





UNSHACKLED:

**Freedom from the pain of the Past
Part 6**

Philippians 3:12-14

Jesus, “The Wounded Healer”.

Hebrews 4:14-16; Luke 4:16-19

“Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.

And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.”

Ephesians 4:31-32.

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“The words ‘just as’ mean that we get in step with God and handle forgiveness the way He would. How has He handled it? Christ’s forgiveness of us is preposterously, absurdly generous. He forgives because it is beautiful and loving to forgive. He doesn’t forgive begrudgingly, as if He has to. And we are the recipients of His mercy. We’re free of guilt. It’s like we were paupers and we won the lottery. We’re rich. Now are we going to begrudge others a small share of the immense treasure of God’s grace that we’ve come to revel in?”

Chuck Swindoll, Counseling Insights

Forgiveness is Vital for Freedom!

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“... the two major causes of most emotional problems among evangelical Christians are these; the failure to understand, receive, and live out God’s unconditional grace and forgiveness; and the failure to give out that unconditional love, forgiveness and grace to other people.”

David Seamands, *Healing for Damaged Emotions*, p. 29.

Defining Forgiveness.

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“The freeing of a person from guilt and its consequences, including punishment; usually as an act of favour, compassion or love, with the aim of restoring a broken personal relationship. Forgiveness can involve both the remission of punishment and the cancellation of debts.”

M.H. Manser; *Dictionary of Bible Themes*

Forgiveness is not always Easy.

“I have received many other letters that describe everything from infidelity to incest to rape to lying and slander...People experience real pain when they or someone they love is hurt by another person. It is often harder to forgive when the one who has been hurt is someone you love deeply, especially your child...It is often easier, then, it seems to me, to forgive what is done to us personally than what is done to those we love...especially when they do not feel the slightest twinge of conscience. If our offender would put on sackcloth and ashes as a show of repentance, it would be much easier to forgive them.” - **R. T. Kendall, *Total Forgiveness***

Forgiveness is a Necessity!!

**We are commanded by God to forgive.
(e.g. Mark 11:25-26; Matthew 18:21-35)**

"And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses.

But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses."

Mark 11:25-26

Chuck Swindoll makes an interesting observation concerning the nature of this sentence:

“Here in Matthew 18:34–35, Jesus refers to torturers—a noun, not a verb. He is saying the one who refuses to forgive, the Christian who harbors grudges and entertains bitter feelings toward another, will be turned over to torturous thoughts, feelings of misery, and agonizing unrest within.”

Charles R. Swindoll, *Forgiving and Forgetting*

The Perils of Unforgiveness

“If you have been wronged, your feelings of unforgiveness may be justified. But even if they are, you should find a way to forgive, because if you fail to do so, you will be the one who suffers most. When anger and resentment stay inside you, they fester and contaminate your being ... and may take control of your life. In other words, your anger no longer belongs to you, but you to your anger.”

Chuck Swindoll, Insight for Living

The Perils of Unforgiveness

- Unforgiveness will hinder your prayer life.
Mark 11:23-24.
- Unforgiveness will hinder your worship of God and thus your fellowship with Him.
Matthew 5:23-25.

The Perils of Unforgiveness

According to Everett Worthington Jr., one of the world's leading researchers on forgiveness:

“People who won’t forgive the wrongs committed against them tend to have negative indicators of health and well-being: more stress-related disorders, lower immune-system function, and worse rates of cardiovascular disease than the population as a whole. In effect, by failing to forgive they punish themselves.”

The Perils of Unforgiveness

“Unforgiving people are also thought to experience higher rates of divorce, which also reduces well-being given that married men and women consistently do better on most health barometers, including longevity.”

“The person who gains the most from forgiveness is the person who does the forgiving.”

R.T. Kendall, *Total Forgiveness*

Misunderstandings about Forgiveness:

- It doesn't mean the wrongs done to us are acceptable.
- It doesn't mean the emotional hurts won't hurt anymore when we choose to forgive.
- It doesn't mean we now have to totally trust the person who hurt, offended or betrayed us.
- It doesn't absolve the offender from some consequences of the offense.

Misunderstandings about Forgiveness:

- It doesn't demand that the other person change or express sorrow.
- It doesn't require that we have to place ourselves in a vulnerable situation again with that person.
- It is not a sign of weakness, but a sign of great strength of character.

Benefits of Forgiving others.

- It releases us from the bondage of bitterness.
- Frees our minds and hearts to enjoy life and build positive relationships.
- Can draw us closer to God because we often have to have His help to forgive others.
- Produces empathy for the offender, humility because we realize we all fall short and need God's forgiveness.

How do we Forgive?

1. Allow The Holy Spirit to Minister Comfort to You. **John 14:16-18.**

“And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Comforter (Counselor, Helper, Intercessor, Advocate, Strengthener, and Standby), that He may remain with you forever--

The Spirit of Truth, Whom the world cannot receive (welcome, take to its heart), because it does not see Him or know *and* recognize Him. But you know *and* recognize Him, for He lives with you [*constantly*] and will be in you.

I will not leave you as orphans [*comfortless, desolate, bereaved, forlorn, helpless*]; I will come [*back*] to you.”

John 14:16-18 – Amplified Bible

How do we Forgive?

1. Allow The Holy Spirit to Minister Comfort to You. **John 14:16-18.**
2. Ask the Lord to help you to Forgive. He understands every struggle. **Hebrews 4:15-16.**
3. Remind yourself of God's gracious Forgiveness of all your Failures.

How do we Forgive?

4. Consider the “why” behind what the person did or said. Having “grace” for people sometimes means considering pressure they may be under, their background, their lack of maturity or the fact they could be under satanic attack.
5. Begin to pray regularly for the person you need to forgive. **Luke 6:28.**

How do we Forgive?

6. Prayerfully consider ways to give and BLESS the person you need to forgive.

Luke 6:27-28.

7. You must use your FAITH to forgive.

Luke 17:1-6.

8. Decide to live the “GRACE LIFE”.

Romans 12:3-21; Psalm 86:5.

“Living a life of unforgiveness is like leaving the parking brake on when you drive your car. It causes you to slow down and lose your momentum. One of the most expensive luxuries that you can possess is unforgiveness toward someone. A deep-seated grudge in your life eats away at your peace of mind like a deadly cancer, destroying a vital organ of life. In fact, there are few things as pathetic and terrible to behold as the person who has harbored a grudge and hatred for many years”

John L. Mason author of “Let Go of Whatever Makes You Stop”



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