
CHRISTIAN ENEMIES

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Dedication

*We want to dedicate the efforts of this Writing to the ONE who loves us, forgave us,
and gave his life for us. It is our privilege to further his cause in our day.*

--Galatians 2:20

Grace Christian Ministries

Avoid Division Amongst Fellow Believers

For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses (Matthew, 6:14-15 KJV).

Are you angry with another Christian? Is there division between yourself and a fellow Christian? Do you have unforgiveness in your heart toward another Christian? Do you feel uneasy at the mention of another Christian's name? Do you have feelings of getting even, revenge, or strong dislike towards a fellow Christian? Well, these are emotions that work against your own spiritual life and displease the heart of God, as He is the Father of both you and the other Christian.

It is a grievous day in the Body of Christ when His followers start fighting against one another like those in the secular world. The bible declares that we are the "*Salt of the Earth*" (Matthew 45:13), which means we are the preservers of God's light in the world. However, if we are disgruntled, divided, and have discord toward one another then how can the Lord reach the lost? If we clap, sing worship songs, and say

amen every Sunday but have things in our hearts toward another Christian across town, how can Jesus Christ be glorified?

Enemies are opposing forces that fight each other. If we are believers of Jesus Christ, why is there hostility amongst us? First John, chapter 4, verse 20 states, *If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?*

Many Christians fail to understand the significance of bringing the bond of peace over contentious and bitter feelings. A heart filled with strife and un-forgiveness can only lead to a decline in godly character. However, through the grace and mercy of God, conflicts can be resolved and reconciliation restored amongst fellow believers. Unfortunately, every Sunday people are bypassing the unpleasant feelings in their hearts toward their brother or sister in Christ to lift their hands in praise to God, whom they have never seen. The aforementioned passage (I John 4:20) asks us a very significant question concerning our conduct toward others. It challenges

us to evaluate what is really in our hearts for both God and our fellowman.

Why is Forgiveness Important?

In Matthew, chapter 18, verses 21-35 NIV, Simon Peter asked Jesus a question concerning forgiveness. What was Jesus' response?

21 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?"

22 Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times."

23 "Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants."

24 As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold was brought to him.

25 Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.

26 *“At this the servant fell on his knees before him. ‘Be patient with me,’ he begged, ‘and I will pay back everything.’*

27 *The servant’s master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.*

28 *‘But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins. He grabbed him and began to choke him. ‘Pay back what you owe me!’ he demanded.*

29 *‘His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.’*

30 *‘But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. 31 When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened.*

32 *‘Then the master called the servant in. ‘You wicked servant,’ he said, ‘I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to.*

33 *Shouldn’t you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?’*

34 In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.

35 “This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

After reading the above passage it is clear how big our Heavenly Father is on forgiveness and reconciliation amongst His children. We cannot get away from the reality of how we became born of God’s Spirit. All of us who confess allegiance toward Jesus Christ had to be forgiven. We could not enter into His Kingdom without being pardoned from our sins and iniquities (Romans 10:9-10 KJV). Just think, our entire nature was changed as a result of being forgiven. We are now sons and daughters of God because He decided to forgive us and change the course of our lives. If we abide in God’s example through Jesus Christ, how many things can change if we forgive?

Do you know we could change the entire direction of a situation or person’s life if we allow God’s love to work through us? However, if we abide in darkness and refuse to see how we have been forgiven, then God will allow us to learn

what it feels like to have something held over our heads. In the book of Matthew, chapter 18, verses 21-35 KJV, Jesus gave a response to Peter of a forgiving heart that amounted to a total of seventy times seven. It showed an example of allowing nothing to stand between two believers of the Lord or for that matter, anyone who has offended us and stands in need of forgiveness.

There are brothers and sisters in the Lord who will offend you, sin against you, and even hurt you emotionally. This is unfortunate, however, we are living in these earthly bodies and you also have made mistakes, fallen to the flesh, and have said or done something that offended or hurt someone else. Therefore, we should seek to bring healing to situations instead of letting them stay infected by anger, resentment, and un-forgiveness. Let's consider what Jesus said in the gospel of Matthew chapter 5, verses 23-24,

“Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer

your gift.” (NIV)

He is speaking the same thing to us in our day. If we hold onto another’s sins and refuse to forgive, we will miss the opportunity to extend the abundance of God’s forgiveness to that person. Furthermore, an attitude of self-righteousness can develop in thinking we cannot make the same mistakes or commit the same sins. Let’s take a look at the word “Self-Righteous.” Let’s break it down further to, “Self-Right,” and finally let’s see the word, “Self.” This kind of thinking can actually exist in a believer’s mind, which makes it very difficult to extend forgiveness to others.

The hard-hearted person can become blind and lack humility or thankfulness for having his or her own sins forgiven. If Hardheartedness grows in us we will hold everyone else responsible for our hurts, and believe we are justified for the way we feel. God is the only one who is faultless and therefore would be justified if mankind offended Him, yet He forgives us. No one denies that we have been wronged, hurt, or sinned against; it is not a good feeling. However, we cannot

allow un-forgiveness to live in our hearts and expect to please God. He did the hardest thing by sending His Son to be a sacrifice, ransom, and mediator for our sins.

Seek to make things Right

Jesus knew situations would arise between believers that would cause tension and uneasiness. Here is a question, have you gone through the following measures to make things right with those whom you are divided against? Have you attempted to address the situation that stands between you both? Have you prayed and communicated your heart with God in asking his help to forgive? Have you kept the matter with integrity and refused to bring others into what happened or spread gossip all over town? Jesus never intended for His followers to become enemies of one another because this is not evidence that they are connected to Him.

Let's consider what Jesus said in the book of John, chapter 13, verses 34-35, KJV, "*A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to*

another?" These verses reveal our authenticity in Christ beyond our praise, worship, prayer, reading our bibles, preaching, saying amen, or any other service we undertake. We can do religious works and believe this constitutes how genuine we are for Christ; however, when we love one another it truly authenticates our Christian confession.

Do you know that anger, bitterness, resentment, and unforgiveness in the heart blocks or hinders you from being reached by God? In a faucet, water can either flow freely, stagger through the pipe, or not come out at all. Do you know that your heart works in the same manner? It can have love flowing freely from it, have love staggering through, or not release love at all? Our own salvation and eternal life started with love and forgiveness. It began with God forgiving us of our sins and opening His heart to receive us into His kingdom. We broke covenant and God initiated a search to bring us back to Him. Who can hurt you and you are the one that initiates reconciliation? God was the one hurt by our sinful practices and yet He chose to be the first one who would reach out His hand toward reconciliation.

Do you want to show spiritual maturity? How about being the one who reaches out first even if you feel the other person was at fault? Should it matter who is wrong when division exists between two children of God? Do you think we can continue to operate in such a selfish manner and receive the abundance of God's blessings? Should we ignore God's love coming to us in the form of Jesus Christ and remain at odds with fellow Christians?

Dear brother or sister, this is a serious matter before our Heavenly Father. He is so stern when it comes to loving one another that He made it a command (John chapter 13, verses 34-35, KJV). It's not open for negotiation or up for debate. They are required of us if we say that we are connected to Him. How can we believe we have love in our hearts if they are filled with partiality—if at the slightest offense or hurt, we turn and go back the other way? We may not want to face it but to avoid separation between God and ourselves we must first deal with the separation between ourselves and our Christian brothers and sisters.

A parent would be highly upset to learn there are dissensions or divisions between his or her children. Neither child could have successful interactions with the parent until there is reconciliation, forgiveness, and mending of hearts amongst themselves. Should our Heavenly Father be any different? Some might argue their point and try to use scriptures to justify their position; but it would be to no avail to God. He fully expects us to forgive and express unconditional love to one another. God made it very clear in I Corinthians chapter 13, verse 1, KJV, *“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.”*

If you are challenged with forgiving anyone, especially a fellow Christian, will you allow the Holy Spirit to help you turn from an un-forgiving heart? Remember, there are Christians worshipping every Sunday who are warehousing un-forgiveness and fail to realize how it is hindering their relationship with God. Remember, He is love and desires for His love to be shared to those who need to be forgiven. May his peace fill your heart and may you find comfort in his arms of Grace.

References

The Holy Bible: King James, Amplified, New American, New International Parallel Bible. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 1999.