

Forgiving Others

Key Verse

"Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone..." Mark 11:25a

Basic Biblical Understanding

Mark 11:25 is one of the clearest passages on forgiveness. Whom should I forgive? Anyone! What should I forgive? Anything! When should I forgive? Whenever I pray. There are no caveats, no disclaimers, no excuses.

But what if the offender doesn't think he did anything wrong? Forgive him. What if she doesn't realize how bad she hurt me? Forgive her. Jesus did not link your ability to forgive to others' recognition of wrong. He leaves forgiveness in the hands of the offended, and there's freedom in that truth.

Unforgiveness corrodes the container it's in. The longer you hold onto it, the more damage it does. You might tell yourself that "it's a justice thing, it's a respect thing, it's about right and wrong, it's about standing up for truth." It doesn't matter how justified you feel in those beliefs, unforgiveness hurts you.

Unforgiveness is a sin that requires repentance. Scripture teaches us to forgive (Ephesians 4:32). When we choose to embrace unforgiveness, we're being disobedient to God. Likewise, unforgiveness is often the outward manifestation of hidden personal sins. For example, unforgiveness may be rooted in...

- **Pride:** I don't have the problem. They have the problem.
- **Selfishness:** I shouldn't have to forgive. They hurt me.
- **Disobedience:** I don't care what God says. I'm not going to forgive.
- **Resentment:** I hate him for what he did. I refuse to forgive him.
- **Jealousy:** Why should she be released to feel better? She is the offender.
- **Idolatry:** My grudge is my idol. I choose to focus on my pain instead of my God.
- **Hypocrisy:** Other people should forgive me, but I don't have to forgive other people.

Unforgiveness holds people captive, retains their debt, and keeps them obligated. How do I know if I've really forgiven someone? Forgiveness has occurred when I no longer want God to get him back, but instead, I want God to bless him well.

What if you believe everything that's been shared, but you still struggle to forgive? In that case, pray a simple prayer every time the offense comes to mind: "God, I can't forgive in my strength, but You can forgive through me." Submit to Him and pray that God would live His perfect forgiveness through you.

Verses (ask God to show you how they apply to your life)

- "Bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you." Colossians 3:13
- "Then Peter came and said to Him, 'Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?' Jesus said to him, 'I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.'" Matthew 18:21-22

Helpful Questions and Application

1. Forgiving others is based on the forgiveness God extended to us (Colossians 3:13). Hebrews 10:17 says, "And their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more." If God forgave you of every sin you committed, what's holding you back from extending that same forgiveness to someone else?
2. It was stated above that unforgiveness can be an outward manifestation of hidden sin. Based on the list provided, what other sins are you holding onto today?

Additional Resources

Scripture references: Luke 6:37; Matthew 6:14; 1 John 1:8; Proverbs 25:21

WordTruth article: ["Forgiveness: The Possible Impossibility"](#)