

STUDY NOTES FROM KAREN HOERDEL'S "DOORWAYS TO THE DEVIL" TEACHING SERIES

Forgiveness

Forgiveness: the act of excusing or pardoning another person in spite of his errors and shortcomings; completely canceling the debt.

John 20:19-23 Jesus gives a ministry of forgiveness to all disciples

James 5:14-15 Healing and the forgiveness of sin

Matthew 5:43-47 Love your enemies

Matthew 5:22-26 Be reconciled to one another

Matthew 6:12-15 Neither will your Father forgive you

Matthew 18:21-35 Seventy times seven and the parable of the wicked servant

Mark 11:25-26 Forgive or the Father will not forgive you

II Cor. 2:6-11 Unforgiveness gives advantage to Satan

Hebrews 12:14-15 A root of bitterness troubles you and defiles many

Ephesians 4:31-32 Let all bitterness be put away from you

James 3:14-16 Envy and strife produce confusion and evil

I John 2:9-12 Hatred is darkness, love is abiding in the light

Job 42:10 Turned the captivity around to healing and restoration

Forgiveness is not an emotion; it is a decision

CONFESS admit your sin of bitterness, unforgiveness, etc.

REPENT turn away from your sin

FORGIVE others, yourself, God

To be forgiven, we must forgive (Matt. 6:14-15). To have our prayers answered, we must forgive (Mk. 11:25, Ps. 66:17-18). More problems are rooted in unforgiveness than any one cause. The quickest way for God to run you over to the torturers is for you to hold unforgiveness in your heart. (Read Matt. 18:21-35). When demons see sin in our lives, they have the legal (God granted) right to move in on us. When we are dwelling in the secret place of the Most High (being under God's authority), then we are abiding under the shadow (protection) of the Almighty (Ps. 91:1-16).

Unforgiveness opens the door of our lives to self-pity, hatred, anger, resentment, criticism, bitterness, depression and many other problems, which have a damaging effect on our bodies. If the truth were known, a great percentage of physical sickness can be traced to unforgiveness. One cannot deny that there is a strong relationship between the two.

Forgiveness is not an emotion, it is a decision. God has never said that we have to “feel like” forgiving, but He has commanded us to forgive. One must decide and choose to forgive. God’s power in that person then makes forgiveness a reality.

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you any person or persons (including yourself) toward whom you have unforgiveness or even a negative, critical, resentful thought. List their names: _____

By an act of your will choose to forgive them and pray this prayer from your heart:
Father, in the Name of Jesus, I have not loved the following people (name people and groups) who have hurt and disappointed me. I have held unforgiveness in my heart. I call upon you, Father, to help me forgive them and to help me love and understand them as only you can do. I cannot do it, Lord, without you. Please forgive me and work forgiveness in my heart because I ask for it in the Name of Jesus. Lord, I have another confession to make. I also have not loved or forgiven myself. Please forgive me. I do now choose to love and forgive myself in the Name of Jesus. Amen.

FORGIVENESS

The need for forgiveness is one of the basic foundational truths of the Christian faith. It was Christ’s sacrificial death on the cross which set the framework by which God could, upon our repentance, forgive us and welcome us into His family. In addition, we find that Scripture is full of references to the necessity of our extending forgiveness to others.

In the Hebrew and Greek sense of the original words, however, there is always the important element of the complete removal of the cause of offense, and deliverance from the jus penalty. God’s total forgiveness of us through Christ’s sacrificial death on the cross is the Christian’s model of forgiveness.

The dictionary gives the following definitions of forgiveness:

- To excuse for a fault or offense
- To cease to feel resentment against
- To renounce anger or resentment against
- To absolve from payment of
- To give up resentment of our claim to requital for

It is interesting to note that even in the dictionary definitions, the concept of dealing with our emotions is a necessary component of forgiveness. Let us take a closer look at the Scriptural references for forgiveness.

God’s view of forgiveness:

We are to forgive one another even as God forgives us (Eph. 4:32, Col. 3:13).

Our forgiveness towards others is essential if God is to forgive us (Matt. 6:14-15 - this refers to specific acts we have done, not to our salvation).

How much God has forgiven us (Matt. 18:21-35, Col. 1:14, 19-22, Rom. 5:7-10).

We are to love our enemies and pray for our persecutors (Luke 6:27-28, 35-37).

Results of unforgiveness:

You are not forgiven by God and have broken fellowship with Him (Matt. 6:14-15, 11:25-26).

You are open to deception (I John 2:9-11).

You may have physical reactions. (Many diseases are caused or aggravated by bitterness.*)

You may develop a root of bitterness (Heb. 12: 14-15).

Forgiveness is:

An act of your will.

Choose to forgive.

Confess your sin of unforgiveness.

Accept God's forgiveness (I John 1:9).

A process that may take some time to complete. (Don't depend on your emotional state to judge the forgiveness.)

Our will does not have complete control over our emotions.*

Our actions do have the power to change our feelings.

*None of These Diseases, S.I. McMillan, Fleming Revell Co., 1963. Chapter 10.

*Ibid., Chapter 13.

Show me a person who has learned to forgive,
and I'll show you a person without an inferiority complex.

Show me a person who has learned to forgive,
and I'll show you a person who cannot be wounded.

Show me a person who has learned to forgive,
and I'll show you a person emotionally sound and in control.

Show me a person who has learned to forgive,
and I'll show you a person unfettered by what others do to them.

Show me a person who has learned to forgive,
and I'll show you a person free to love and soar to amazing heights.

Show me a person who has learned to forgive,
and I'll show you a person who is free and unbound by the cares of this life.

Show me a person who has learned to forgive,
and I'll show you a person without bitterness, envy, greed, hatred.

Show me a person who has learned to forgive,
and I'll show you a person who can remove walls, barricades, barriers, and can set people free.

Show me a person who has learned to forgive,
and I'll show you someone who is a pleasure and comfort to be around.

Isaiah 58:6 "...let the oppressed go FREE"

Forgiveness
By Jay and Sally Lee
Freedom Ministries

God loves and forgives you. These are simple words that we've often heard. But, how many really believe this statement? We've ministered to Christians who had difficulty believing that God loved and forgave them. Some refused to forgive those who had wounded or hurt them. Many were tormented, refusing to forgive themselves for sins of the past. Some even thought they had blasphemed the Holy Spirit and could not be forgiven.

Know that God loves you. John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." You are the whosoever the scripture talks about. Jesus came to pay the price on the cross for you. God not only loves you but He will forgive you of all your sins. I John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." This is a wonderful promise. We don't have to live in guilt and condemnation for sins of the past. The blood of Jesus was shed to cover all our sins.

In Matthew 18 we read how we must forgive others. The story is about the servant who owed a great debt to the king. The king forgave the debt and the servant went on his way. Then the servant found a fellow servant who owed a small debt to him and demanded payment. The fellow servant could not pay the debt. The servant who had been forgiven much was not willing to forgive the little debt that was owed to him. When the king found out about this he was angry and had the servant who had been forgiven delivered over to the tormentors until he should pay all that he owed. Likewise God will turn over to (demonic) tormentors those who refuse to forgive.

When we don't forgive ourselves we are turned over to the tormentors. Demon spirits are experts in tormenting. They torment with guilt, condemnation, defeat, depression,

self-hatred, hopelessness and thoughts of suicide. Some Christians feel they have blasphemed the Holy Spirit and can never be forgiven. If they truly had committed the unpardonable sin, they would no longer care if they had blasphemed or not. Their conscience would have been seared and they would have no desire to return to God. Remember the scripture says in Romans 5:20 "...where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." Even the most shameful sin can be forgiven and will be forgiven by God. We must remember to forgive ourselves just as God has forgiven us.

There is a simply ways to be set free from the tormenters that entered due to unforgiveness. First you must confess your sin to God and repent. Repentance is turning away from your sin and determining not to do it again. Second, receive God's forgiveness, knowing that you have been cleansed by the blood of Jesus. Third, forgive all those who have ever hurt you. This doesn't mean that you always agree with what the person has done, but you make the choice to forgive. As you realize and accept that God has forgiven you, forgiveness toward others becomes easier. Fourth, you must forgive yourself. Perhaps this is difficult for you to do, but remember it's very important. Fifth, you must take authority over the demon tormenters that entered you because of your unforgiveness. Don't ask them to leave, but command them to go in Jesus name. After the demons are gone, fill your house with the opposite of what was cast out. For example, if you cast out a spirit of depression you should meditate on scriptures about the joy of the Lord. Where there was a spirit of sexual impurity, fill your house with holiness.

Having done these things it will be easier for you to realize and know God's love and forgiveness. Remember that you must walk in forgiveness toward everyone, including yourself.

I John 3:16 says, "Hereby perceive the love of God, because He laid down His life for us... ."

Twelve Steps to Forgiveness*

You may say, "I can't forgive this person because he hurt me so badly. Yes, the pain is real. Nobody has really forgiven someone without acknowledging the hurt and the hatred which are involved. But until you forgive that person he will continue to hurt you because you have not released yourself from the past. Forgiveness is the only way to stop the pain.

Here are 12 simple steps you can use to walk through the process of forgiving someone who hurt you in the past. Following these steps will help you unchain yourself from the past and get on with your life:

- 1) Make a list of the names of the persons who offended you. Describe the specific wrongs you suffered (e.g. rejection, deprivation of love, injustice, unfairness, physical, verbal, sexual or emotional abuse, betrayal, neglect, etc.) Of the hundreds of people who have completed this list in my counseling office, 95 percent put father and mother as number one and two. Three out of the first four names on most lists are close relatives. The two most overlooked people for these lists are God and yourself. God doesn't need to be forgiven, but we sometimes hold false expectations of God that lead us to anger or bitterness toward Him. We need to release God from those expectations

and feelings. And some of us need to forgive ourselves for weaknesses and sins which God has long since forgiven.

2) Face the hurt and the hate. Write down how you feel about these people and their offenses. Remember: It is not a sin to acknowledge the reality of your emotions. God knows exactly how you feel, whether you admit it or not. If you bury your feelings you will bypass the possibility of forgiveness. You must forgive from your heart.

3) Acknowledge the significance of the cross. It is the cross of Christ that makes forgiveness legally and morally right. Jesus took upon Himself all the sins of the world—including yours and those of the person who have offended you and He died “once for all” (Hebrews 10:10). The heart cries, “It isn’t fair! Where’s the justice?” It’s in the Cross.

4) Decide that you will bear the burden of each person’s sin. (Galatians 6:1,2) This means that you will not retaliate in the future by using the information about their sin against them (Luke 6:27-34, Proverbs 17:9). All true forgiveness is substitution as Christ’s forgiveness of us was.

5) Decide to forgive. Forgiveness is a crisis of the will, a conscious choice to let the other person off the hook and free yourself from the past. You may not feel like making this decision, but this is crisis of the will. Since God tells you to, you can choose to do it. The other person may truly be in the wrong and subject to church discipline and even legal action. But that’s not your primary concern. Your responsibility is to let him off your hook. Make that decision now; your feelings of forgiveness will follow in time.

6) Take your list to God and pray the following: “I forgive (name) for (list of offenses).” If you have felt bitter toward this person for some time, you may want to find a Christian counselor or trusted friend who will pray with you about it (James 5:16).

7) Destroy the list. You are now free. Do not tell the offenders what you have done. Your forgiveness is between you and God only! The person you may need to forgive could be dead.

8) Do not expect that your decision to forgive will result in major changes in the other persons. Instead, pray for them (Matthew 5:4) so they, too, may find the freedom of forgiveness (Galatians 5:1, 13, 14).

9) Try to understand the people you have forgiven. They are victims also.

10) Expect positive results of forgiveness in you. In time you will be able to think about the people who offended you without feeling hurt, anger or resentment. You will be able to be with them without reacting negatively.

11) Thank God for the lessons you have learned and the maturity you have gained as a result of the offenses and your decision to forgive the offenders (Romans 8:28, 29).

12) Be sure to accept your part of the blame for the offenses you suffered. Confess your failure to God and to others (I John 1:9) and realize that if someone has something against you, you must go to that person (Matthew 5:23-26).

*Excerpted from “Victory Over Darkness” by Neil Anderson, Chapter 11, “Healing Emotional Wounds from Your Past”, pages 203-205.

“Unforgiveness”

By Geri McGhee

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“For if you forgive men for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.” Matthew 6:14-15

We not only have a need for God to forgive us but we must forgive others and our self as well. In John 13:34-25, Jesus said, "A new Commandment I give to you that you love one another as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." The Christian is called not only to love his neighbor and his brother but also to love his enemy (Matthew 5:47).

I Corinthians 13:4-7 says, "Love is patient, love is kind, and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered (forgives), does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things." If love is all these things, that is just the opposite.

God will forgive us only to the extent we can forgive others and our self. Forgiveness is not an emotion but it is a choice. We do not have to feel like it, want to forgive, like to forgive, think it is fair to forgive or even that those we are having a problem with are worthy of our forgiveness. We choose to forgive because we love God and want to obey and please Him more than we want to hold on to unforgiveness.

To forgive means the act of excusing or pardoning another in spite of his slights, shortcomings and errors. If I truly forgive, it means I will feel that same about a person after he has hurt me as I did before he hurt me. To forgive means to transfer a case from our court room to God's court room. To put it simply, I get off my judge's bench where I have been judge, make a choice to forgive and take the person(s) I have been judging, and put them in God's court room where He sits on His throne as the great God and Judge of the universe. I then shut the door and in so doing, I release the person(s) to God and I rest my case. God says, "vengeance is Mine, I will repay." Vengeance means the infliction of pain on another, in return for an injury or offense. You can rest assured that if you leave the matter in God's hands, recompense will be made through the "Law of Sowing and Reaping." Proverbs 12:14 says, "...the deeds of a man's hands will return to him." Jesus said in Matthew 7:1-2, "Do not judge lest you be judged. For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you."

We pay a high price in our physical bodies when we hold on to unforgiveness. When we are hurt, we get angry. Letting the sun go down on our anger gives the devil a foothold in our lives (Ephesians 4:26-27). Anger carried through the night becomes unforgiveness and then we are opened up to bitterness. Bitterness then opens us up to torment, sickness and even death.

Matthew 18:21-35 says we are to forgive seventy times seven and that means every time we are offended. When we do not forgive, we choke the person with whom we are angry and throw them into a spiritual prison. God calls us wicked and turns us over to the torturers. The word torturers means: demons that inflict pain and the pain of disease. When we refuse to forgive another person, we bind that person to the very thing we hate about our relationship (John 20:23). Unforgiveness also puts us into a spiritual prison and we will be bound there until we forgive (Matthew 5:25-26).

Jesus says in John 6:24, "Do not judge according to appearance, but judge (decide) with righteous (correct, by implying innocent) judgment." This means we are to see the flaws and failings in others but look beyond them through eyes of love, forgiveness,

compassion and with a heart to restore. This is only possible when we first get the logs (unresolved childhood issues) out of our own eyes. The people in our present circumstances are only mirroring the defects that are in us. Their specks are bothering us because we have logs in our own eyes. The logs are what we have done or what we have judged our parents for doing. When our logs are dealt with, healing and freedom comes and their specks are no longer an issue to us. Hallelujah!

Six Critical Steps to Forgiveness and Healing

- 1) Trust God with the outcome: If you believe God is in control, you will be able to trust Him to heal you and deal with your offender. (Romans 12:19)
- 2) Renounce sinful attitudes and expectations: If you are waiting for the offender to earn your forgiveness, trying to punish him or looking for guarantees that the offense will never happen again, your attitude is getting in the way of forgiveness. (Matthew 5:45)
- 3) Assess your contribution to the problem: Prayerfully consider your role in very conflict. Write down the ways you fueled the fire with careless words or actions. Take responsibility. Correct whatever is possible to correct.
- 4) Recognize that God will use your hurt for good if you allow Him: Your circumstances may be giving God a chance to demonstrate His character and goodness. The pain you are enduring may help you mature and serve others.
- 5) Focus on the enormous debt God has forgiven toward you. This will help you forgive others. (Matthew 18: 21-35)
- 6) Draw on God's strength: You can't do it alone. Spend time in prayer. Search the Scriptures. Seek biblical counsel. True forgiveness requires God's grace.

I'm Still Learning to Forgive By Corrie ten Boom

It was in a church in Munich where I was speaking in 1947 that I saw him - a balding heavyset man in a gray overcoat, a brown felt hat clutched between his hands. One moment I saw the overcoat and the brown hat, the next, a blue uniform and visored cap with its skull and crossbones.

Memories of the concentration camp came back with a rush: the huge room with its harsh overhead lights, the pathetic pile of dresses and shoes in the center of the floor, the shame of walking naked past this man. I could see my sister's frail from ahead of me, ribs sharp beneath the parchment of skin.

Betsie and I had been arrested for concealing Jews in our home during the Nazi occupation of Holland. This man had been a guard at Ravensbruck concentration camp where we were sent.

Now he was in front of me, hand thrust out: "A fine message, fraulein! How good it is to

know that, as you say, all our sins are at the bottom of the sea!"

It was the first time since my release that I had been face to face with one of my captors and my blood seemed to freeze.

"you mentioned Ravensbruck in your talk," he was saying. "I was a guard there. But since that time," he went on, "I have become a Christian. I know that God has forgiven me for the cruel things I did there, but I would like to hear it from your lips as well. Fraulein - " again the hand came out - "will you forgive me?"

And I stood there - and could not. Betsie had died in that place - could he erase her slow terrible death simply for the asking?

It could not have been many seconds that he stood there, hand held out, but to me it seemed hours as I wrestled with the most difficult thing I had ever had to do.

For I had to do it - I knew that. The message that God forgives has a prior condition: that we forgive those who have injured us. "If you do not forgive men their trespasses," Jesus says, "neither will your Father in Heaven forgive your trespasses."

Still I stood there with the coldness clutching my heart. But forgiveness is an act of the will, and the will can function regardless of the temperature of the heart. "Jesus, help me!" I prayed silently. "I can lift my hand. I can do that much. You supply the feeling."

And so woodenly, mechanically, I thrust my hand into the one stretched out to me. And as I did, an incredible thing took place. The current started in my shoulder, raced down my arm, sprang into our joined hands. And then this healing warmth seemed to flood my whole being, bringing tears to my eyes.

"I forgive you, brother!" I cried. "With all my heart!"

For a long moment we grasped each other's hands, the former guard and former prisoner. I had never known God's love so intensely as I did then.*

With Corrie's willingness came God's power to forgive her former captor.

When you and I are willing to see our need for God's forgiveness, He is willing and able to forgive our sins. The Bible says that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"¹ and that "the wages of sin is death."² But it goes on to explain that "God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."³

You too can know the same forgiveness and salvation that transformed Corrie and the former Nazi guard: "If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."⁴

Bible References: 1 Romans 3:23, 2 Romans 6:23, 3 Romans 5:8, 4 Romans 10:9

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