

Forgiveness

The Inner Healing Ointment

We have discussed many issues regarding inner healing and wholeness in the previous chapters. However, the subject of forgiveness is *the key* element in inner healing. This is the most important issue.

Forgiveness was the death blow that defeated Satan! Unforgiveness gives Satan a license to operate in your life!

The Apostle Paul warns us in 2 Corinthians 2:10-11 about Satan taking advantage of us through unforgiveness. 2 Corinthians 2:10-11 says, "Now whom you forgive anything, I also *forgive*. For if indeed I have forgiven anything, I have forgiven that one for your sakes in the presence of Christ, lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices."

I want to plant a vision in you at this point about the real meaning of forgiveness.

Picture yourself with someone screaming at you words of insults, especially that are not true. Picture that sin going into your heart and wounding you as the Bible says it does.

Now picture Jesus stepping in between you and the perpetrator, and see that sin going into His heart instead of yours.

He "bore" our sins.

Isaiah 53:5,

"But He *was* wounded for our transgressions, *He was* bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace *was* upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed."

Isaiah 53:12-b,

"...And He bore the sin of many, And made intercession for the transgressors."

When you agree with that truth you have forgiven and you are set free. He bore the sins perpetrated against you as well as the sins you have committed.

Jesus' mission as stated in Isaiah 61, and as He spoke in Luke 4, is to set us free, through forgiveness, from the things that enslave us.

"And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written: 'The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.' Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them, 'Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing'" (Luke 4:17-21).

The acceptable year of the Lord referred to the Year of Jubilee as described in Leviticus chapter 25. This was the Sabbath of Sabbaths. The Sabbath year was every seventh year during which time people were to allow their land to rest. However, each 50th year was the Year of Jubilee. This is when all slaves were set free and all mortgaged land

and loans were forgiven. In short, this was the "Year of total forgiveness," and Jesus was proclaiming the final fulfillment of this promise in Him. This Year of Jubilee began on the Day of Atonement, which was the one day each year that the priest went into the Holy of Holies with the blood for the atonement and forgiveness of sins.

Forgiveness is the surgery that removes our sins.

It is the major step towards healing.

It is much like physical surgery. The word forgive means to remove. Its root word is death, which means to separate.

Humans attempt to medicate their inner wounds with "outer ointments."

The problem is that we do not even realize that our outer issues are usually the result of inner wounds, so we try all sorts of medications and activities, none of which work, indeed they make things worse. Forgiveness, as we wrote about in Chapter 1 of this book, is the ointment for inner healing.

Inner healing usually brings healing and prosperity to those "external issues" that we are so concerned with. 3 John 1:2 says, "Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers."

Most inner wounds are caused by shame, rejection, lack of love and primarily broken relationships, especially with father figures. God created us for relationships and to the degree our prime relationships have been less than perfect, which includes all of us, to that same degree we acquire inner wounds. Forgiveness is the process that God created to transfer those wounds to Jesus.

What exactly is forgiveness?

Too many people, even Christians, have misunderstood forgiveness, thus they have been kept in bondage. To forgive is to release from judgment and to give up the right to get even. When we do not release others from our judgment and give up our right to get even, we place ourselves in the position of the man in the story in Matthew 18 (below) who was unwilling to cancel the debt of his fellow slave.

If you do not agree and appropriate God's forgiveness, then you will not only be miserable, but you will also reap a horrible judgment. We reap the horrible consequences of unjust judgment we put on others. Holding on to unforgiveness is the same as judgment. Being forgiven is the opposite of judgment.

Forgiveness has nothing to do with feelings. It is entirely dependent upon our will. If we wait until we "feel" like forgiving, we will never forgive. This is especially true in situations where the wounds another person has caused are deep. The decision to forgive is made with our will, and we submit our feelings to God. He will change our feelings in due time.

Forgiveness runs in two directions.

It is for the sins we have committed, and for the sins committed against us.

It is not excusing someone or someone's sin. It does not excuse sin. In order to forgive one must admit that a terrible wrong has been done. Neither does forgiveness

carry a demand to go back into an abusive situation to be abused, controlled, or manipulated by another.

Most people understand that they need to be forgiven when they sin, but often do not completely understand what forgiving others is about. Jesus stood between you and the person who perpetrated sin against you. Jesus bore your sin. All you have to do is agree, and you will be set free.

Forgive means to separate.

It is the same word used in the New Testament for death. To die is to be separated. To forgive requires cutting the sin away from one and putting on another.

Forgiveness defined: (Greek) *aphiemi* - means to remove – to send away, to remove, the remission for the punishment due to sinful conduct, the deliverance of the sinner from the penalty.

To forgive someone means to account their sin against you as having been done, not to you, but to Jesus, and to agree to allow the sin and its penalty to rest there and there alone!

Forgiveness is a finished work of Jesus.

All we have to do is believe the truth, that all sin has already been put on Jesus. When we agree that the work has been done, then our part of the transaction has been completed, and we are set free. It is not so much in our doing, but more in our believing and in taking the corresponding action in what we believe. John 1:29 says, "The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, 'Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!'"

Jesus gave us a clear message and a warning in Matthew 18.

Matthew 18:21-35 says,

21 Then Peter came to Him and said, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?"

22 Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven."

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

24 "And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents."

25 "But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made."

26 "The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, 'Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.'"

27 "Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt."

28 "But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying, 'Pay me what you owe!'"

29 "So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.'

30 "And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt.

31 "So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done.

32 "Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me.'

33 'Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?'

34 "And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers [Greek: *basanistes*, inferring the jailers by definition] until he should pay all that was due to him.

35 "So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses."

In this parable the Master forgives, but the servant refuses.

It is obvious that the servant does not believe that he has been forgiven. A debtless man has no need to collect money. A freed man has no need to bribe his way of escape. It would be natural for a man who has been released a great debt to dance the whole way home, anxious to tell his family of their new found freedom, and ready to help others with similar liabilities. This servant either questioned the Master's mercy, or doubted his own safety, or denied his own ability to be forgiven. Only after we accept forgiveness for ourselves are we able to forgive others. When we refuse to forgive we are the ones who suffer as a result!

We always pay the penalty for the sin we do not forgive in others.

Notice the wicked servant did not have to pay his original and forgiven debt, described in verse 25, but had to pay the debt of the man he did not forgive, as in verse 34.

You get what you don't forgive, memories, thoughts, deeds, you will experience here and/or in eternity. This is a spiritual law. Notice the penalty was to be delivered to the torturers or tormentors, which means the jailers. Unforgiveness will always result in torment. The torturers that we are handed over to include anger, fear, guilt, resentment, hatred, bitterness, shame, etc. When we walk in unforgiveness our families and loved ones are also affected just as the slave's wife and children in this teaching.

What gives you the right to refuse to forgive?

"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).

If, as the Scripture verifies, you have indeed been crucified with Christ, and He now lives in you; then who are you to keep Him from forgiving? His very essence is forgiving. That is who He is! If you do not forgive you are denying Him. It is a very serious matter.

If we find ourselves in that position with a wicked heart, we can get rid of it with 1 John 1:9 which says "If we confess (agree with God's judgment) our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins (take them away from us and put them on Jesus) and cleanse us from ALL unrighteousness."

God gave us the gift of some warning signs to help us avoid the horrible consequence of unforgiveness. Most people would not view hatred and anger as a warning sign, but they are. Also, if you find yourself continually talking about an offense done to you or a past wound, that could be a good indicator that you are not finished with forgiveness with that matter.

If you ever sense these warnings in your life, quickly seek God about some sort of forgiveness issue. Some more advanced warning signs could be some form of torment, spiritual, emotional and even physical. It is clear from the Matthew 18 story that one of the results of unforgiveness is torment.

A testimony.

Ever since I met the Lord I have been quick to decide to forgive. However, it has not always been easy. There have been times when I have had to "mourn" over a wrong done to me, and just forgive by a violent act of my will. I do not have the natural disposition to ignore lies said about me, therefore that has been my greatest trial in forgiveness. There have been times when I went through a process of forgiveness for years before I actually could "feel" the victory. I can remember times of total victory after I just agonized with the Lord about forgiving certain people. One time I had been agonizing with my emotions for months about forgiving a person. I had forgiven as an act of my will, and had spoken it aloud dozens of times, but my emotions were fighting me. As I was traveling one day, I stopped at a restaurant off the highway for a snack. Suddenly I realized that I was just within a few miles of where this person lived. I felt the Holy Spirit working on me, and that morning my inner being finally was set free. Later this person came to me with a written apology.

Forgive yourself

The following is a quote from Reaching Towards The Heights by Richard Wurmbbrand.

¹

"Forgetting those things which are behind." (Philippians 3:13)

Shema Israel, Adonai, Eloheinu, Adonai, ehad.

"Listen Israel, the Lord your God is one God." It was this prayer (the words above are their Hebrew original) that was on the lips of many Jews who went to Eichmann's gas chambers while he looked on smiling.

Some twenty years later he was captured by the Israeli Secret Police in Buenos Aires. In his provisional prison, he amazed the guards by reciting this same prayer; this was even more amazing since he claimed not to be a believer at all.

¹ Richard Wurmbbrand – *Reaching For Toward The Heights*. Living Sacrifice Book Company. Bartlesville, OK., 1979, pages 221-223.

I have known well the world of murderers and big criminals. A mysterious identification with their victims happens in their souls. Mass murderers of Jews became much more obsessed with Jewishness than any Jew would be. Professional abortionists will be haunted by a world of children who point at them, putting the question, "Why did you kill me?" The man who dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima, when asked by reporters, "How do you feel about it?" answered, "How did they feel about it?"

We have many victims in life. Jesus became the ideal victim, the innocent lamb betrayed, insulted, wronged, killed for our misdoings. And He died with the words, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Then He addresses Himself to us and says, "I, the victim, have forgiven you. All your victims are now in a world where forgiveness reigns. You are the only one who does not forgive yourself. You are haunted by what you have done. Accept forgiveness. Forgive yourself. The unhealthy identification with the men whom you have wronged will cease. You will have a new personality."

Define forgiveness as death. Forgiveness is the death of sin, sin goes into another realm away from you onto Jesus.

Remember who you are!

You are a vessel filled with God, the Temple of God.

Prayer.

Jesus, I, by an act of my will and my words, acknowledge that the sin perpetrated against me by others was actually borne by You. You took it, not me. Therefore I am free from the affects of that sin against me.

I also, as an act of my will and my words, acknowledge and confess my sin to You, Lord. Your Word says that when I confess my sin You are faithful and just to forgive me and to cleanse me of all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).

Dunklin quotes the following from the book Inner Healing.

FORGIVENESS IS NOT:

1. Overlooking the wrong done to us.

We like to believe that if we overlook a wrong done to us, it will go away. In reality it does not. Overlooking something is not forgiveness; it is a form of repression or denial.

Some of us were hurt by what people said or did as we were growing up, and we tried to overlook those things. But the truth is, they had a great effect upon our lives. Repressing and overlooking offenses does not mean we have forgiven. If there is still pain inside, it is a sign there is probably unforgiveness still inside.

2. Excusing or whitewashing the wrong done to us.

When we try to make excuses or water down an offense, we are actually trying to tell ourselves that it really wasn't as bad as it seemed. This is justifying or rationalizing, but it is not forgiveness.

3. Psycho-analyzing a person's nature to explain why he did the wrong to us.

It is important that we understand exactly what happened, but understanding and forgiveness are two different things. While Jesus was hanging on the cross, He said, Forgive them for they know not what they do. As we come out of chemical addiction, we may be able to analyze our actions, but we really can't explain them away.

Knowing what has motivated a person to behave the way he has will help us forgive that person. But knowing is not the same as forgiving. We can know about a person, and we can even know why he behaved the way he did, but still not forgive him. Understanding a person's behavior doesn't mean we have forgiven him.

Sin is moral stupidity, it is unexplainable. The Apostle Paul said, The things I do I do not understand. (Romans 7:15) So we must know that we don't base our forgiveness upon understanding. That means we don't have to understand in order to forgive.

Some people spend years in self-help and therapy groups, trying to analyze their childhood and understand why their parents mistreated them. They are often disillusioned to find they are no better off after their efforts than before they started. Forgiveness is the key that unlocks us from the binding judgments we formed in our painful past.

We have to look at ourselves before we can experience healing. It is possible for us to say, "I understand why my father acted the way he did. I understand where he was coming from, but I just can't forgive him."

If we are unwilling to get beyond our feelings and make a decision to forgive, we will never be able to receive God's healing in our lives. We may finally understand the reason for a person's behavior, but if we don't have the will to forgive, there will be no forgiveness for either party.

4. Taking the blame for the wrong done to us.

This happens often in child abuse. Taking the blame is not the same thing as forgiveness. It is proper for us to take the blame for our reaction to the experience. But if we were physically, mentally or sexually abused as a child, it was not our fault. If we take the blame for it, that is not forgiveness.

Many of those who have been sexually abused have the blame imposed upon them. Many young victims are told it was their fault, that they had a part in it. If they are convinced it was their fault and they take the blame that is still not the same as forgiveness. It may create the feeling of forgiveness toward the abuser, but that is only because the anger has been turned inward.

All the above reactions are improper attitudes, which reflect internal problems and misunderstandings. We short-circuit what God wants to accomplish in us if we attempt to substitute any of these attitudes for forgiveness.

FORGIVENESS IS:

1. Facing the specific wrong done to us.

We can neither excuse it nor rationalize it. We have to be honest. Listed below are six words. Taking each word independently, close your eyes and picture in your mind specific events related to them.

a) Rejection.

Picture events in which you may have felt the need for love and acceptance, but it was withheld from you; you wanted attention, but you were ignored.

b) Neglect.

A typical example of neglect in an alcoholic family is when the parents spend money on liquor instead of purchasing food or other essentials.

c) Injustice or unfairness.

This is when the punishment doesn't fit the crime. You may never have known whether you were going to be hugged or slugged. It also may have been difficult for you to figure out what brought on the different reactions.

d) Cruelty or brutality.

This could have been either physical or verbal. Verbal cruelty always identified you with your actions. For example, you were not told you did something stupid, you were told you were stupid because of what you did.

Forgiveness Worksheet

List the people who have caused pain in your life.

List the people who you have had a difficult time forgiving.

Write in your own words, from your own feelings, how you feel about these people. Be honest, do not pretend.

Now as an act of your will, not from your feelings, say, "I forgive _____. I choose to see the sin they perpetrated against me as going on to Jesus as He was my sin-bearer. Now Father I ask you to line up my feelings with my decision to forgive." " But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matthew 6:15).

Now list the sins that you have in your life. Confess them to the Lord. Confess means to speak, but also to agree with how Jesus sees them.

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

This Father will never leave you!

"For He Himself has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you'" (Hebrews 13:5b). You never have to fear again. Your conduct will not be perfect; you will still sin from time to time. Even then, your Father will never leave you nor forsake you. He will always be there to turn you around and bring you back. He is passionate about you.

Now take this sheet of paper, and nail it to a piece of wood, as if it were the Cross of Jesus. After that remove it from the cross and burn it as a symbol of it being totally consumed.

How Do You Forgive?

By Rick Warren — Apr 27, 2016

(This story is marvelously told in the book and movie “Through Gates of Splendor” by Elisabeth Elliot. We encourage you experience this book and/or movie.) Larry and Carol

Nearly 60 years ago, five American missionaries headed to the rainforest of the eastern Amazon in Ecuador to make a second visit to the Huaorani tribe, which anthropologists said was the most vicious, violent society on the face of the earth. They had a culture of killing, and studies showed 60 percent of the tribe died by homicide.

As soon as the missionaries got out of the plane, they were speared to death by members of the tribe. The brutal murders made news around the world and the cover of Life magazine, Time, and Newsweek. Many newspapers reported the deaths of these men, who included Nate Saint and Jim Elliot.

A couple years later, Elisabeth and Valerie Elliot, wife and daughter of Jim, and Rachel Saint, sister of Nate, moved into the Huaorani village to show love and forgiveness and minister to the people who had killed their family. Eventually, Mincaye, the leader of the tribe, and the five men who participated in the missionary murders all became Christians.

The kind of forgiveness that Elisabeth Elliot and Rachel Saint modeled doesn't make sense until you have been forgiven by God. Once you've experienced it, how do you forgive? You do the four things that these women did:

Relinquish your right to get even. Romans 12:19 says, “Don't try to get even. Let God take revenge” (CEV). Leave it up to God. He'll take care of it, and he'll do a much better job than you ever could.

Respond to evil with good. How can you tell when you've completely forgiven someone? You can actually pray for God to bless the person who hurt you. The Bible says, “Do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you” (Luke 6:27b-28 NIV).

Repeat these steps as long as necessary. Peter asked Jesus in Matthew 18:21-22, “How many times should I forgive someone who does something wrong to me? Is seven times enough?” Jesus replied, “Not just seven times, but seventy-seven times!” (CEV) Sometimes forgiveness has to be continual.

Rescue others with the Good News of God's forgiveness. The Bible says in 2 Corinthians 5:18-20, “God has done it all! He sent Christ to make peace between himself and us, and he has given us the work of making peace between himself and others. What we mean is that God was in Christ, offering peace and forgiveness to the people of this world. And he has given us the work of sharing his message about peace. We were sent to speak for Christ, and God is begging you to listen to our message. We speak for Christ and sincerely ask you to make peace with God.”