

The Process Of Forgiveness

A person with a backpack is seen from behind, standing on a rocky mountain peak. They are looking out over a vast mountain range under a blue sky with scattered clouds. The person is wearing a green tank top, a pink shirt, green shorts, and hiking boots. The backpack is black and grey. The overall scene is bright and scenic.

A Wonderful Personal Testimony

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Introduction

Forgiveness in a human heart is as vital as the blood that flows in our veins, without it, life as it was designed to be, stops. Both the giving and receiving of forgiveness must be present for a man to live free and enjoy life to the fullest. When this process is not present, our lives stagnate like a swamp, rather than flow like a river. Effective parenting styles need to include an understanding of the importance of the process of forgiveness and its role in maintaining and strengthening family relationships. It has been said that forgiveness is meant to be a lifestyle, not just a one time event.

The Process Of Forgiveness- Principal Scripture

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect. (Matthew 5 v 43-48)

The Process of Forgiveness - A Wonderful Personal Testimony

Many years ago, after completing my training at Bible College I traveled to Wollongong on New South Wales's southern coast to assist one of our churches there. It was my first opportunity to help in God's work and I was both excited and a little terrified at the same time. Looking back, I sometimes laugh at how green and completely unprepared I was for life serving God. During the year I spent there, I needed to find employment to finance myself, and eventually, I landed a job in sales.

My job entailed driving from Wollongong to Sydney and selling for a small importing company. Unbeknownst to me when I took the job, an existing staff member did not appreciate my presence within the company at all, feeling like I was taking some of his clients. This gentleman proceeded to go out of his way to make my life miserable and often cursed me to my face.

Now this was all quite new to me, as I had never really had any enemies before, and I struggled daily with the humiliation I experienced at his hands. Jesus did tell us that we would suffer persecution as His servants, and although this might not have compared with what the early church suffered, it still felt like it. So as I drove up to Sydney I had quite a chat with God about the situation, mainly telling Him about how unfair it was, and here I was serving Him faithfully and this is what I get!

God was very patient with me, listened to all my complaining as He often has, and then spoke this statement to me. "John, you've never had an enemy before, now I have given you one to love, will you trust in the power of My Word or let your emotions rule you?" That statement got my attention and even though the emotional hurts were still there, at least now I had hope in my heart that I could overcome this trial. Of course. I knew what the Bible taught about offenses and forgiveness and had even spoken to others on the subject, but now I needed to put the scripture to the test personally.

The Process Of Forgiveness (A Wonderful Personal Testimony)

At times, I was so mad at this bloke for his continual jibes that I felt like smoke was coming out of my ears! But deep down I knew I had to choose, either to continue being ruled by my emotions or do things God's way. God wouldn't force me to do it His way, that's not how He operates, He always respects the free will He gave Mankind at creation. But I also realized that if I didn't win this battle I would become ineffective as a servant of God, so I chose to obey God's Word.

When I first began praying for my tormentor, it was like chewing gravel because everything within me wanted God to punish him for his actions. However by using the scripture above I began to practice the process of forgiveness, Loving my enemies, Blessing those who curse you, Doing good to those who hate you, and Praying for those who spitefully use and persecute you.

Every time I felt aggrieved by this guy's curses and mockery I began to seriously pray for God to bless him, his family, his finances, and that he might find God's forgiveness and mercy in his life. Initially saying those prayers of blessing over him felt like I was starting to climb Mt Everest, and I was not sure whether I could ever make it to the top.

At night, when I knelt in prayer beside my bed I remember crying out to God to help me in my prayers for this man, and for just a second I saw this man how God saw Him, a precious soul that desperately needed saving. (Just like I used to be) I felt my heart open a little to this man's difficulties and challenges in life, his love for his family, and his hopes and dreams, and then found myself interceding powerfully for God's mercy and forgiveness in His life. Through God's mercy touching my own heart, I found myself loving this man and wanting the best for him and his family.

I'd love to testify that everything changed overnight but it didn't. The curses and humiliation continued daily, but what had changed was that I no longer felt hurt as much anymore, I seemed to be stronger emotionally and not take everything he said to heart.

I continued praying for that man every day, often for hours while I drove around Sydney. I blessed him, I blessed his marriage, I blessed his kids, and prayed for his salvation, and that God would heal his heart from the pain he carried inside. I would like to think that over the next few weeks, that guy was probably one of the most prayed-for people in Australia.

The Process Of Forgiveness (A Wonderful Personal Testimony)

Then one morning I came to work, and he had changed. He stopped cursing me, he stopped swearing, and he even spoke to me and asked where I was planning to visit that day. He asked me about my church work and where I attended, and our relationship completely changed. When I finally moved to the Gold Coast to help a local church there, this bloke made a point to visit me and see how I was doing while he was on holiday. His life had been transformed, he was happy, and he had even started going to church with his wife and family.

I have found many times that Jesus' teachings go against what my fleshly old life wants, He says forgive while inside I want revenge! He says to give unto others and He will bless you but I just want some money to pay the bills now. His ways and understanding are higher than ours, they work at a far more long-term level. they are eternal in origin. This is why walking with God can initially be difficult for those who, like me, are rational and critical thinkers, because we have to relearn how to live and do it God's way.

However, having proved to myself how powerful God's Word is when believed and obeyed, I look forward to daily living a supernatural life as I walk with Jesus Christ.

The Process Of Forgiveness- The Proliferation Of Offenses

Jesus taught that it was 'impossible that offenses would not come' in this present world system, so we as men need to be prepared emotionally and mentally and know what to do when offenses arrive. I suspect that most of us would have been offended or hurt already in life, by what someone said, did, or failed to do, but this does not mean that we have to carry that hurt forever inside us.

Woe to the world because of offenses! For offenses must come, but woe to that man by whom the offense comes! (Matthew 18:7)

The Process Of Forgiveness- Signs That You Have Been Offended

If you have never been offended or hurt by anyone in this world, then hang around a little longer, I'm pretty sure someone will come by soon. I can usually tell when I have been hurt or offended by someone because when I think of or see that person, I feel the hurt on the inside.

I may want to walk on the other side of the road to avoid having to speak to them, or similar sounding situations. They all point to the fact that I have been offended or hurt by that person, and the pain inside is limiting my ability to live life to the fullest.

When Haman saw that Mordecai did not bow or pay him homage, Haman was filled with wrath (Esther 3:5)

Haman the court official was offended by Mordecai the Jew, and Haman allowed this offense to dominate his life and eventually it caused his downfall.

The Process Of Forgiveness- Freedom From Emotional Pain

But we don't have to carry that pain inside all our lives; healing is available through the act and process of forgiveness. Jesus taught us in The Lord's Prayer, 'Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.' Here, we see the flow of forgiveness; it must flow in and out like the daily tides. Through forgiveness, we can release the pain and hurt we feel and begin to enjoy life again.

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

The Process Of Forgiveness- God's Way Of Living

Often when people hurt us, our first reaction or impulse is to hurt them back, but Jesus taught us 'to turn the other cheek', and not to strike back. To some, this may seem foolish or cowardly, or at least 'go against the grain' of what men generally do. But Jesus came to show us a better way, a higher way to live, the way that life is lived in heaven, God's way.

If we follow God's way of living, we will get God's results. If we choose to merely do what comes naturally, then we will get those natural results too. It is not always easy to forgive, actually, sometimes it feels nearly impossible, however, that is why we need to 'call upon God for help in time of need'.

Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy (Matthew 5:7)

The Process Of Forgiveness- Removing The Seed Of Bitterness

Unforgiveness often comes into our hearts in 'seed form' through an offense or hurt, and if we do not get rid of it by choosing the process of forgiveness, it grows stronger and stronger inside us. If we refuse to deal with it correctly eventually it may poison the complete flow of life within us and leave us bitter and twisted. Many good men and women have been crippled emotionally by being ignorant of the process of forgiveness, or by being unwilling to let go of the hurts and forgive.

looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled (Hebrews 12:15)

As I have stated in the title of this teaching, forgiveness is most often a process, not just a one-time act. This can be especially true if you have harbored resentment toward another person for some time, but the process works if you are prepared to stick with it and do it in God's way.

In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus taught the heavenly way of dealing with the offenses of this world. He said ' Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven.' These words became a beautiful statement of freedom for me when I faithfully followed these specific steps.

The Process Of Forgiveness- A Tried and Tested Principle

This heavenly process of forgiveness works, even in the most difficult situations or circumstances. Even though the first time you begin the process, it may seem impossible, it will get easier day by day, as long as you continue in it. Within a short period, if you follow the steps daily, you will be free of the pain and offense on the inside, and your prayers for this person will release God to move afresh in their lives. When the process is finished you will no longer feel the pain when you think about them, and it may feel as if a weight has been lifted off you.

When we learn to do things God's way in life, we co-operate with God and His process of transforming us to be more like His Son, Jesus Christ.

The Process Of Forgiveness- Things To Remember

Step 1 Love Your Enemies

Step 2 Bless Those Who Curse You

Step 3 Do Good To Those Who Hate You

Step 4 Pray For Those Who Spitefully Use You And Persecute You

These steps may need to be practiced multiple times every day until the hold that unforgiveness has on your heart is broken and you step into the freedom and joy of life again. Hang in there and keep praying, and if it doesn't seem to be working pray harder! God's Word will not return to Him without accomplishing what it is sent for!

So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it (Isaiah 55:11)

And I have put My words in your mouth; I have covered you with the shadow of My hand, That I may plant the heavens, Lay the foundations of the earth, And say to Zion, 'You are My people.'" (Isaiah 51:16)

Remember, Jesus taught us that forgiveness is meant to become a lifestyle not just a one-time event, so forgive quickly in life and be a blessing to all those you meet in life.

God Bless

John Nolan

The Ministry Of DadsUni.com

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