Freedom from Strongholds:

Supplement on Forgiveness

Greek word for unforgiveness = *aphíēmi. To send forth or away, to let go from oneself.* The Word Study Dictionary gives this definition: “To let go from one’s power, possession, to let go freek, to let escape. Metaphorically, to let go from obligation toward oneself, to remit, e.g., a debt, offense. Of sins, to remit the penalty of sins, ie to pardon, forgive.”

In Leviticus 16, in the law concerning the scapegoat, this word is applied to the scapegoat in verse 10 when the goat is sent into the wilderness after the priest lays his hands upon it. (In the Septuagent which is an early translation of the Hebrew Old Testament into Greek.) The goat was sent away bearing the sins of the people on the Day of Atonement while another goat is sacrificed as a sin offering in the temple.

Thus we see that forgiveness is a “sending away” of the sin/offence of someone who has hurt or offended me so that it no longer stands between us or affects our relationship. Forgiveness is not saying or even implying that the offence was “okay” in any way. Nor does forgiveness say that I will allow the sin against me to continue. Forgiveness releases the person to God with no strings attached. I no longer hold the sin against the offender and release all responsibility I may have felt for seeking retribution or vengeance. So far as it concerns me I release them from any consequences of their sin.

When I sin, I ask God to forgive me so that I do not stand guilty before him and I am no longer under the power of my sin. When someone sins against me, God requires that I forgive them so that they do not stand guilty before me. When I forgive them I release them to God who can deliver them from the power of their sin. Forgiveness is, therefore, a powerful weapon on our spiritual toolbelt.

See **Matthew 9:2-8**. Jesus is God and can forgive sin, but He has also shared this authority with people who believe.

**John 20:21-23.** “… *if you forgive the sins of any, their sins have been forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they have been retained*.”

**I John 5:16-17**. “*If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask and God will for him give life to those who commit sin not leading to death*…”

Codicil: In the situation where someone refuses to forgive you even when you have repented, you are not bound in any way by their unforgiveness. If you are born again you belong to Jesus and His blood and the power of His forgiveness trumps every other source of unforgiveness. The forgiveness of God cannot be controlled by the unforgiveness of people.