

FOREGIVENESS

How many of you have been wronged, betrayed, or hurt by someone?

How did it make you feel?

If you are like me, I get angry, bitter, frustrated, misguided, lose touch with myself, and wish bad things towards the person that has hurt me. Unfortunately, not forgiving someone blocks access to God's grace, his blessings, and creates a cycle of resentment rather than peace and spiritual growth.

Forgiveness is one of the hardest things to do as a Christian. However, we must realize that forgiveness is crucial for us to receive God's forgiveness and grace. To forgive someone allows for us to be Christ like and promote spiritual and emotional healing. Forgiveness frees us from bitterness and enables prayer.

Think about this, God has shown mercy to us, and he commands us to show mercy to those who have wronged us. Forgiveness is essential for our own cleansing and breaks the cycle of retaliation, leading to spiritual freedom and a closer walk with God. Understand that holding grudges weighs us down, but forgiving frees us from bitterness, allowing emotional and spiritual healing.

Anyone know many times we are to forgive someone?

Matthew 18:21-22 gives us the answer: Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times".

From a biblical perspective, I researched and found 10 key reasons for forgiveness:

1. **To Receive God's Forgiveness:** Luke 6:37 states, "Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven". This implies that our own forgiveness is conditional on the forgiving of others.
2. **To Reflect Christ's Character:** Ephesians 4:32 talks about forgiving others, "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you". This implies that we are to become more like Christ.
3. **For Spiritual Freedom & Healing:** Galatians 5:1 states, "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery".
4. **To Have Our Prayers Answered:** Mark 11:25 states, "And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins". Jesus taught to forgive before praying so our prayers aren't hindered.

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5. **To Break Cycles of Bitterness:** Unforgiveness breeds resentment and retaliation; forgiveness ends this cycle as noted in Colossians 3:13, “Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.”
6. **For Spiritual Purity:** Confessing sins and forgiving others cleanses us from unrighteousness as noted in 1 John 1:9, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness”.
7. **To Receive God's Mercy:** Forgiving others opens our hearts to receive God's mercy. Proverbs 28:13 states, “Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy”.
8. **To Prevent Bitterness from Destroying Us:** Bitterness defiles and corrupts us, but forgiveness prevents it from corrupting our hearts and lives which is noted in Hebrews 12:15, “See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many”.
9. **To Experience True Relationship with God:** Troubled human relationships hinder our closeness with God; forgiving helps restore these vital connections. Ephesians 2:8 states, “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God”.
10. **It's a Divine Command:** Forgiveness isn't just advice; it's a fundamental command from God, reflecting His own merciful nature. Matthew 6:14-15 states “For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins”.

I hope these biblical verses gives personal thought on evaluating forgiveness in your life.