

IT CAN BE HARD TO FORGIVE

Matthew 6:12 ... “And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.”

Matthew 6:14-15 ... “For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”

The NIV translates verse 14, as: “For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.” We occasionally return to the topic of forgiveness, because it was so important to Christ that he repeated himself. When Jesus repeats himself, we take notice.

I’m sure you understand the basic idea of forgiving others. Our verses today make it very clear. If we want God to forgive us of our sins against him (and every sin is against God), we must forgive other people of their sins against us. Simple, right? But, as you know, it can be difficult for a number of reasons. Some of the things people do to us are very hurtful. It is not easy to ignore terrible injustices, slander, injury, abuse, theft, dishonesty and other things that people do to us. The hurt can be deep and costly, or covered in so much humiliation that we want to hide behind a wall of tears and anger.

Unfortunately, Jesus did not give us any exemptions to forgiveness. We are just as obligated to forgive someone for not returning a borrowed shovel, as we are to forgive a rapist or murderer. That does not mean a criminal gets to go free because we forgive them; they must still pay the consequences of their crime. Forgiveness is a spiritual act, not justice. And, the main beneficiary of forgiveness is the forgiver, not the one receiving the forgiveness. The anger you have against someone is hurting you, not them. To forgive someone of something very painful, you might want to have a plan that involves a process you can follow to work through the act of forgiveness:

- 1) Understand that the Holy Spirit who dwells within you, is able to help you forgive others. Just ask him for that help and follow his guidance.
- 2) If you are struggling to forgive someone, start by asking God to forgive you of your attitude of unforgiveness.
- 3) Keep in mind that God paid a tremendous price – the death of his son – to create the process of forgiveness.
- 4) Once you have genuinely – GENUINELY – forgiven someone, you should continue to pray and study God’s Word for the strength and perseverance to keep forgiving them. Quite often, our forgiveness of someone is authentic, but later we allow the memories of the sin that someone committed against us, to brew in our hearts and minds until we are again bitter about it. You have the power to forgive, and you have the power to withdraw forgiveness. God will bless you for forgiving, but he may chastise you for retracting forgiveness.

Copyright © 2019 Datu Wali Mission Foundation