

FORGIVENESS: LETTING GO OF ANY CLAIM TO JUSTICE OR DEBT OWED



Forgiveness is not about the person who wronged you, but about *you*. When you forgive, you let go of the claim to justice or debt owed by another person. It's not necessarily letting them off the hook for the wrong they have done, it is giving the situation and the person to God and allowing Him to work. The Bible commands forgiveness. We see this in Matthew, Chapter 6 and Colossians 3:13 says to *forgive as the forgave you*. You forgive, not because you feel like it or because the other person deserves it, you forgive to obey God and because it *frees* you. It's been said that unforgiveness is like drinking poison and hoping the other person dies. When you *choose* to forgive, it improves *your* life spiritually, emotionally, and physically.

Hurt and wrong should be addressed; you let the other person know what has happened and give them the opportunity to take responsibility for that wrong. Prayerfully, they take responsibility and seek to right the wrong, but even if they don't you must give it to the Lord. They may have to suffer consequences for their wrong, but as you let go and give it to the Lord, you will be freed from bondage to the hurt and pain of the wrong. Is this easy? No. But it *is* possible through Christ.

This especially applies in the marriage relationship. Ruth Graham once said that a "happy marriage is the union of two good forgivers." James 3:2 says that we all stumble (or offend) in many ways. Who do we tend to offend most? Unfortunately, the one we love the most. Most offences require a simple, "I'm sorry, will you forgive me?" Adultery, abuse, extreme anger, or greater sins may require counseling and possibly temporary separation before the relationship can be restored. The Biblical admonishment is to forgive and, as Dr. Martin Luther King said, "forgiveness is not just an occasional act: it is a permanent attitude." We must have an attitude of forgiveness even as we address wrong done to us. Do you have this attitude? Or do you hold on to wrongs done to you, possibly even allowing them put distance between you and the Lord?

Helpful Resources: *Fortified Marriages Resource page:* www.fortifiedmarriages.com

Excellent Forgiveness Resources: www.fortifiedmarriages.com/docs/Forgiveness%20Resources2.pdf

Articles to check out:

The Power of Forgiveness in Marriage by Domeniek L. Harris - www.todayschristianwoman.com

Don't Let Bitterness Poison Your Marriage by Sabrina Beasley McDonald - www.familylife.com