
Forgiveness Part IX

© 2003, *Discipleship Tools* www.discipleshiptools.org

How do I know I have forgiven someone properly?

Psalm 32; Matthew 18:21-35; 1 Peter 2:23-24

When you feel compassion toward the person who wronged you, then you can be assured you did truly forgive them. Let these Scriptures impact and change you to the core of your being. Let the power of prayer be your focus, and the Scripture your heartbeat. Our standard is not that of the world, but that of God. We would not want to go through life in misery and bitterness, remembering those who wronged us, harboring grudges, and experiencing unhappiness. This is not the plan that Christ has for us! Bitter people have no impact for the kingdom of God except to cause division and distraction. They have the tenacity and drive to show everyone the hurts and wrongs they suffered. Do not let this happen to you, or to the people around you. Take your lead from this verse, not your inclinations.

“When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.” (1 Peter 2:23-24, NIV)

God does not ask us to minimize the wrong, but He does call us to forgive the person. We are not to repay evil for evil, rather, evil for good, just as our Lord did for us.

We have to keep in mind that our bad experiences can be like a prison, keeping us within the bars we have made from fear, anxiety, and stress. Such a prison prevents our being stretched or experiencing any growth from learning, therefore preventing us from taking what we have been through and making it sweet and productive. Having persevered in the past helps us persevere in the future. The church at Philadelphia in Revelation was able to do so, so we can, too and in so doing flourish. The key is to hold on even when we do not see any handles to grasp. When we hold on to Him, and Him alone, Christ will reward and keep us, and we will be victorious!

We must be aware that we have a problem in the church today, and that problem is unforgiveness! Our awareness needs to jump to being proactive, doing a better job of caring for people and providing church discipline to those who hurt others, sanction, and even removal of people who willfully, purposely distort God's truths and refuse to operate in His character and Fruit. We have to ask are we, as Lot was, sick of the immorality and hatred of God? For someone to deliberately distort His love, truth and Fruit shows they are perhaps mentally ill, delusional, or they hate God, because God is a God of Truth and if you do not love truth, the only logical conclusion is that you must hate God.

Questions

Read 1 Peter 2:23-24

1. What kind of faith and determination would Jesus see in you?
2. Knowing that our Lord Jesus Christ did not deserve to suffer, yet still did, and endured great physical, mental, and spiritual pain on our behalf help motivate you in times of hurting and confusion?
3. When we do not forgive, we walk a path of self-destruction, brought on by the buildup of resentment, and the unfulfilling nature of revenge
4. How can this passage help you persist and to not give up or skip out on your opportunities and duty when it gets difficult?
5. What is the balance between putting up with a hash environment and show Christ there and moving on to a new location?
6. How does suffering and enduring hardships help us see a greater purpose in life in others and in God?
7. Knowing that Jesus faced all of the temptations we face and remained true and never disobeyed God help you when you are in a difficult situation?
8. How can you help urge yourself and others to learn to live with hardship (as long as there is no illegality or abuse), work for improvement so we can reform it by good character and the Gospel?
9. How can you do a better job at focusing on our duty and respect authority? How can knowing that we are doing it for God help you in this endeavor? How can the suffering of Christ help you go through situations that are difficult for you or outside your control?
10. How can you be aware of pride and arrogance, and that will take over, control, and ruin you?
11. Imagine what Christ can do for you when you do not give in to fear or give up in your situation? Can you list some? What will you do about it?
12. Many churches have given up and have closed; they have failed to persevere in Christ and allowed unforgiveness to kill them. What are some of the hardships that your church could face that might cause them to fail? What can be done to make sure your church continues to persevere with forgiveness and seek to please Him?