

Forgiving others may be a simple matter for you, or it may be a struggle. The mind set of our culture gives us permission to cling to our resentment, broken relationships, and unresolved conflicts, but the Word of God gives us a higher standard. God wants us to forgive even as we have been forgiven. The cost of forgiveness is great, but Jesus has already paid the price. He wants us to follow in His steps and walk the road of forgiveness that leads to blessing. As you prepare for this journey, remember that the Lord is always present with you. He will give you the strength and courage you need.

Going Deeper

Sometimes we want people to sympathize with us in our hurts. The truth is, sympathy can provide temporary relief, but nothing short of forgiveness can procure lasting release. Why do you think people are content to wallow in self-pity when the release of forgiveness is available?

Is your reaction to hurt or offense in your life an attempt to seek revenge? To wound the person who has wounded you? If so, explain how you feel that getting revenge or wounding your offender would resolve your problem. Would that resolution bring lasting peace, or only add to your pain as a victim? Are you seeking relief or release?

Some responses to hurt and offense are not obvious. Instead of an outburst of anger or hope for revenge, there is the quiet, subtle eating away—the “gnawing teeth”—of a bitter heart. Is this your response to those who hurt you? Why can this kind of response be even more deadly than an outburst?

What is your initial reaction to the concept of forgiveness? Do you react in denial, anger, self-righteousness, or judgment? Do you perhaps feel hostile toward the whole idea of forgiveness as a necessity?

What characteristics in your life might indicate that you haven't fully forgiven past hurts, even if you know in your head what you need to do?

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Forgiveness

Sermon Notes

