.
3. And what you are willing to pay the price for.

(Hebrews 12:16) Make sure that no one is immoral or godless like Esau. He traded his birthright as the oldest son for a single meal.

(Hebrews 12:17) And afterward, when he wanted his father's blessing, he was rejected. It was too late for repentance, even though he wept bitter tears.

Esau sold his birthright for a moment of joy. And he was never given the blessing initially planned for him even though he cried.

Do not value something based on circumstances as you will give value for that only **temporarily**. That very often distract you from the course and destiny that God has for you.

Do not go for things that are **momentarily**. *"Is it really so important to you right now?"*

Instead look at your life and start evaluating on how God made for you.

Our whole entire life (success and failures) are all based on a value judgment. *"Is forgiveness important to you? Is forgiving the person, friends, family important to you?"* It is all about value judgment.

Conclusion ...

How do I forgive people?

1. Give up your right to get even.

(Romans 12:19) Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord.

Nobody can really live up to your expectation because none of us are perfect. Instead live it to God. Unwillingness to forgive each other is the ultimately hurt.

Release your forgiveness!

2. Learn how to set boundaries.

If a conned man has con you before, then learn to build boundaries. A boundary is a wall with gate that allows good things to come in and bad things to go out. So if you do not have boundaries, you are allowing good and bad to enter your life.

Keep yourself pure all the time.

3. Learn to respond to evil with good.

How you know if you already forgive? When you respond to your enemies by loving them.

(Luke 6:27) "But I say to you who hear: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,

(Luke 6:28) bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you.

4. Repeating these steps as long as necessary.

Forgiveness is rarely a one-time thing. Forgiveness is a continuous thing.

Forgiveness is something that you do not count.

Every time you remember the hurt, you pray for the person. And release it to God until you do not feel the pain anymore.

However there is something else **even** better than forgiving and forgetting ... it is **forgiving and remember how God can turn the bad situation into something good.**

Sermon taken from <http://www.bryanchung.sg>
