

	<p style="text-align: center;">FORGIVENESS</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your sins.” Matt. 6:14-15</i></p> <p>We strongly believe that unforgiveness is the number one problem in the Church and the world. It is the enemy’s number one tactic for imprisoning the unwary. Its destructive fruit is pervasive – penetrating all areas of life. If God has sin “rankings”, unforgiveness would be at the top of the list.</p> <p>Unforgiveness is the enemy’s number one weapon to “kill, steal and destroy” GOD’s Abundant Life and HIS destiny for you. As you will discover, the consequence of unforgiveness is devastating – it produces nothing but evil and death. GOD wants to change all that – HE wants to set you free from any unforgiveness you might be harboring!</p> <p><u>If you are like most, you may have areas of unforgiveness you are unaware of.</u> Unforgiveness is very deceiving – because it can feel as though it is justified! It is an anesthetic that masks the pain arising from an offense. It is so powerful that much of our sin may well be the fruit of unforgiveness.</p> <p>In this chapter, you will: (1) learn how hideous unforgiveness is; (2) learn to identify unforgiveness; and (3) learn how to forgive. The end result will be a newfound freedom and more enjoyment of HIM and HIS Abundant Life!</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Sin, The JUDGE & HIS Judgment</p>	<p>[David’s cry after he committed adultery with Bathsheba and had arranged for her husband to be killed.] <i>Against YOU and YOU only have I sinned. Psalm 51:4.</i></p> <p><i>For not even the FATHER judges anyone, but HE has given all judgment to the SON. John 5:22</i></p> <p><i>But when the Son of Man comes... He will sit on His glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them ... He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right, ‘Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you ... Then He will also say to those on His left, ‘Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire ...’ Matthew 25:31-34; 41</i></p> <p>A discussion about forgiveness must start with sin. GOD has made it clear – you are a sinner (i.e., your old person). And, every person who was conceived from flesh (this excludes Jesus who was conceived by the Holy Spirit) has an old person whose nature is sinful.</p> <p>JESUS is the only true judge of sin. HE paid the price to be judge by taking upon HIMSELF all the sins of the world. In essence, HE “bought” the right to be judge. GOD has also made it clear that: (a) we have all sinned and fallen short of HIS glory (Romans 3:23); (b) we are already judged and found guilty of treason against GOD (our Creator) (John 3:18); and (c) the consequence of our sin is death. That is why GOD sent Jesus – to provide the way out of this death sentence.</p> <p>Furthermore, although you may be the victim of someone else’s sin – ultimately, the “perpetrator” has sinned against GOD (the Creator) for he/she is accountable to his/her Creator – he/she is not accountable to you. Although all mankind has been judged as falling short, the final judgment will not occur until Jesus returns.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">What is Unforgiveness?</p>	<p><i>Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, “VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY,” says the Lord. Romans 12:19</i></p> <p>Simply put, unforgiveness arises when you decide to be the “judge” and play “god”. It develops in this manner:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. You believe an injustice (which may or may not have been sin) has been perpetrated against you or another person (usually a loved one). 2. This “injustice” greatly offends you – and so you believe that the offender should “pay the price” for his/her offense. 3. Your old person demands justice – and the quickest way to obtain justice is to make yourself the judge (instead of JESUS). 4. So, you appoint yourself judge (taking JESUS’ place). You put on your black robe. You take your place at the Judge’s bench. You call the court to order. You recite the facts (as you see them). You deny the offender any right to be heard. And, you declare the offender guilty of an unforgivable crime. 5. You then sentence the offender by declaring it now lawful to: (a) execute revenge against the offender; (b) withhold forgiveness from the offender; (c) mistreat the offender; (d) gossip about the offender; (e) declare that the offender is not “worthy” of receiving God’s blessings; (f) blame the offender for your misfortune; and/or ... <p>You’ve been deceived. You think you’re now in control of the situation. But the truth is that the “offense” you suffered is now in control of you!!! Why? Because you are not longer walking with GOD (and HIS forgiveness). Instead, you have chosen to allow your victimhood to control you! You are now a prisoner to the anger, bitterness, spite and hatred of unforgiveness. This is <u>not</u> HIS Abundant Life.</p>



FORGIVENESS

Unforgiveness is an Affront to GOD

*But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your sins. **Matthew 6:14-15***

*HE is the propitiation for our sins; and not only ours ... but ... those of the whole world. **1 John 2:2***

Jesus' voluntary death on the cross is (and will always be) the greatest sacrifice in history. No greater price has ever been or ever will be paid for anything. When JESUS endured the cross, HE took your sin, the sin of the world, and the death sentence for all mankind (the consequence of sin) upon HIMSELF. HIS sacrifice allowed GOD to forgive your sins and the sins of the whole world. All sin is forgiven. With HIS death, the way was made possible for mankind to have relationship with God and to enjoy HIS life. It is the greatest act of love ever extended to mankind. What a gift!!! The greatest sacrifice that the world will know lead to the greatest gift the world will ever know.

We have no idea how costly the cross and JESUS' death was for JESUS or the FATHER. The enormity of the physical pain and shame that JESUS endured, the consequences of death that HE bore and the broken relationship between the FATHER and the SON are all far beyond our human comprehension.

Given that fact that this sacrifice/price was paid for us when we did not ask for it and when we were completely unworthy of it, could there be a greater affront to JESUS – a greater insult – than to declare that HIS sacrifice is not enough to forgive the sin of another? That is exactly what we do when we refuse to forgive others.

In other words, anyone refusing to forgive is declaring (usually without recognizing it) that either:

1. JESUS' sacrifice was not enough to forgive "this" sin; and/or
2. GOD is a liar because all the sins of the world have not be "paid" for by Jesus' sacrifice; and/or
3. He/she is greater than GOD because he/she should determine when sin should be forgiven and not be forgiven – not GOD.

GOD's Response to Unforgiveness

*[A lord forgave a borrower a large debt – when a debtor of the forgiven borrower requested the same grace, the forgiven borrower refused and threw the debtor in prison] ... When his lord (heard of this), moved with anger, he handed him (the forgiven borrower) over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed. So shall MY Heavenly FATHER also do to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart. **Matthew 18:21-35.***

This is a **very** serious Scripture. GOD is very serious about forgiveness. Forgiveness is perhaps the most important attribute of GOD's great love. HE is a forgiving GOD. But, HE applies the Kingdom principle that "you reap what you sow" (**Galatians 6:7**) to HIS gift of forgiveness. If you won't sow forgiveness to others, then you won't reap HIS forgiveness. This is a scary thought.

Unforgiveness has such a devastating effect on our relationship with GOD and others that GOD longs to set us free from unforgiveness. Even when we harbor unforgiveness, HE loves us so much that HE does not walk away from us. No, GOD in HIS mercy towards us allows the "torturers" (verses 34 to 35) to harass us until we do forgive. This torture (the "natural" consequences of unforgiveness) can affect our relationships, physical body (through sickness), job, finances, ministry, etc. – nothing is exempt. And, HE allows the torturers to hound us until we see it HIS way. This is HIS "severe" mercy. HE longs to see us in full fellowship with HIM enjoying HIS Abundant Life – but first, we must forgive!

Are curious you about "forgiveness versus accountability", "consequences versus forgetting offenses"? Be patient, we will get to them toward the end of the chapter.

Signs of Unforgiveness

*Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY," says the Lord. **Romans 12:19***

The usual signs/symptoms of unforgiveness reflect your old person's desire to get revenge. These signs are:

1. Prolonged anger/bitterness/resentment toward the offender – or anger without a known cause
2. A desire to mistreat the offender
3. Constantly trying to find fault with the offender
4. A desire to "uncover" the offender (by telling others what an awful "sinner" the offender is!)
5. A desire for God to withhold HIS blessings from the offender (he/she doesn't deserve it)
6. A desire that something bad happens to the offender (he/she deserves it)
7. Rejoicing when you hear that some bad thing has happened to the offender (he/she deserved it)
8. Replay the incident over and over in your mind
9. Repeatedly reminding the offender of his/her offense
10. Avoiding the offender



FORGIVENESS

The Ugly Fruit of Unforgiveness (Generally)

See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled. Hebrews 12:15

Here is a short list of the ugly fruit the old person may produce when you refuse to forgive:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Anger, Resentment, Bitterness | 6. Mean spiritedness toward the offender and his/her defenders – spitefulness |
| 2. Victim mentality (“poor me”) | 7. Withdrawal from the offender and those who are in relationship with him/her |
| 3. Trying to get revenge (but at a very high price) | 8. Becoming just like the offender – doing his/her sin to others |
| 4. Less intimacy with GOD | 9. A delay in moving into your destiny in GOD |
| 5. Broken relationships with the offender and his/her defenders | |

Obviously, this is not good fruit. It is the enemy “killing, stealing and destroying” your relationship with GOD and HIS Abundant Life. You will be the enemy’s captive – doomed to some degree to experience this horrible life. That is, until you forgive the offender.

The Ugly Fruit of Unforgiveness Toward GOD

[Job’s “encouraging” wife]. Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die! Job 2:9

You may never have looked it quite this way, but many times the world’s life is an indicator that we are harboring an offense and unforgiveness toward GOD. Some of the signs of this are:

1. Anger, resentment, bitterness, hatred.
2. Discouragement, despair, and/or hopeless about the circumstances of my life. GOD, how could you allow “this”? GOD, why don’t you give me “this”? GOD, “this” is not fair. And etc.
3. Self-hatred/shame/guilt because of the circumstances of your life.
4. Withdrawal from God.

These are not good places to go – they do not result in HIS Abundant Life for you!

The Ugly Fruit of Unforgiveness Toward Self

Love your neighbor as you love yourself. Matthew 19:19

The world’s life can also be an indicator that we are harboring unforgiveness toward ourselves. Some of the signs of this are:

1. Shame and guilt
2. Frequent self-criticism, self-judgment and/or self-hatred
3. Lack of confidence – insecurity
4. Self destructive behavior – eating/sleeping disorders; alcohol/drugs; cutting; and etc.
5. Inability to acknowledge needs (I don’t deserve it)
6. Anticipating failure and/or repeated failures
7. Sabotaging our own success
8. Withdrawal from God

Again, these are not good places to dwell – they do not produce HIS Abundant Life for you!

Projection

Why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye, but do not look at the log in your own eye. Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Brother, let me take out the speck that in your eye’, when when you yourself do not see the log that in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the speck that is in your brother’s eye. Matthew 19:19

The ironic thing about unforgiveness is that the unforgiven offense frequently involves an area of sin in your own life – this is called “projection”. The log in your own eye is the same as the offender perpetrated against you! Again, this is the law of sowing and reaping at work. You sin against others, you then reap that same sin from another. GOD uses this to show us our own sin (clever isn’t HE!). So ask the LORD and others to show you if you have been sowing the same sin, you may be surprised.

How to Forgive

Forgiveness occurs as you take the “mind of Christ” and allow your New Person to love the offender. We have found the following steps can be very helpful to walk this out:

1. **Acknowledge** – the act and the fruit/effect of the offense in your life and the life of others.
2. **Confess** – your sin of unforgiveness to GOD and others.
3. **Surrender** – all your rights to judge and punish the offender.
4. **Intercede** – before GOD on behalf of the offender asking GOD to forgive him/her.
5. **Cover** – the offender from others learning about his/her sin.
6. **Rejoice** – in your forgiveness and HIS incredible life!

Each step is discussed in detail below. In most instances, we have found it helpful to work through these steps with someone you trust.



FORGIVENESS

Acknowledge (Step 1)	<p><i>Pursue peace with all men ... See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled. Hebrews 12:14-15</i></p> <p>The first step of forgiveness is to acknowledge the offense – and the hurt/pain that it has caused you. Burying the hurt and pain does not make it go away. Instead, it just simmers beneath the surface, infecting your soul and depriving you of HIS Abundant Life. Acknowledging all the hurt and pain will allow you to fully forgive and enter into the fullness of HIS Abundant Life. Failing to acknowledge any hurt or pain may allow a root of bitterness to remain. Acknowledging the hurt and pain involves sharing the feelings and fruit the offense has produced in you. However, be careful, acknowledgement should not “uncover” the offender (except when it may be necessary to protect others from the offender).</p>
Confess (Step 2)	<p><i>“But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your sins.” Matthew 6:14-15</i></p> <p><i>[The Sin of Projection] “Why do you look at the speck ... in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log ... in your own eye? ... You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye ... “ Matt. 7:3-5</i></p> <p>Unforgiveness is sin – but it is so deceptive that you may not see it as sin. You know the thinking, “I have been wronged – therefore, I have every right to hold an offense and withhold my forgiveness – at least until the offender admits his/her sin and asks for my forgiveness”. Yet, as you have discovered, any unforgiveness is sin – even when you have been seriously wronged. This faulty thinking (that unforgiveness is not sin) is part of a silly circle – someone offends you and you in turn refuse (rather self-righteously) to forgive them. One sin breeds another sin. The enemy loves this sin circle!</p> <p>So, the second step of forgiveness is to confess your own sin of unforgiveness – ask the LORD to forgive you for insulting HIM and for trying to take HIS place (as judge). If you see any “projection” in yourself (your old person), confess that as well. This is powerful confession – it will lead you into more of HIS Abundant Life!</p>
Surrender (Step 3)	<p><i>Which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up, and walk’? But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins” – then He said to the paralytic, “Get up... and go home. And he got up and went home. Matthew 9:5-6.</i></p> <p><i>For just as the Father has life in Himself, ... so He gave that life to the Son to have ... and He gave Him authority to execute judgment ... “ John 5:26-27.</i></p> <p><i>If anyone desires to come after Me, he must deny himself [giving up his rights to justice], take up his cross daily [forgiving others] and follow Me. Luke 9:23.</i></p> <p>The Greek word for “Forgive” literally means to “send away”. Forgiving is the act of “<u>sending away</u>” the condemnation of sin – releasing the offender from the sentence/penalty due for his/her sinful action. Because JESUS bore the sin of all mankind, JESUS has the authority to judge all mankind. Yet, until HE comes again, HE chooses HIS other right – the right to forgive – by surrendering HIS right to condemn sinners to death. HE chooses to “send it away” and forgive. What an incredible love!!!</p> <p>Likewise, to follow JESUS you must deny your rights for justice and “send away” your “righteous” judgment. This is the act of “bearing your cross daily”. How do you bear your cross? By surrendering the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Your right to judge the offender – by giving that right back to GOD2. Your right to demand personal justice (the punishment appropriate for the “crime”) from GOD against the offender3. Your right to vindicate yourself, to seek vengeance and/or to get revenge. <p>This act of surrender (made possible only through the Holy Spirit’s power and grace) reflects HIS glory – and leads you into more of HIS Abundant Life!</p>
Intercede (Step 4)	<p><i>When they ... crucified Him ... Jesus was saying, “Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.” Luke 23:34</i></p> <p><i>[David’s cry after he had sinned with Bathsheba] Against YOU and YOU only have I sinned. Psalms 51:4</i></p> <p><i>For this is MY blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. Matthew 26:28</i></p> <p><i>Bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. Luke 6:28</i></p> <p>We have found the following steps helpful when interceding for the offender – ask the FATHER to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Forgive the offender – by releasing all HIS rights to judge the offender2. Wash the offender completely clean with JESUS’ blood – that the blood of Jesus would not be withheld from the offender3. Pour HIS favor on the offender – to not withhold anything good from him/her <p>We will discuss these on the next page.</p>



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Intercede (Step 4)

“Father, forgive them” is an interesting request by JESUS. HE had the authority to forgive sins – so you would think that HE would have said “I forgive you because you don’t know what you are doing”. But, instead HE asked the FATHER to forgive them. This is a very powerful example and insight for us. JESUS was demonstrating the fourth step of forgiveness – intercession for the offender.

Intercession for the offender involves the following three acts of intercession on behalf of the offender:

1. **God’s Forgiveness:** Asking the FATHER to forgive the offender is sometimes a difficult act of surrender. Sometimes the act of surrendering your right to judge the offender can produce self-righteousness (I forgive you – therefore I am better than you). But, to acknowledge that the offender’s sin is really against God and not you (as David observed) – and then to ask GOD to forgive the offender by withholding any judgment against the offender – this is where the “rubber hits the road”!
2. **Blood of Jesus:** Asking GOD to wash the offender with the blood of JESUS (and not withhold it) is also a difficult act of surrender at times. Our experience is that, if there is significant demonic involvement in the unforgiveness, this will be a very difficult request because the enemy does not want the blood of Jesus to become involved. This step can reveal the heart/motive our motive toward the offender.
3. **God’s Favor:** The final intercession is to ask GOD to pour out HIS favor and blessings upon the offender and to not withhold any good thing from him/her. You are asking GOD to truly forgive the offender such that the offense is forgotten. This too can be a difficult act of surrender as it is the final component of asking GOD to release the totality of HIS love upon the offender.

This is powerful and fruitful intercession – it will lead you into more of HIS incredible Abundant Life!

Cover (Step 5)

*He who goes about as a slanderer reveals secrets ... do not associate with a gossip. Pro. 20:19
Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all transgressions. Proverbs 10:12*

The next step of forgiveness is to “cover” the offender’s offense. We call this the “acid test” of forgiveness. Your old person/flesh will want to slander and “expose” the offender – by telling others about the awful thing the offender did to you (or camouflaged in religious clothing such as “please pray for him/her because he/she did so and so”) – so others will think badly of him/her. This is merely the enemy trying to stir things up – it is his attempt to “kill, steal or destroy” your enjoyment of HIS Abundant Life.

The enemy’s lie is that you will “feel better” (probably about yourself) if you “expose” the offender. This is a partial truth – your flesh may initially feel better – but because of your sin, you will soon lose HIS life of peace and joy that comes from abiding in HIM. So, you must cover the offender – you must not disclose his/her sin (unless it is necessary to protect others).

Rejoice (Step 6)

... there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance. Luke 15:7.

His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master. Matthew 25:23.

The final step of forgiveness is to REJOICE! Rejoice with the LORD and HIS angelic hosts! You are forgiven – your unforgiveness has been “sent away” – accept it, rejoice in it. Rejoice that you have forgiven another. Rejoice that you have stopped the “sin circle” – that your sin of unforgiveness will no longer have any effect on earth. Well done, good and faithful servant – enter into HIS joy!

Fruit of Forgiveness

... the Kingdom of God is ... righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.” Romans 14:17

Forgiveness is an act of your New Person. It agrees with GOD and, thus, breaks the enemy’s captivity – so you can walk back into HIS Abundant Life. The key fruit of forgiveness is freedom – to be free from the effect of the offender’s sin – so that only GOD has a hold of you – not someone else’s sin! This freedom ushers you into HIS Abundant Life of:

1. **Peace** with GOD, yourself, the offender and his/her defenders
2. **Joy** of experiencing GOD’s incredible gift of forgiveness being extended to you and through you
3. **Love** of GOD, yourself, the offender and his/her defenders
4. **Increased intimacy** with GOD
5. **Freedom** in your soul (particularly when you are around the offender)
6. **Restored relationships** with the offender and his/her defenders

This is the fruit your soul longs for – it is the fruit of your New Person – it is HIS Abundant Life!



FORGIVENESS

The Battle After Forgiving

*For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses [lies that were believed] ... and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ ... **2 Corinthians 10:4-5***

*Therefore, take up the full armor of God ... taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one. **Eph. 6:13,16***

Although you have forgiven the offender, your old person (or the enemy) may attempt to lure you back into the land of unforgiveness. The attack will come as negative thoughts (darts) regarding the offense and the offender – thoughts of the offense may once again trigger anger, bitterness, hatred and desire for revenge (see the “Signs of Unforgiveness” above). Simply having these thoughts is not sin – but what you do with them will determine if sin will take root.

If you immediately submit the thoughts to JESUS and allow HIM to direct you how to respond to the thoughts (it may be to reject them, to intercede for the offender, etc.) you have triumphed – and you will continue enjoying HIS Abundant Life!

On the other hand, if you entertain the thoughts – by embracing the anger, bitterness, hatred, etc. or how good it would feel to get “revenge” – you have taken back your offense and your right to judge. If this happens, do not fret, simply go back through the above six steps of forgiveness – and refuse to believe the enemy’s lie. You will soon resume enjoying more of HIS incredible Abundant Life!

Forgiveness versus Forgetting

*... for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more. **Jeremiah 31:34***

*... love keeps no record of when it has been wronged. **1 Corinthians 13:5 (NIV)***

*... love does not take into account a wrong suffered. **1 Corinthians 13:5 (NAS)***

The path these Scriptures direct us to travel is a “difficult” path (for your old person). It is not easy to: (1) “no longer remember” an offense you suffered or (2) to not take the offense into account when dealing again with that person. The world’s wisdom says that you should forgive, but not forget – that you should take the offense into account when dealing again with that person so you can protect yourself.

But that is the world’s wisdom – not GOD’s wisdom. You may ask, then how do I protect myself against that happening again? As we have discussed, the fruit of forgiveness is freedom – a freedom in which nothing but GOD has a hold of you. You see, if anything but GOD has a hold of you, that thing will prevent you from clearly discerning HIS leading – particularly when that “thing” is harboring or remembering an offense (i.e., when the offense has a hold of you).

So, if someone’s past offense against you is not “forgotten”, your tendency will be to develop your own wisdom by taking the past offense into account – instead of discerning HIS leading (which is HIS wisdom). HE is the only one that can protect you – and if it will not be beneficial for you to become involved with the person again, HE will lead you accordingly. This is simply being lead by the Spirit and allowing the LORD to be LORD of your life!

Forgiveness versus Accountability

*If your brother sins, go and reprove him in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. **Matthew 18:15***

*... speaking the truth in love [to one another], we are to grow up in all aspects tin HIM, who is ... Christ. **Ephesians 4:15***

How does our responsibility to forgive relate to holding a fellow believer accountable to “love God and his/her neighbor” (the Great Commandment)? Can you forgive and hold someone accountable for what they have done to you?

Jesus instructed each of us to hold one another accountable to the Great Commandment. However, the key to accountability is **your motive** – are you confronting for the sake of GOD and the offender – or – are you confronting for your sake? Is it all about GOD and the offender (i.e, selflessness) – or – is it all about you (i.e., selfishness)?

If it is about you – then it is evident that you have not forgiven, but are merely “enforcing” your rights. If it is about GOD and the offender, then you will come with a spirit of love and compassion (and you might even reap justice). The key to holding others accountable to the Great Commandment is to practice the Great Commandment as you confront!



FORGIVENESS

Forgiveness versus Consequences

... love keeps no record of when it has been wronged. 1 Corinthians 13:5 (NIV)

... love does not take into account a wrong suffered. 1 Corinthians 13:5 (NAS)

How does demanding restitution (being made whole) for a sin you suffered relate to your responsibility to forgive? For example, if you were competing for a project – the prospect has told you it is going to give you the business, but the contract is not signed – your only competitor then tells lies about you to the prospect – the prospect believes the lies, and – the prospect gives the business to your competitor. What should you do?

Obviously, you must first choose to forgive the competitor. But, should you demand that the competitor make you “whole” by paying you the profit you would have made from the project? Does forgiving the competitor prohibit you from making such a demand? The world’s wisdom says that you should forgive, but demand what is legally yours – that you should enforce your rights – sue them!

But that once again that is the world’s wisdom – not GOD’s wisdom. As one under GOD’s rule, you must first acknowledge that you have no rights in the matter – that the right to that money is GOD’s right – not your right. This principle applies to any “right” you think you may own.

If you believe you own that “right” – then that “right” will “own” you. As we have discussed, the fruit of forgiveness is freedom – a freedom in which nothing but GOD has a hold of you – and if anything but GOD has a hold of you, that thing will prevent you from clearly discerning HIS leading – particularly when that thing is a right you believe you are entitled to enforce.

So, if you think you own the “right” (instead of acknowledging that it belongs to GOD), your tendency will be to develop your own wisdom by taking the “right” into account – instead of discerning HIS leading (which is HIS wisdom). HE is the only one who knows what is best for: (1) you, (2) the offender and (3) HIS glory. HE is the only one who knows how to work this situation out for good for all three parties. HE will lead you accordingly – it may be to enforce HIS “right” or to release HIS “right”. Again, this is simply being lead by the Spirit and allowing the LORD to be LORD of your life!



FORGIVENESS

Review Questions

1. What “struck” you as you read through the Forgiveness chapter? What did you learn?
2. Describe how unforgiveness arises.
3. Describe how GOD views unforgiveness.
4. How serious is unforgiveness to GOD?
5. What are the symptoms/signs/fruit of unforgiveness?
6. What is fruit of unforgiveness toward GOD?
7. What is the fruit of unforgiveness toward self?
8. What are the six steps of unforgiveness?
9. Describe the three acts of intercession (Step 4).
10. Describe the fruit of forgiveness.
11. What is the common theme of Forgetting, Accountability, and Consequences?

EXERCISE 1

Complete the **Forgiveness** exercises. **Prayerfully** consider the following persons you may be withholding forgiveness from:

1. **GOD** – has HE dealt you some “injustice”. Has HE withheld something you dearly desire? Has HE “allowed” some evil in your life that is not fair?
2. **Self** – have you done some “evil” that you are unable to shake off – that haunts you with shame and guilt? Have you “failed” in your own eyes? Are you a “nobody”?
3. **Others** -- For the following, were you mistreated, neglected, abused, treated as the “less favored”, rejected, betrayed, exposed, a target of gossip, taken advantage of, cursed, deceived, etc.?

<input type="checkbox"/> Parent	<input type="checkbox"/> Close Friend
<input type="checkbox"/> Spouse	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Leader
<input type="checkbox"/> Child	<input type="checkbox"/> Teacher/Coach
<input type="checkbox"/> Sibling/Relative	<input type="checkbox"/> Boss/Co-worker

EXERCISE 2

Complete the “**Forgiveness**” entry in Chapter 12. Daily prayerfully meditate on your Declarations and Scriptures you listed in Chapter 12 (both for this chapter and previous chapters). As you meditate, “wait” on GOD during your time allow the LORD to minister to you. Ask HIM to show you the lies you have believed. Repent of your unbelief. Embrace HIM and HIS truth. Enter into HIS life!

EXERCISE 3

One week after you completed Exercise 1, consider how the Battle has gone. Have you encountered any attack of the enemy in an attempt to get you to take back your “rights” to judge? Consider the following:

1. What thoughts has the enemy been tossing your way?
2. How has the LORD lead you to respond?
3. How have you responded?
4. How has the LORD used those darts against the enemy?



FORGIVENESS EXERCISE 1

"But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your sins." Matthew 6:14-15

We have all been offended by another and refused to forgive the offender (for some period of time). We have also found that many believers are being held in bondage by unforgiveness they were not consciously aware of. This exercise is designed to help you: (1) discover any unforgiveness that you are unaware of and (2) walk through the process of forgiveness so you can be set free.

DIRECTIONS: Begin by coming before the LORD – open your heart to HIM – ask HIM to reveal any unforgiveness that you harbor against anyone. Slowly review the list of possible candidates listed on page 7-7. As you “listen” for HIS reply: (a) HE may bring people’s names or faces to your mind; (b) HE may bring bad experiences to your mind; (c) HE may allow the ugly fruit of unforgiveness (anger, resentment, bitterness, spite, hatred, etc. or a lack of peace and joy) to come to your mind; and/or (d) You may begin to experience the negative emotions/feelings of unforgiveness.

When you “hear” HIM, journal these things by simply writing what is coming to your mind – don’t analyze it yet, just listen, feel, sense and write. Then when you feel HE has stopped speaking/revealing, look at what you have heard/felt/sensed. For any person(s) who came to mind, complete the below chart for each such person as follows:

COMPLETING THE CHART: When the Spirit reveals an offense to you:

1. **“Person”** – type/write the first name of the offender.
2. **“The Offense & its Fruit”** – describe the: **a)** offense; **b)** all the pain and hurt it has caused you (or a loved one); and **c)** all the negative fruit this has produced.
3. **“Confess Your Sin of Unforgiveness”** – write a short prayer confessing your sin of unforgiveness and any sin of projection.
4. **“Surrender Your Rights to Judge”** – write a short prayer surrendering your rights to “sentence” the offender to get vengeance/vindication/vengeance.
5. **“Intercede for the Offender”** – write a prayer interceding for the offender, asking God to: **a)** forgive the offender; **b)** wash the offender with the blood of Jesus; **c)** to not hold the sin against the offender; and **d)** to bless the offender.
6. **“Cover the Offender”** – write a short prayer committing to cover the offender for his/her offense.
7. **“Rejoice”** – write a short prayer rejoicing that: **a)** you have been forgiven; and **b)** the effect of the offense and your sin has come to an end!

As an example, listed below is a personal offenses one of us had to work through.

Person	Acknowledge the Offense & its Fruit	Confess Your Sin of Unforgiveness	Surrender Your Rights to Judge	Intercede for the Offender	Cover the Offender	Rejoice
Joe (not his real name)	In order to protect his job, Joe lied about me – and denied what he had done. Instead he said that I did the things that he had done. The lie led to broken relationships and loss of my job, a lawsuit against me and severe financial stress. I have been resentful toward Joe and desire nothing good for him.	LORD, please forgive me for not forgiving Joe – for holding on to unforgiveness, bitterness and resentment. Please forgive me for playing YOU by making myself his judge. Please forgive me for insulting YOU by declaring YOU a liar – by trying to nullify YOUR great sacrifice.	LORD, I surrender the right to judge Joe – I surrender the right for revenge, the right to punish him for what he did to me, and the right to restitution. I lay all these rights at YOUR cross.	LORD, please forgive Joe. Please wash him completely with the blood of Jesus. Please do not hold this sin against him. Please pour out YOUR favor on him – do not withhold any good thing from him. LORD, bless Joe!!!	LORD, I commit to not “uncover” Joe by not gossiping about what he did to me.	LORD, I rejoice that YOU have forgiven me for my unforgiveness. I rejoice that the effect of my sin and Joe’s offense against me have been made powerless!



**FORGIVENESS
EXERCISE 1**

Person	Acknowledge the Offense & its Fruit	Confess Your Sin of Unforgiveness	Surrender Your Right(s) to Judge	Intercede for the Offender	Cover the Offender	Rejoice



**FORGIVENESS
EXERCISE 1**

Person	Acknowledge the Offense & its Fruit	Confess Your Sin of Unforgiveness	Surrender Your Right(s) to Judge	Intercede for the Offender	Cover the Offender	Rejoice