

Sunday, April 22, 2012

Practical Christianity – Forgiveness
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Everyone at some point in their life is going to have to learn how to forgive.

Colossians 1:13 (KJV)

¹³Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:

When we become born again we are transferred from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of heaven. We are to then live by the kingdom of heaven principles, guidelines and boundaries. When we choose to live the kingdom principles after being in darkness there will be a learning process to operate in them.

Until we really learn to walk in forgiveness and just choose to continue in unforgiveness towards others it will affect our relationships with people and with the Lord. It won't affect how the Lord sees us because that never changes, but it will affect our progress spiritually and walking in God's favor for us here on the earth.

Why do we forgive? The main reason is because Jesus said to and that is obedience to God. An example of him instructing to begin in the book of Matthew chapter 18.

Matthew 18:21-22 (KJV)

²¹Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?

²²Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.

By the world's standards and to the natural man forgiveness isn't natural so when someone hurts us we think they don't deserve it, it was their fault and we justify it that way, but Jesus says to forgive.

Ephesians 4:15 (KJV)

¹⁵But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

When the truth is spoken in love there will be a growing up into those of us who hear the truth. We must all learn to walk in forgiveness and we all have our excuse or justification bag we carry around so we don't have to, but we are required by God's word to forgive. It is a journey we begin when we accept Jesus Christ as savior. It can and most likely will be a challenge to do so but if God's word says to do it, He will equip us to do it if we make the quality decision to do so.

In Matthew chapter 16 Jesus taught of the authority given to the church and how the gates of hell would not prevail against the church. It didn't say that the gates of hell wouldn't assail or assault, but they won't prevail. We will win! If we are weak in the area of forgiveness that is exactly where the adversary will attempt to prevail.

Matthew chapter 18 took place about six months before Jesus crucifixion and resurrection. This chapter begins Jesus teaching on the domestic life of the church and how to handle wrongs, bestow forgiveness and get along, with one another. It explains that when you do have someone that has wronged you that you are to go directly to that person and not everyone around you,

In verse 21 when Peter, who was familiar with the law, went to Jesus he felt he was being generous in asking if seven times enough was because the law was three. Jesus answered in verse 22. He isn't so much teaching a number as under the law but learning to walk in a lifestyle of forgiveness. We are to just walk in it. It is a learned principle. Everyone is going to learn the principle of forgiveness in one way or another. You will have many opportunities to walk in it. When we forgive a person we loose them we don't hold them under condemnation, and it keeps us from being there also.

Matthew 18:23 (KJV)

²³Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants.

That scripture begins the account of a man who is forgiven an astronomical debt, un-payable in the natural. Then that man had someone who owed him a small amount in comparison to what he was forgiven and he wouldn't forgive and wanted him in prison. In the end Jesus declared that forgiveness was due.

We become more Christ like in any time in our life when we forgive. As Jesus was dying he said, "Forgive them for they know not what they do", and when Stephen was being stoned he said, "Father don't lay this sin to their charge."

Where there is unforgiveness there is offense, hurt, disappointment and that leads to bitterness and resentment. It has a spiritual malignancy that will grow and spread until it consumes every waking moment. When you forgive it gives God the opportunity to work.

God has a way of vindicating individuals who choose to walk in kingdom principles. It may not occur in your time frame but it will occur.

Forgiveness is made up of two Greek words. One is aphiemi means to "loose" or "to send away liberated." The other is paraeis which means you pass over, you let it go.

Here is the insanity of forgiveness. If you are in unforgiveness you are tied to the situation that you are despising so much. In forgiveness you loose yourself and the other person.

Unforgiveness will contaminate us spiritually if it's a lifestyle, but when we forgive we are loosed and God can work on our behalf.

Romans 12:18-21 (KJV)

¹⁸If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

¹⁹Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

²⁰Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.

²¹Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

What is being said in the above is that as long as you are tied to unforgiveness God is saying that he cannot get involved and correct a situation. God does want to vindicate. Believe it or not God loves the person that you feel has done you wrong. He wants to develop and grow them. No relationship can survive without forgiveness.

Leviticus 16:12-13 (KJV)

¹²And he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the LORD, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the vail:

¹³And he shall put the incense upon the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not:

The reference of heaping coals of fire on his head is referring to the above scripture in Leviticus when the cloud of incense covered the priest's imperfections. It will be a covering when you forgive and always tend to life.

How to forgive?

It is not keeping it pushed down and pushed back. It is getting rid of it and the poison it brings to us. It is loosing and letting go.

Matthew 18:32-34 (KJV)

³²Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me:

³³Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee?

³⁴And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.

They were displeasing and so because they wouldn't forgive. People who don't forgive are tormented. Their joy and peace is gone and they have no rest spiritually. They are always wrought or worked up.

Colossians 3:12-13 (AMP)

¹²Clothe yourselves therefore, as God's own chosen ones (His own picked representatives), [who are] purified and holy and well-beloved [by God Himself, by putting on behavior marked by] tenderhearted pity and mercy, kind feeling, a lowly opinion of yourselves, gentle ways, [and] patience [which is tireless and long-suffering, and has the power to endure whatever comes, with good temper].

¹³Be gentle and forbearing with one another and, if one has a difference (a grievance or complaint) against another, readily pardoning each other; even as the Lord has [freely] forgiven you, so must you also [forgive].

Eventually on the journey we are on we will learn to forgive like God forgives. That is challenging.

1 Peter 3:16 (MSG)

Keep a clear conscience before God so that when people throw mud at you, none of it will stick. They'll end up realizing that they're the ones who need a bath. It's better to suffer for doing good, if that's what God wants, than to be punished for doing bad.

People are going to find fault with you from time to time but do right so it won't stick on you. Unforgiveness will affect your life negatively. Nothing good comes of it.

1 Peter 2:22-23 (MSG)

**He never did one thing wrong,
Not once said anything amiss.**

They called him every name in the book and he said nothing back. He suffered in silence, content to let God set things right.

The first thing in forgiving is that you have to want to forgive. We may not know how to but want to.

Jesus taught on forgiveness when he taught on faith. He taught forgiveness when he taught how to pray, read the Lord's Prayer.

When you go to worship, forgive.

Matthew 5:23-24 (KJV)

²³Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee;

²⁴Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

You have been forgiven by God, forgive.

Ephesians 4:31-32 (KJV)

³¹Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

³²And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

Seven Reasons to Forgive

From Joyce Meyer

1. Forgive because God says to forgive.
2. Your faith won't work if you don't forgive.
3. Unforgiveness is like spiritual filth or dirt on the inner man.
4. Unforgiveness causes torture in your own life.
5. You can't love with unforgiveness in your heart.
6. Unforgiveness blocks your personal relationship with God.
7. Unforgiveness opens the door to the devil.

Pastor prayed for those struggling and being challenged with forgiveness.

Father, Right now in Jesus name I pray, and devil I adjure you in Jesus name your plan didn't succeed. You failed because here are people that are going to walk in forgiveness and the blessings from heaven will be unstoppable and the glory of God and the favor of God will flow into their lives in an immeasurable way. Father I pray you supernaturally vindicate them.

Father, right now, I forgive, in Jesus name. In Jesus name I forgive right now everyone that has hurt me, that has disappointed me, I forgive them in Jesus name. I loose them; I let them go in Jesus name. Amen