

do ye also to them likewise.”-- Luke 6:31

Somebody once stated, “*Holding a grudge is letting someone live rent free in your head.*”

However sorely they may have wounded us, we are not to cherish our grievances and sympathize with ourselves over our injuries; but as we hope to be forgiven for our offenses against God we are to forgive all who have done evil to us. . . .

If we would find true health and happiness, we MUST forgive. An infinite blessing is waiting for us, for the scriptures declare, “*Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.*” Matthew 5:9.

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Have you been hurt by someone? Have you tried to forgive the person? You might say that what the person did to you is unforgivable.

In the Bible, we find the story of a man called Joseph and how, because of his brothers, he was taken from his family, thrown in a pit, sold into slavery and even spent a long time in jail? (Genesis 37-50) To most this would seem totally unforgivable. Yet here is what Joseph had to say to his brothers: “*And when Joseph’s brethren saw that their father was dead, they said, Joseph will peradventure hate us, and will certainly requite us all the evil which we did unto him. And they sent a messenger unto Joseph, saying, Thy father did command before he died,*

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think that unless those who have injured us confess the wrong we are justified in withholding from them our forgiveness. It is their duty, no doubt, to ask forgiveness; but we are to have a spirit of compassion toward those who have trespassed against us, whether or not they confess their faults. We don’t have to remain in the position where the person can hurt us, but we should forgive them. As we come to God, this is the condition which meets us at the threshold, that, receiving mercy from Him, we yield ourselves to reveal His grace to others.

**Here are a few Biblical instructions to help us learn how to forgive.**

1. **Do something kind** for those who have wronged you. (when appropriate)

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After everything they had done to Joseph, because of his love for God, he was still able to forgive them. While the world chooses hatred and revenge, Jesus, in his Sermon on the Mount, presented a wholly different idea. “*Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?*” Matt. 5:43-46

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These words are for you and me as well. Why? Because the Bible says the reason why He received this treatment is because of our sins. “*But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.*”-- Isaiah 53:5

We have all broken God’s laws and deserve a just penalty-- the death penalty, yet God loved us so much that He sent His only begotten Son, to die in our place, and today Jesus looks at you and me, saying “Father, forgive them...” Still today he promises, “*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

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Other studies have connected an unforgiving spirit with diseases like cancer. Dr. Michael Barry explains “*Harboring these negative emotions, this anger and hatred, creates a state of chronic anxiety...Chronic anxiety very predictably produces excess adrenaline and cortisol, which deplete the production of natural killer cells which is your body’s foot soldier in the fight against cancer,*” <http://www.cbn.com/cbnnews/healthscience/2011/june/holding-grudges-forgiveness-key-to-healthy-body/>

Perhaps this is why it is said, “*Holding a grudge is like drinking poison and expecting the other person to die.*”

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The life of Christ is a perfect pattern for his followers.

Jesus was betrayed by someone He trusted and loved, He was abandoned by all His disciples and some even denied knowing Him. We read how “*they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote him with the palms of their hands,*” - -Matt. 26:67 When Jesus stood in front of the Roman Governor, Pilate asked the people: “*What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?*” and their reply was “*Let him be crucified.*”--Matt. 27:22,26 Jesus was then “*scourged*” and “*delivered ... to be crucified.*” The Roman soldiers “*stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe. And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the*

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Jesus further illustrated this concept by telling the story of a king who forgave one of his servants an immense debt. However, the servant was unforgiving to another man who owed him a relatively small amount. When this came to the king’s attention, the Bible records, “*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: Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.*” Matt. 18:32-35

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We, as Christians, are required to forgive, no matter what was done to us.

Perhaps, **it would be well to note that forgiveness is necessary for health of body.** Jesus tells us to forgive, because he knows it is what is ultimately best for us. In his book *None of These Diseases*, S. I. McMillan says, "Anger, unhandled, will show itself in at least 50 diseases." In fact, several years ago, researchers with the National Comorbidity Study reported that those who said they tended to hold grudges reported higher rates of heart disease and cardiac arrest, elevated blood pressure, stomach ulcers, arthritis, back problems, headaches, and chronic pain than those who didn't share this tendency. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/supersurvivors/201309/gudge-match-can-unforgiveness-be-bad-our-health>

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The scriptures teach that we should show others the same compassion as our Father shows us.

In Matt. 5:21-24, Jesus tells how serious it is to stay angry at someone and not forgive them, "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

*Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy*

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If we confess our sins, He not only forgives us, but cleanses us from our sins. He removes the sins out of our lives. When we are forgiven for our sins it should make us want to stop sinning and show the same mercy to those who have hurt and offended us.

But some of us may wonder like Peter, how many times should we forgive those who hurt us? "Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven." Matt. 18:21,22

We are to forgive others not only seven times, but seventy times seven—just as often as God forgives us. We should not

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*before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift."*

**If an unforgiving spirit is regarded in such a serious light by God should we not seek to forgive and reconcile as soon as possible?**

Taking the name of "Christian" is a high calling. According to the 1828 Webster's Dictionary, a Christian is, "A real disciple of Christ; one who believes in the truth of the Christian religion, and studies to follow the example, and obey the precepts, of Christ; a believer in Christ who is characterized by real piety."

In other words, a Christian is someone who studies the Word of God in order to follow the example and teachings given by Christ.

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*saying, So shall ye say unto Joseph, Forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin; for they did unto thee evil: and now, we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father.*

*And Joseph wept when they spake unto him. And his brethren also went and fell down before his face; and they said, Behold, we be thy servants.*

*And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for am I in the place of God? But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive." Genesis 50:15-20*

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**Forgiveness is also what is best for us spiritually.** We can see this teaching repeated by Jesus, as presented in the Lord's prayer. Let's read Matthew 6:9-13.

*"After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven... And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors...."*

He then continues to explain this statement in Matt 6:14-15: "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".

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1. "But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you..."-- Luke 6:27 "If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink: For thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the LORD shall reward thee."—Prov. 25:21,22 (Also Romans 12:20)

2. **Pray for your enemies.** It is difficult to hate those you are praying for. "Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you."-- Luke 6:28

3. **Try to look at the offense from the offender's perspective** and treat them as you would desire to be treated. "And as ye would that men should do to you,

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*knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head."-- Matt. 27:28-30 "They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall."-- Matt. 27:34 "Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders". —Matt. 27:41*

Now remember, Jesus did not deserve this treatment, for even the Governor, Pilate, when investigating the case said, "I find no fault in him." Yet, we read in the Bible that Jesus did not hate them, instead, He said while hanging on the cross, "... "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." ... Luke 23:34

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