

Singles Alive!
“Freedom In Forgiveness”

Tremendous transforming power comes to us through the act of forgiveness. When we release our disappointments, rejections and frustrations to the Lord we tap into the mighty resurrection power of Jesus Christ.

On the other hand, holding on to grudges can deeply affect our mental and physical health and will surely lead to torment and bitterness of soul.

Throughout the scriptures, God instructs us to forgive our enemies.

Matthew 18:21-22 “Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?” Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.” (NIV)

Jesus teaches us to forgive in this famous passage of scripture.

Matthew 6:12, 14 “...and forgive us our sins, just as we have forgiven those who have sinned against us. If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you.” (NLT)

Just before He died, while hanging on the cross, Jesus prayed for forgiveness of His enemies. This is the most powerful example of total forgiveness found in the bible.

Luke 23:34 “Father, forgive them; they don't know what they're doing.” TM

With no opportunity for reconciliation, Jesus freely forgave all those who abused, mocked and tried to destroy Him.

Forgiveness is more for us than those who have hurt us.

In forgiving those who have offended us God is free to do a work in our hearts and begin the healing process that is necessary to our recovery.

Luke 6:37 “...acquitt and forgive and release (give up resentment, let it drop), and you will be acquitted and forgiven and released.” (AMP)

There are consequences if we don't forgive our enemies. In the parable of the unforgiving servant (Matthew 18:23-35) Jesus points out the penalty for unforgiveness, we can end up being emotionally and sometimes physically tormented.

Forgiveness is a choice not a feeling.

We must make a conscious decision to forgive those who have offended us.

Colossians 3:13 “You must make allowance for each other's faults and forgive the person who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.” (NLT)

Forgive and release your enemies to the Lord.

When you forgive you should let go of all past offenses and your right to hold any grudges. Also, be aware of the fact that people are not always aware that they are wronging others.

1 Corinthians 13:4-5 *“Love is patient, love is kind...it keeps no record of wrongs.” (NIV)*

Vengeance belongs to God.

Deuteronomy 32:35 *“It is mine to avenge; I will repay.” (NIV)*

We are to forgive our enemies, release them to the Lord and pray for them.

Allow the Lord to bring about justice in His time and in His way.

Psalms 94:15 *“For justice will return to the [uncompromisingly] righteous, and all the upright in heart will follow it.” (AMP)*

Forgiveness is not complete until we pray for those who have hurt us.

When Job forgave his friends and prayed for them, God turned his situation around and restored everything that was taken from him. As we forgive our enemies, release them to God and then pray for them God will bless and heal us.

Job 42:10 *“After Job had prayed for his friends, the LORD made him prosperous again and gave him twice as much as he had before.” (NIV)*

A lesson in forgiveness:

- Pray and ask the Lord to reveal to you anyone you need to forgive.
- Make a list of the offenses this person committed against you.
- After you have listed all the offenses, write down that you forgive them for everything they did against you.
- Release them to the Lord. Let go of your right to hold any grudges.
- Pray that God would bless them.
- Tear up or burn the paper.
- Do not go back to the old habit of unforgiveness.

John 8:36 *“So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.” (NIV)*

Questions:

1. How does Jesus' power help us to forgive?
2. If you forgive someone, does that remove God's judgment from their life? Explain
3. In the instance of a serious crime, such as rape or murder, are the victims and their families required to forgive? How about society? Is the social system required to forgive?
4. What are some of the emotional, physical and spiritual consequences of not forgiving?