

Freedom Group #7

Forgiveness

Ephesians 1:7 *He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins. NLT*

Because we live in a fallen world, we face the realities of hurt and offense. The words and deeds of others can wound us to the core in indescribable ways. Things like neglect, abuse, violence, betrayal, and cruel remarks can cause bitterness and resentment to infiltrate our hearts, and we, perhaps even unintentionally, begin to harbor unforgiveness.

An unforgiven offense is like an arrow dipped in poison. The offense slashes through our defenses and hurts us in the moment, but the aftermath of unforgiveness is like a poison that remains long after the event takes place. It seeps into our lives, tainting our thoughts and clouding our vision.

Reasons We May Struggle to Forgive

1. We have a wrong idea of forgiveness

The first reason we don't offer forgiveness easily to others is that we have an incorrect definition of forgiveness. To understand what it means to forgive someone, we need to start by learning what forgiveness is not.

- Forgiveness is NOT minimizing the offense
- Forgiveness is NOT forgetting what happened
- Forgiveness is NOT reconciliation – reconciliation is a two-way street.

2. We don't think it's fair – Matthew 18:21-35

The second reason we don't offer forgiveness to those who have hurt us is that it does not seem fair to let them off the hook. We reason in our minds that they don't deserve forgiveness.

3. We don't think we can do it

We don't think we have the power and strength to do so. This is the voice of the enemy. We must recognize and silence the voice of the adversary.

The Forgiven Forgive

Ephesians 4:31-32 *Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. 32 Instead, be kind to each other,*

tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.
NLT

Romans 5:6 says that while we were still sinners, God sent Jesus to die for us. When it comes to understanding forgiveness, this is critical: It is impossible to forgive others of their offenses until we receive forgiveness for ourselves. If we struggle with forgiveness, chances are we have not fully grasped what God has done for us.

The Unforgiveness Trap

An offense is something we consider to be a violation of what we think is right and fair. We need to understand that the enemy uses offense to hold us captive and keep us from moving forward in the freedom that God has for us.

Living and Unoffended Life

1. Recognize our own imperfection (Romans 3:23 & Matthew 10:8)
2. Focus on the real enemy (1 Peter 5:8)
3. Receive the Love of God (1 John 4:10)

Forgiveness in Action – Daily steps for walking out forgiveness

1. Pray for people who have offended you (Matthew 5:43-44)
2. Bless people who have offended you (Luke 6:27-28)
3. Do good to people who have offended you

Let Freedom Ring – Romans 12:17-21

Forgiving Ourselves

Confronting the past – 3 Ways people typically respond

1. We try to bury it – Proverbs 28:13
2. We beat ourselves up – Ps 38:4-8
3. We blame others – Genesis 3:12-13

Getting Past the Past

1. Stop trying to earn forgiveness – Ephesians 2:8-9
2. Receive God's forgiveness by faith
3. Defeat every lie with the truth

It would be great if once we had received forgiveness, we never thought about our past again. The truth is, the enemy will continue to bring up our past every day. We will wait for weak moments in our lives and whisper our failures to us. We have to resist him every day. Remember, Satan is the accuser of the Christians and the "Father of Lies!" We defeat him by knowing and speaking the truth.

