

CHAPTER FOUR

Step No. 4 - Forgiveness

We will now begin to discuss the Biblical understanding of forgiveness. We must forgive because Jesus has forgiven us.

(Ephesians 4:32 KJV) And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

Forgiveness is commanded by God and is something we do in obedience to God.

FORGIVENESS IS A DECISION OF THE WILL - WE CAN FORGIVE

(Colossians 3:12-13 KJV) Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; {13} Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.

These scriptures raise an interesting point. If God chooses to forgive us to the level we forgive others, any failure on our part to forgive someone else could be understood to mean that God will also withhold His forgiveness. Any failure to forgive by us then becomes a salvation issue.

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

The Victor needs to understand that harboring unforgiveness will open his soul to demonic torment, (Matthew 18:34); and that for forgiveness to be genuine it must touch the heart and emotions and be released to God. (Matthew 18:35).

(Matthew 18:21-35 KJV) Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? {22} Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven. {23} Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. {24} And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. {25} But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. {26} The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. {27} Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. {28} But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. {29} And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. {30} And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. {31} So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. {32} Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: {33} Shouldest not thou also have had

compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee? {34} And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. {35} So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

NEED TO FORGIVE GOD?

Many times victims harbor un-forgiveness towards God. It is not that God has anything to be forgiven for, because God is perfect and incapable of doing wrong. A victim often blames God for not rescuing them out of their abusive circumstances. “Where was God when my abuse was taking place?” is a question we are often asked. God created mankind with freewill. Free to make mistakes, hopefully learn from making those mistakes, and possibly we will not make those same mistakes again. We are free to love or to hate as we choose - free to do good or bad. This applies to both the perpetrator and the victim. Each of them were created in the image of God. In order for God to know for sure we have made the decision to believe in Him and His Son and follow the teachings of Jesus, we had to have free will.

God did not want a bunch of robots that ‘had’ to love Him. None of us would really like it if someone were forced to love us. It means so much more when they choose to love us. God wants each one of us to submit our wills to Him and serve Him. Perpetrators have used their free will to commit crimes on the innocent. Why doesn’t God stop the wicked person? Because God knows the outcome for the wicked person and God has already given that person a choice.

(Psalms 10:4 KJV) The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts.

(Proverbs 5:21-23 KJV) For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and he pondereth all his goings. {22} His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins. {23} He shall die without instruction; and in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray.

God ponders the path of the wicked person knowing that his deeds have ensnared him, his sins hold him in his condition and because he will not receive instruction he will go astray and be lost and receive eternal punishment. Unless he repents and gives his will over to God and cleanses himself of his iniquities by believing in what Jesus did on the cross, the wicked person is doomed. Jesus chose to die on the cross to make a way for each person to be made free from the punishment of evil sins committed if they will believe Jesus is who He says He is. Jesus made His choice, but each person is confronted with using their free will to make a choice to follow Jesus.

(John 10:17-18 KJV) Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. {18} No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.

(Romans 5:8 KJV) But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

God also knows that although His enemies can inflict pain and abuse on the victims innocent bodies,

He wants us to remember that our souls and spirits are what lives on forever, not our physical body that will return to dust at death.

(1 Corinthians 15:42-44 KJV) So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: {43} It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: {44} It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

(1 Corinthians 15:50 KJV) Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

This is one of the reasons God has installed the safety device of disassociation - to preserve our spirits. Some victims disassociate to the degree of Multiple Personality Disorder and some to a milder degree. Many victims never recall all their memories of abuse. We feel it is not necessary to remember every detail of abuse in order to be healed. If a person is having a re-occurring problem in a specific area of their memories, then they may ask God to reveal to them anything they need to remember to get well. Victims need to look forward not backwards in order to become real Victors.

(Luke 9:61-62 KJV) And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. {62} And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

Jesus had heard all kinds of excuses why people did not put him first and follow him. Harboring un-forgiveness towards God is just another excuse. If we, as victims, keep ourselves dwelling on our past memories we waste precious time we could use following Jesus and helping set others free. As we mentioned earlier God is concerned with our spirits and we should be more worried about Him (God) who has all the power to decide our eternal habitation, than our enemies who only have a temporary time here on earth to torment us.

(1 John 3:2 KJV) Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

(John 4:24 KJV) God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

(Luke 12:3-7 KJV) Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops. {4} And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. {5} But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him. {6} Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? {7} But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows.

If God shielded us from all harm and hurt by taking away mankind's free will, all would soon agree that the price would be too high. God in his omniscience knows that our ability to choose to love God and one another is the greatest joy that humans can experience. When we see an abusive situation we need to always understand that it is God's will to deliver that person from that situation and is looking for people who are willing to help rescue the captives.

(Job 29:17 KJV) And I brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth.

We need to remember that God is in control and he is a just God metering out punishment where it is deserved not only here in our lifetime, but for everlasting. Only God has the power to cast a person into Hell. You may feel like you have already been there, but it was only temporary until you could get help, not forever.

RESTORING THE FATHER IMAGE and RELATIONSHIP

Victims may find it hard to accept God as their father because of the abuse from their earthly fathers or because they have harbored un-forgiveness towards Him for so long. They also may be unforgiving because during their abuse there was a twisting of the truth of God and they have to re-new their thinking. This can only be done with a truly repentant heart and examining the word of God to find out the real truth.

We have provided a section on Who We are in Christ (Appendix One) at the back of this book that may help a victim to overcome false concepts. We usually suggest that they pray before they ever start to read the section for God to help them understand the truth and also that they read the list several times a week to re-enforce the Scripture into their hearts. There is also a poem, MY HEAVENLY FATHER, in Appendix Eight that the Lord inspired me (Donna) to write on Father's Day one year. Here are some more Scriptures to further explain the Father relationship.

(John 14:23 KJV) Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

(John 10:30 KJV) I and my Father are one.

(John 14:6 KJV) Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

(Romans 8:15-16 KJV) For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. {16} The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

(2 Corinthians 1:3-4 KJV) Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; {4} Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.

(2 Corinthians 6:17-18 KJV) Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, {18} And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

NEED TO FORGIVE YOURSELF?

Many victims cannot forgive themselves for what they have done and need to add themselves to their lists. When a victim's body responds in physical pleasure during an unwanted sexual act, the victim does not understand that it is not always their fault. That is the way our bodies are made - to respond to physical touch or even emotionally to conversations.

There are also times when the victim knew that they were participating in something that was not right, but felt they had no power to stop the perpetrator or realized later that it was wrong. This is one area where Satan loves to speak to the victim's mind and causes them to heap more and more condemnation on themselves. Just tell the Victor to repent, ask for forgiveness from God for what they did that they knew was wrong, make a decision to forgive themselves, and live for Jesus.

(Romans 8:1-2 KJV) There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. {2} For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

If the Victor has truly trusted in Christ for healing and freedom, they need to quit heaping condemnation on themselves. If they make the choice to forgive themselves, they are forgiven and if their past sins are brought up by themselves, they have not truly trusted in the power of the cross.

(Micah 7:18-19 KJV) Who is a God like unto thee, that oneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. {19} He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.

(Hebrews 9:28 KJV) So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

(Hebrews 8:12 KJV) For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.

Forgiving ourselves is often harder than forgiving others. This is also a choice we make based upon the word of God and our faith in the cross. When this decision is made it is often helpful to anoint with oil and pray for God to begin the healing of the Victor's emotions. As parents we could try to protect our children from being hurt by never letting them live and experience life, but this is not a life style than anyone would choose.

FORGIVENESS IN CASE OF DIVORCE

Just a word here about victims and forgiving themselves in the case of divorce. We have written a whole section on Divorce (Appendix Two) and God's perfect plan and the circumstances that are

dealt with according to the word of God. The reason why he laid out his perfect plan is because He knew there would be problems connected with divorce - He knew it would cause heartache in the spouses involved, the children, and the rest of the family.

There are many factors that pertain to divorce such as salvation, sin, rash vows, soul ties, iniquities, word curses, and multiple personalities. We have written about each factor in this book. When people make the vows to marry, they are supposed to join themselves to the other person for the rest of their lives. It is more than a physical act of going through a civil ceremony. They are supposed to cleave (glue) themselves to each other as we explain in the Soul ties section. They are supposed to spiritually join every facet of that marriage to God. This is the perfect plan of God. It is devastating to victims when they carry ungodly soul ties (be they willing or non-willing) from former sexual relationships into a new sexual relationship in a new marriage. The garbage of un-Godly soul ties remain until a person acknowledges them and prays for cleansing and forgiveness.

Then there is the possibility of iniquities that have been handed down from another generation that tempt the victim or cause the victim to have a compulsion to act in an un-Godly way going from one relationship to another. Many victims say their personalities caused problems in their relationships. All these factors make divorce a difficult situation to deal with in deliverance ministry and especially in the area of forgiveness.

As ministers of the word of God we are required to show the Victor what God's word has to say and the only reasons why God allows divorce. We cannot suggest that a person get a divorce even if it seems there are valid reasons. There is always the possibility of healing on both sides of the relationship. We can stand by the Victor before, during, and after the divorce and minister healing in the areas where it has created trauma. The Victor will have to stand before God with their own decision. We have ministered in many difficult situations. We have met many victims who have made rash vows (Appendix Five) and made bad choices of marriage partners that have ended in divorce because they were un-saved or not in a stable condition spiritually, emotionally, or mentally or else their spouse just divorced them whether they wanted it or not. They often had no control over themselves because they were being controlled by others, iniquities or soul ties, etc..

However in some cases, a person may decide to leave because of just not being able to cope with the relationship and because of suicidal thoughts or attempts. If a person is a non-Christian at the time of the divorce it is an entirely different matter. However, after the Victor has decided to become a Christian and believe they can be totally free through what Jesus did on the cross, they need to forgive themselves for making the wrong decisions and ask God for forgiveness. In the case of a Christian getting divorced, they are responsible to God. A Christian is supposed to live their lives in obedience to God, His word, and do what pleases God. Of course, only God can know and judge a person's heart.

(Jeremiah 17:9-10 KJV) The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? {10} I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.

To make divorce the unonable sin would be devastating to many victims because the decisions were made in bad situations. Once we realize we have sinned even in a divorce situation, we need to learn from our mistakes, be cleansed and forgiven of our sins, and go on with our lives living in obedience

to God's word.

(1 John 1:9 KJV) If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

REMEMBER

1. Forgiveness does not mean tolerating abuse.

(Romans 12:18-21 KJV) If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. {19} Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. {20} Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. {21} Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

2. Forgiveness does not mean you approve of the person's behavior.

(Luke 6:27-28 KJV) But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, {28} Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.

3. Forgiveness is a decision of the will to release the person who has wronged you of any debt, or commitment or apology that you feel they owe you and to release all bitterness to God.

(Hebrews 12:14-15 KJV) Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: {15} Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;

(Ephesians 4:31-32 KJV) Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: {32} And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

4. If you have unforgiveness toward someone, you will begin to react emotionally every time you are around that person. If you do not forgive someone, you are allowing that person to control you!

(2 Corinthians 3:17 KJV) Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

When you do not forgive someone who has hurt you, you are not ruling your own spirit or your will, and you will leave yourself wide open to attack from the enemy.

(Proverbs 25:28 KJV) He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls.

Satan is the accuser of the brethren and he delights in inflicting condemning thoughts in your head. If you have truly forgiven those that have hurt you, it takes away his control over that part of your life. Your heart will be joyous that you have already taken care of that un-forgiveness and it will make you stronger and not ashamed in the sight of God.

(1 Peter 5:8 KJV) Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

There will be a time when the devil will no longer be able to accuse us.

(Revelation 12:10 KJV) And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.

Until that time we must be on our guard to prevent him from getting a foot-hold in our lives.

APPLYING THE BALM

The Victor must pray for the Holy Spirit to bring to their mind the name of every person that they have any unforgiveness or bitterness toward. The Victor should write down these names (or initials if preferred). This list does not have to be shared with anyone, but each one needs to be dealt with.

The minister should anoint the Victor with oil and pray for the Holy Spirit to enable the victor to release unforgiveness from their heart for each person on their list, being careful not to omit putting their own name on the list, as we often have the hardest problem forgiving ourselves. (See Appendix Five - Rash Vows)

The Victor must pray through their list one person at a time, forgiving each person from their heart; not forgetting to ask God for forgiveness for blaming Him and also asking that all bitterness against Him be released. This is very important because if bitterness toward God is not released, future growth will be thwarted.

Close the session in prayer asking God to protect and seal the work that you have done.

SAMPLE PRAYER

Father God, we thank you for your forgiveness of us. Help us not to go back to our old habits of bitterness and help us to be strong when the accuser of the brethren tries to inflict us with guilt and unforgiveness again. We ask you now to seal the work that we have done as we forgive all those who have hurt us. Amen.