

how can I FORGIVE



Gods glory revealed in his mercy and forgiveness is one of the major themes of the Bible

JESUS' TEACHING ON:

2 Debtors – Luke 7

³⁶ One of the Pharisees asked him to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. ³⁷ And behold, a woman of the city, who was a sinner, when she learned that he was reclining at table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of ointment, ³⁸ and standing behind him at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head and kissed his feet and anointed them with the ointment. ³⁹ Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner." ⁴⁰ And Jesus answering said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." And he answered, "Say it, Teacher."

⁴¹ "A certain moneylender had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. ⁴² When they could not pay, he cancelled the debt of both. **Now which of them will love him more?"** ⁴³ Simon answered, "The one, I suppose, for whom he cancelled the larger debt." And he said to him, "You have judged rightly." ⁴⁴ Then turning toward the woman he said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. ⁴⁵ You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss my feet. ⁴⁶ You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. ⁴⁷ Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little." ⁴⁸ And he said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." ⁴⁹ Then those who were at table with him began to say among themselves, "Who is this, who even forgives sins?" ⁵⁰ And he said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."¹

What are the key things you learn about forgiveness in this passage?

¹ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version.* (2001). (Lk 7:36–50). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

What should the forgiveness of our God towards us produce in our hearts, and thinking, and living?

PRODIGAL SON – Luke 15

¹¹ And he said, “There was a man who had two sons. ¹² And the younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me.’ And he divided his property between them. ¹³ Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living. ¹⁴ And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶ And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything.

¹⁷ “But when he came to himself, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! ¹⁸ I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.” ’ ²⁰ And he arose and came to his father. **But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him.** ²¹ And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ ²² **But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. ²³ And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. ²⁴ For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.’ And they began to celebrate.**

²⁵ “Now his older son was in the field, and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶ And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. ²⁷ And he said to him, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and sound.’ ²⁸ **But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, ²⁹ but he answered his father, ‘Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might celebrate with my friends.** ³⁰ But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!’ ³¹ And he said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. ³² It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.’ ” ²

² *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version.* (2001). (Lk 15:11–32). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

What are the key things you learn about forgiveness in this passage?

VERY SPECIFICALLY list the reasons the father had to be angry and bitter with his son?

What reasons did the father show love and compassion and forgiveness?

Unforgiving Servant – Matt 18

²¹ Then Peter came up and said to him, “Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?” ²² Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times.

²³ “Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴ When he began to settle, one was brought to him who **owed him ten thousand talents**. ²⁵ And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. ²⁶ So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ ²⁷ And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. ²⁸ But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him **a hundred denarii**, and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, ‘Pay what you owe.’ ²⁹ So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ ³⁰ He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt. ³¹ When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place. ³² Then his master summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³ And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?’ ³⁴ And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. ³⁵ So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you,

if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.”³

What are the key things you learn about forgiveness in this passage?

Why would someone forgiven a UNPAYABLE 10 lifetimes of debt be so cruel right away to someone who owes him a few weeks of debt?

Be quick to forgive. Over and over

^{NKJ} **Luke 17:3** "Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. ⁴ "And **if he sins against you seven times in a day**, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, 'I repent,' you shall forgive him."

Most of us struggle to forgive ONE offense. But ... ONE offense every day? ONE offense every hour? Why would you struggle to forgive someone SEVEN times in one day?

Let's be honest ... we often feel that others deserve forgiveness ONLY if they are truly "**worthy**" of it in some way. In what way were we "worthy" of God's forgiveness at all? What will it take for you to have this kind of forgiveness? What needs to change in your thinking?

³ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*. (2001). (Mt 18:21-35). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

EPH 4: ²⁴ Put on your new nature, created to be like God-- truly righteous and holy. ²⁵ So stop telling lies. Let us tell our neighbors the truth, for we are all parts of the same body. ²⁶ And "don't sin by letting anger control you." Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, ²⁷ for anger gives a foothold to the devil. ²⁸ If you are a thief, quit stealing. Instead, use your hands for good hard work, and then give generously to others in need. ²⁹ Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them. ³⁰ And do not bring sorrow to God's Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, he has identified you as his own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption. ³¹ **Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior.** ³² **Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.** (Eph 4:1 NLT)

There's an awful lot going on here...

- Vs. 24 – we are commanded to be righteous and holy as our NEW NATURE dictates to us to be
- Vs. 25 – we are told to act in a way that shows we are all a part of the same body and that we need and care for each other accordingly
- Vs. 26 – Anger is sin. Anger controls. Anger is our fault every time and it is an offense to God. And we are to remedy that sin right away and not allow it to linger
- Vs. 27 – When we are angry we are opening a door to all kinds of sin and slamming the door on glorifying God
- Vs 29 – We are to ONLY have good and encouraging and helpful words.
- Vs 30 – Our sin brings sorrow to the Holy Spirit
- Vs 31 – We are to GET RID OF (not keep under control) ALL anger and harsh words and slander, etc.
- Vs 32 – We MUST be kind, tender hearted, forgiving

THE STANDARD IS GOD

What are the key things you learn about forgiveness in this passage?

There is SO much about anger in this passage. What does that have to do with forgiveness?

There is SO much about SPEECH and words in this passage. What does that have to do with forgiveness?

Forgiveness requires forgiveness

*We need not climb to heaven to see if we are forgiven ... we need only look in our heart. **If he can forgive, he knows he has been forgiven** - Thomas Watson*

He who demands mercy and gives none ruins the bridge over which he must pass. - Thomas Adams

Read the following verses carefully:

^{ESV} **Matthew 6:12** and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. ... ¹⁴ For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, ¹⁵ but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

^{NAS} **Mark 11:25** "And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone; so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your transgressions. ²⁶ *"But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father who is in heaven forgive your transgressions."*

^{ESV} **Luke 6:37** "Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven;

As you can imagine, these verses are rarely discussed and when they do come up, they bring a great deal of concern and questions. For the sake of this worksheet, I'm simply going to tell you my view in the second question.

The first thing that must be considered is the clear expectation that God has for us as His children to be quick and total in the area of forgiveness. Perhaps this is best illustrated by the parable of the two debtors found in Luke 7. Do we really believe that we are forgiven an immense, unpayable, eternally damning debt?

Why do you think we struggle so much to forgive what others do to us?

What can we do to be more convinced and controlled by the fact that we too are HORRIFIC sinners and have been forgiven so much more than could ever be done to us?

I would also ask you to SERIOUSLY consider not only the total forgiveness you owe to ANY who offends or hurts you, but the repeated and ENDLESS forgiveness you owe them.

We come to this second set of propositions and think perhaps God is saying that if we won't forgive others, then "He's going to be angry with us." Sadly, our anger and bitterness to others makes this "threat" seem palatable, if not simply a very fair deal. So, we go on with our well-deserved grudge and take the "consequences of a disapproving Dad." However, let's be clear. This is NOT what this passage means. Remember that forgiveness with God is **final and total** at Salvation. ALL sins are forgiven and paid for by the blood of our Savior. So, when God says "I will not forgive you" we are dealing with eternity. There is much study you can do on this, but the short answer is that the embracing of unforgiveness toward others is a BIBLICAL sign of one who is not redeemed.

Why do you think these verses teach this principle? Do you find that this is hard for you to get a handle on? Why?

I think this issue is best summed up by John Piper's comment: "If we think we can be indwelt by the Spirit of Christ and not make war on that attitude (*not forgiving / holding grudges*), we are deluded."⁴

⁴ John Piper, "If I Fail to Forgive Others, Will God Not Forgive Me?", Desiringgod.org. <https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/if-i-fail-to-forgive-others-will-god-not-forgive-me>

Compelling motives for forgiveness – John MacArthur

1. Forgiveness is the most Godlike act a person can do

- ^{NLT} **Ephesians 4:32** Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.
 - ^{ESV} **Ephesians 4:32** Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.
- VERY NEXT VERSE:
- ^{NLT} **Ephesians 5:1** Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are his dear children.

LACK OF FORGIVENESS IS SIMPLE PRIDE AND SELFISHNESS

Lack of forgiveness is SELFISHNESS. It is an undeserved affection for yourself that makes you aggravate the faults of others who offend you ... Proud self-esteeming ego is easily angered and usually unforgiving because it thinks so highly of itself and then so hatefully of any who offend – John MacArthur

- ✚ the reason you're so mad is because you have an elevated opinion of yourself
- ✚ be humble enough that no offense against you is worthy of hate.

The commands in Ephesians 4 are significant. Take each one and slowly read and think about them. Which do you feel might not be ones that you do well? Why?

Probably the most significant point we see in this verse is the standard we are to compare our thoughts and attitudes to. We are not told to be "quite" kind or "very" tenderhearted and forgiving. No, we are told to be those things LIKE Christ. How does this standard cause you to look at the list in this verse?

The Ugly Lifestyle of Selfishness - Tripp

It is a relational lifestyle driven by ugly selfishness.
It is motivated by what we want,
what we think we need, and by what we feel.

It has nothing to do with a desire to please God with the way we live with one another, and it surely has nothing to do with what it means to love others in the midst of their struggle to live God's way in this broken world.

It's also scarily blind. We are so focused on the failures of others that

we are blind to ourselves. We forget how often we fail, how much sin mars everything we do, and how desperately we need the grace that we are daily given but unwilling to offer to others. This way of living turns the people in our lives into our adversaries and turns the locations where we live into a war zone.

Yet, we have all been seduced by the power of unforgiveness. We have all used the sin of another against him or her. We have all acted as judges. We have all thought we are more righteous than the people around us. We have all used the power of guilt to get what we want when we want it and in so doing have not only done serious damage to the fine china of our relationships, but have demonstrated how much we need forgiveness.⁵

2. It is not murder only that is forbidden by the 6th commandment...

- ^{NLT} **Matthew 5:21** "You have heard that our ancestors were told, 'You must not murder. If you commit murder, you are subject to judgment.'²² But I say, if you are even angry with someone, you are subject to judgment! If you call someone an idiot, you are in danger of being brought before the court. And if you curse someone, you are in danger of the fires of hell.
 - ^{ESV} **Matthew 5:21** "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.'²² But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire.
- ✚ includes: anger, wrath, malice, lack of forgiveness, vengeance

One thing we see often in the Scripture is the severity of sin to God. Lack of forgiveness (anger, bitterness, etc.) is a sin we often justify and ignore, but God compares this with MURDER. How seriously do you take forgiving others? What can you do to take this issue more serious?

3. You must remember that whoever has offended you has offended God greater

- ✚ **Psalm 51:1** Have mercy on me, O God, because of your unfailing love. Because of your great compassion, blot out the stain of my sins.² Wash me clean from my guilt. Purify me from my sin.³ For I recognize my rebellion; it haunts me day and night.⁴ **Against you, and you alone, have I sinned;** I have done what is evil in your sight. (NLT)
- ✚ ^{NLT} **Psalm 41:4** "O LORD," I prayed, "have mercy on me. Heal me, for **I have sinned against you.**"

⁵ Tripp "Five Benefits of Unforgiveness" DesiringGod.org <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/five-benefits-of-unforgiveness-then-the-better-way>

 **ESV Psalm 41:4** As for me, I said, "O LORD, be gracious to me; heal me, for I have sinned against you!"

MATTHEW 18:21-35

Then Peter came up and said to him, "Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?"²² Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but **seventy-seven times**.

²³ "Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants.²⁴ When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents.²⁵ And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made.²⁶ So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.'²⁷ And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt.

²⁸ But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, 'Pay what you owe.'²⁹ So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.'³⁰ He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt.

³¹ When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place.³² Then his master summoned him and said to him, **'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me.'**³³ **And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?'**³⁴ And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt.³⁵ So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart." (ESV)

This passage has many important points to submit our thinking to.

First, Peter comes to Jesus with a very hard question. HOW MANY TIMES do I have to forgive the SAME person? We usually think that forgiving a person ONE time is quite godly, and if we have to forgive them 3-4 times we are embarking on earning "apostle status." Peter says "maybe seven times is way more than enough?". And what is Jesus reply? **Forgive anyone for anything EVERY TIME without limit and without conditions.** Let that sink in.

How quick are you to forgive?

Why is it so hard to forgive quickly?

Why is it so hard to forgive the SAME person over and over?

Why does God have the right to tell us to do this? Is it unreasonable or hypocritical for God to demand this of us?

SECONDLY, he tells a story of a man who was forgiven more than he could hope to pay in a lifetime only for that very same servant to go out and harshly demand a very small debt from another and have NO mercy on him?

What do you think the main point of this story is?

4. God who is so severely offended forgives so readily. It is only reasonable that those forgiven the greater sins should forgive the lesser sins

- + **Matt 18:**
- + We have been forgiven an un-payable and inconceivable debt
- + Can't we forgive the small debts
- + Even when the offense is going on... all your thoughts should be geared towards forgiveness

Still looking at the Matthew 18 passage ... how long does it take you to even be in the mindset of forgiving WHILE the offense is going on? Why?

Matthew 18 really needs to become not only part of your thinking, but part of your BELIEF. You MUST be convinced that you are a HORRIBLE sinner deserving of God's intense anger, and due to the completely lavish mercy you've been given ... HOW could you NOT possibly quickly and totally forgive all others any injury or hurt? How can you TODAY and every day start to make this part of your thinking and belief system in such a way that you really live it out naturally?

5. The one who does not forgive will not enjoy the love of other Christians (lack of forgiveness damages my participation in the body of Christ)

- o ^{NLT} **Hebrews 10:24** Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works.
- o ^{ESV} **Hebrews 10:24** And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works,
- + You need the life of God's people

The reality is, according to Scripture, we do NOT have the "luxury" to NOT love and NOT build up ANYONE in the body of Christ. If we are harboring unforgiveness or hatred or

bitterness or a grudge, we will be TOTALLY unable to minister to that person and many others. That is sin !!! Who is your enemy / enemies (don't put their name down)? Can you honestly love and serve them from a heart that cares deeply for their relationship with Christ? What can you do today to begin to mend and restore that to where it would honor Christ?

6. Failure to forgive results in divine chastening

- **Hebrews 12:6** For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives." (Heb. 12:6 ESV)
- ^{NLT} **James 2:13** There will be no mercy for those who have not shown mercy to others. But if you have been merciful, God will be merciful when he judges you.
- ^{ESV} **James 2:13** For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.
- ^{NLT} **Matthew 5:7** God blesses those who are merciful, for they will be shown mercy.
- ^{ESV} **Matthew 5:7** "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

Now be VERY careful here. ALL OUR SINS ARE FORGIVEN as believers. We do not get "punished" for sinning. That is not how God treats us. HOWEVER, God is very intentional about conforming us to holiness and Christlikeness. This is done by difficulties and "chastening" (a term of learning and instruction and guiding toward maturity). So, the point is not to fear an angry God, but yet to still realize that, like a good parent, he will bring to bear whatever pain and suffering we need to be brought to maturity. He will NOT allow unforgiveness to go unaddressed.

7. The one who does not forgive will not be forgiven

- ◆ **Matthew 6:15** but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. (Matt. 6:15 ESV)
- ◆ **Matthew 18:35** So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart." (Matt. 18:35 ESV)
- ◆ **Matthew 6:12** and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. (Matt. 6:12 ESV)
- ◆ **Luke 11:4** and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation." (Lk. 11:4 ESV)

✚ You forgive us God as we have forgiven others

✚ If you forgive you'll be forgiven ... **God deals with you as you deal with others**

People struggle with this verse, but I don't think it's as complicated as we tend to make it. This is not a true condition the way we normally think of them. God is not threatening that we will lose salvation if we refuse to forgive. HOWEVER, it is clear in scripture that **a TRUE believer WILL forgive**. Therefore, if you refuse to forgive others, you reveal that you yourself are not forgiven, nor a true believer, nor indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

We speak of evidences of salvation. Well, there is one right here that is profound and clearly against human nature. So ... how are you in this area? Do not take it lightly. Do you hold grudges? Do you refuse to forgive? This could be a **very serious indicator** that there is NO God inside you other than yourself. How long does it take you to forgive? Do you have unforgiveness for someone right now? Do you have reason to be concerned that perhaps you are not a true believer based on your lack of forgiving?

8. The absence of forgiveness renders us unfit to worship

- ✚ Worship becomes a form of hypocrisy
 - Isaiah 1
 - **Matthew 5** You have heard that our ancestors were told, 'You must not murder. If you commit murder, you are subject to judgment.' (Mat 5:1 NLT)²² But I say, if you are even angry with someone, you are subject to judgment! If you call someone an idiot, you are in danger of being brought before the court. And if you curse someone, you are in danger of the fires of hell.²³ "So if you are presenting a sacrifice at the altar in the Temple and you suddenly remember that someone has something against you,²⁴ leave your sacrifice there at the altar. **Go and be reconciled to that person. Then come and offer your sacrifice to God.**" (Mat 5:1 NLT)
 - ^{ESV} **Matthew 5:23** So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you,²⁴ leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

This is a passage that so many just gloss over. God does NOT want our worship if we are not willing to forgive and pursue forgiveness. Why do you think this is God's thinking in the matter?

- ✚ Don't draw near to God if there's an unsettled grudge with another Christian
- ✚ Reconciliation must precede worship
- ✚ We must forgive in the heart and do all we can to make it right
 - **Psm 66:** ¹⁸ **If I had not confessed the sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened.** ¹⁹ But God did listen! He paid attention to my prayer. ²⁰ Praise God, who did not ignore my prayer or withdraw his unfailing love from me. (Psa 66:1 NLT)

David says a similar thing. God is not going to give attention to my prayers if I hold on to sin in my heart. Why do you think that is?

9. Not to forgive is to usurp the authority of God

✚ If you won't forgive you are holding yourself up as the one who **holds the sword of Divine judgment**

✚ GENESIS 50: ¹⁹ But Joseph said to them, "**Do not fear, for am I in the place of God?**" ²⁰ As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive

✚ ^{NLT} **Romans 12:14** Bless those who persecute you. Don't curse them; pray that God will bless them. ¹⁵ Be happy with those who are happy, and weep with those who weep. ¹⁶ Live in harmony with each other. Don't be too proud to enjoy the company of ordinary people. And don't think you know it all! ¹⁷ **Never pay back evil with more evil.** Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable. ¹⁸ Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone. ¹⁹ Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God. For the Scriptures say, "I will take revenge; I will pay them back," says the LORD.

✚ ^{ESV} **Romans 12:14** Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. ¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. ¹⁶ Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. ¹⁷ Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. ¹⁸ If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. ¹⁹ Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord."

✚ It is blasphemy to think we know better and to assume we can exercise actions on his behalf – John MacArthur

Do you agree that choosing to not forgive is putting yourself in the place of God? Why or why not? Explain your answer clearly?

10. Offences against you are your trials ... and by those trials God is perfecting you

✚ The offences against you are the very trials which God will use to make you like His son

✚ Be LITTLE concerned about your personal injuries and MUCH concerned about your personal holiness

✚ In your trials God is at work making you STRONG and HOLY

✚ ^{NLT} **James 1:2** Dear brothers and sisters, **when troubles come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy.** ³ For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. ⁴ So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.

✚ ^{ESV} **James 1:2** Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, ³ for **you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.** ⁴ And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing

✚ Romans 5: ³ We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. ⁴ And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. ⁵ And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love. (Rom 5:1 NLT)

We so often say we LONG to be like Christ and we want NOTHING more than to bring Him glory by our actions and attitudes. However, we QUICKLY forget that passion when we are wronged don't we? Yes, IT IS WRONG what many do to us, but it is NOT our responsibility to make the other person right with God. But it is ALWAYS our responsibility to react to life and others (and deep wounds and wrongs) in a way that reflects the mercy and love and forgiveness of the God who lives in us.

Why is it hard to view wrongs against us as "trials" to be embraced and as still from the hand of God for our good?

How would this view make a difference in our thinking and reactions and feelings if we are wronged?

What can you do, starting now, to affect your thinking in such a way as to see wrongs as trials YOU are responsible to invest and embrace?

Failure to forgive is a blatant sin... No discussion

NLT 1 John 5:3 Loving God means keeping his commandments, and his commandments are not burdensome.

ESV 1 John 5:3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome.

WHY DON'T WE FORGIVE? – TRIPP

I want this worksheet to be scripture, but I think this excerpt from a *Desiring God* article where Paul Tripp shares why we don't forgive is insightful and convicting.

Holding onto the other's wrongs gives us the upper hand in our relationship. We keep a record of wrongs because we are not motivated by what honors God and is best for others but by what is expedient for ourselves. - Tripp

- 1 **Debt is power.** There is power in having something to hold over another's head. There is power in using a person's weakness and failure against him or her. In moments when we want our own way, we pull out some wrong against us as our relational trump card.

We don't forgive because we want to use their failures against them

- 2 **Debt is identity.** Holding onto another's sin, weakness, and failure makes us feel superior to them. It allows us to believe that we are more righteous and mature than they are. We fall into the pattern of getting our sense of self not by the comfort and call of the gospel but by comparing ourselves to another. This pattern plays into the self-righteousness that is the struggle of every sinner.

We don't forgive because it makes us feel better or more righteous than them

- 3 **Debt is entitlement.** Because of all the other person's wrongs against us, he or she owes us. Carrying these wrongs makes us feel deserving and therefore comfortable with being self-focused and demanding. "After all I have had to endure in relationship with you, don't I deserve . . . ?"

We don't forgive because it makes me feel I deserve to feel self focused

- 4 **Debt is weaponry**. The sins and failures that another has done against us become like a loaded gun that we carry around. It is very tempting to pull them out and use them when we are angry. When someone has hurt us in some way, it is very tempting to hurt them back by throwing in their face just how evil and immature they are.

We don't forgive because we want to hurt them back

- 5 **Debt puts us in God's position**. It is the one place that we must never be, but it is also a position that all of us have put ourselves in. We are not the judge of others. We are not the one who should dispense consequences for other's sin. It is not our job to make sure they feel the appropriate amount of guilt for what they have done. But it is very tempting to ascend to God's throne and to make ourselves judge.⁶

We don't forgive because we don't trust God to get revenge

Which of the two above do you think you struggle with the most and why??

Where forgiveness exists. Relationships last. Quick and easy forgiveness
We are never more like God than when we forgive
We are never more like Christ than when we carry the debt so forgiveness can happen
- John MacArthur

⁶ Paul Tripp <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/five-benefits-of-unforgiveness-then-the-better-way>

EXAMPLES:

Story starts in Genesis with Adam and Eve

Joseph – Genesis 45

⁴ So Joseph said to his brothers, “Come near to me, please.” And they came near. And he said, “I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. ⁵ And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, **for God sent me** before you to preserve life. ⁶ For the famine has been in the land these two years, and there are yet five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. ⁷ **And God sent me** before you **to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors.** ⁸ So it was not you who sent me here, but God. He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt.”⁷

- It is a GOD thing. My perspective on God will TOTALLY change my view of my sin and forgiveness
- God is always in charge no matter what man thinks he’s doing
- God always has a purpose. It might take 30 years to see it ... or you may never see it

Joseph – Genesis 50

¹⁵ When Joseph’s brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, “It may be that Joseph will hate us and pay us back for all the evil that we did to him.” ¹⁶ So they sent a message to Joseph, saying, “Your father gave this command before he died: ¹⁷ ‘Say to Joseph, “Please forgive the transgression of your brothers and their sin, because they did evil to you.” ’ And now, please forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of your father.” Joseph wept when they spoke to him. ¹⁸ His brothers also came and fell down before him and said, “Behold, we are your servants.” ¹⁹ But Joseph said to them, “**Do not fear, for am I in the place of God?** ²⁰ As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today. ²¹ So do not fear; I will provide for you and your little ones.” Thus he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.⁸

- Revenge or anger against others puts us in the place of God. It is **blasphemy and PRIDE**

Christ

^{NKJ} **Luke 23:34** Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." And they divided His garments and cast lots.

⁷ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version.* (2001). (Ge 45:4–8). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

⁸ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version.* (2001). (Ge 50:15–21). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.