

## OVERCOMING UNFORGIVENESS

**No matter how different the rest of our challenges may be, every believer can count on a multitude of challenges to forgive.** Remember, God's primary agenda in the life of a believer is to conform the child into the likeness of His Son, Jesus Christ. No other word sums up His character in relationship to us like the word forgiving. **We never look more like Christ than when we forgive; since that's God's goal, we're destined for plenty of opportunities!**

I believe we can safely say that we, as ambassadors of Christ in this generation, have literally been called to a ministry of forgiveness. So... how is your ministry going? Have you had lots of ups and downs? A few successes and a few too many failures? Me too! But I pray that God has been as unrelenting in His insistence upon your willingness to forgive as He has mine. The longer I've walked with God in prayer and His Word and come to love Him, the less I want Him to let me off easy. **I'm learning that a believer's willingness to do "the hard thing" is what sets him or her apart for the extraordinary in Christ.** I'm beginning to learn to say, "Lord, my flesh is so resistant to what You want right now that I can hardly stand it. But don't stop! Insist upon my best. Insist upon Your glory. Take me to the line on this, God. Don't let up on me until we've gone every inch of the distance." I remember when I used to complain, "What do You expect out of me?" Now, I find myself wanting God to be able to expect much from me. **I don't want to occupy this small space in time in mediocrity.** Do you feel the same way?

**Unparalleled joy and victory come from allowing Christ to do "the hard thing" with us.** **Perhaps nothing is harder than forgiveness.** Let's face it. Each of us has been confronted by some pretty overwhelming challenges to forgive. Some seem... well, unforgivable. We argue with God that all inflicted hurts are not created equally. For instance, sometimes the person who hurt us isn't sorry. Or won't take responsibility. Or is in the grave. Or the person might be sorry but refuses to recompense. Perhaps the person simply doesn't deserve our forgiveness. After all, forgiveness would make everything OK, and we want the record to show: we're not OK! Then, if we let it, truth begins to eclipse our mound of excuses: we won't be OK until we forgive. If only we could understand that **God's unrelenting insistence on our forgiveness is for our own sakes, not the sake of the one who hurt us.** God is faithful. He will plead our case and take up our cause... but only when we make a deliberate decision to cease representing ourselves in the matter.

**Innumerable strongholds are connected to an unwillingness to forgive.** Left untreated, unforgiveness becomes spiritual cancer. Bitterness takes root, and since the root feeds the rest of the tree, every branch of our lives and every fruit on each limb ultimately become poisoned. **Beloved sister or brother, the bottom line is... unforgiveness makes us sick. Always spiritually. Often emotionally. And, surprisingly often, physically.**

Please keep in mind that forgiveness is not defined by a feeling, although it will ultimately change our feelings. The Greek word most often translated "forgiveness" in New Testament Scripture is "APHIEMI", meaning "to send forth or away, let go from oneself. To let go from one's power, possession. To let go from one's further... attendance, occupancy." **Forgiveness is our determined and deliberate willingness to let something go.** To release it from our possession.

## OVERCOMING UNFORGIVENESS

To be willing and ready for it to no longer occupy us. God is not asking us to let “it” go haphazardly into the black hole of nonexistence. **Forgiveness means letting it go to God.** Letting it go from our power to His. Forgiveness is the ongoing act by which we agree with God over the matter, practice the mercy He’s extended to us, and surrender the situation, the repercussions, and the hurtful person to Him.

Don’t expect Satan to let you off the hook of unforgiveness easily. **Be prepared to recommit to forgiveness every single day until you’re free.** Second Corinthians 2:11 warns us to forgive “in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.” The King James Version says we must forgive “lest Satan should get an advantage of us.” **The Word of God clearly teaches that Satan takes tremendous advantage of any unforgiveness in our lives. Unforgiveness qualifies as one of the most powerfully effective forms of bondage in any believer’s life.** We cannot tolerate it. Yes, this stronghold demands serious demolition, but the liberty you will feel when you finally let go is inexpressible! **Forgiveness is the ultimate “weight loss”!**

This important chapter includes three segments. The first section below is a list of Scripture-prayers resembling those of the other chapters. Following these Scripture-prayers, you will find a segment explaining the importance of praying specifically **about** the person you’re struggling to forgive. And, finally, you will find an explanation and approach for learning to pray **for** the person you’re struggling to forgive. Each segment is vital in breaking the horrible bondage of unforgiveness. **Be strong and courageous, believer! Whatever it is... we can forgive. We MUST forgive... in order to be forgiven! Matthew 6:14-15 (NASB) "For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. "But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.**

### PRAYING GOD’S WORD:

Lord, as hard as this may be for me to comprehend or rationalize, Your Word is clear: if I forgive others when they sin against me, You, my heavenly Father will also forgive me. (Matt. 6:14)

Lord God, if I do not forgive others their sins, You, my Father, will not forgive my sins. (Matt. 6:15)

Father, according to Your Word, if I judge others, I too will be judged, and with the same measure I use, it will be measured to me. (Matt. 7:1–2)

Christ Jesus, when I want so badly to judge, condemn, or refuse forgiveness to another person, I can hear Your Word speak to my heart saying, “If you are without sin, be the first to throw a stone at them.” (John 8:7) I am not without sin. If I claim to be without sin, I deceive myself and the truth is not in me. (1 John 1:8)

Lord, I must ask myself why I look at the speck of sawdust in another person’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in my own eye. How can I say to my brother, “Let me take the speck out

## OVERCOMING UNFORGIVENESS

of your eye,” when all the time there is a plank in my own eye? O God, rescue me from being a hypocrite! Give me the honesty and courage to first take the plank out of my own eye, and then I may see clearly to remove the speck from another person’s eye. (Matt. 7:3–5)

Jesus, when Peter asked You, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?” You responded, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.” (Matt. 18:21–22)

Lord, in the parable of the unmerciful servant, the only person in the end who was imprisoned and tortured was the one who would not forgive. (Matt. 18:33–34) Help me to see the monumental price of unforgiveness. It is so enslaving and torturous. According to Matthew 18:35, You may allow me to suffer the same kind of repercussions if I refuse to forgive from my heart someone who has sinned against me.

**Bitterness is like a rock thrown into a placid pond; after its initial splash, it sends out concentric circles that disturb the whole pond. It starts with ourselves, expands to our spouse, then to our children, friends and colleagues.**

Lord, Your Word tells me that when I stand praying, if I hold anything against anyone, I am to forgive him or her, so that You, my Father in heaven, may forgive me my sins. (Mark 11:25)

God, if I am offering my gifts to You through worship or service and remember that my brother has something against me, I am to leave my gift there in front of the altar. I am to first go and be reconciled to my brother, then I am to come and offer my gift. (Matt. 5:23–24) Help me to be obedient to Your will, God.

Your Word asks me why I judge or look down on my brother. I acknowledge to You today, Lord, that we will all stand before Your judgment seat. It is written: “As surely as I live,” says the Lord, “every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God.” So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God. Therefore help me stop passing judgment on others. Instead, I make up my mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in my brother’s way. (Rom. 14:10–13)

**Withholding forgiveness until an offender understands or acknowledges the emotional pain they have inflicted is a subtle form of revenge. Why? Because it’s hoping that the offender would hurt a little too, in order to understand. But this type of revenge robs you of your freedom and allows the offender to keep control of you.**

- Dr. Chuck Lynch

## OVERCOMING UNFORGIVENESS

Lord, You tell me to forgive others in the sight of Christ in order that Satan might not outwit me. Help me never to be unaware of his schemes. (2 Cor. 2:11) Please help me to see how much the enemy takes advantage of unforgiveness. I offer him a foothold any time I refuse to forgive.

Lord God, empower me to bear with others and forgive whatever grievances I may have against another. Help me to forgive as You, Lord, have forgiven me. (Col. 3:13)

Your ways are not my ways, Lord God. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are Your ways higher than mine. (Isa. 55:8–9) I may not always understand Your ways, Lord, but they are always prosperous. (Ps. 10:5) Your ways are always righteous. (Ps. 145:17) Your ways, O God, are holy. (Ps. 77:13) Your ways are loving and faithful. (Ps. 25:10) I have considered my ways, Lord. (Ps. 119:59) I choose Yours instead. Keep me from deceitful ways. (Ps. 119:29)

Lord God, help me to walk in Your ways. (Ps. 119:3)

Lord, You have extended such grace to me. You have forgiven my wickedness and remembered my sins no more. (Heb. 8:12) Help me to demonstrate my gratitude by forgiving others!

**No physical or emotional pain happens in a purposeless vacuum. One of the purposes is to prepare us to help others.**

**Dr. Chuck Lynch**

According to Your Word, blessed am I when men hate me, when they exclude me and insult me and reject my name as evil, because of the Son of Man. I am to rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is my reward in heaven. (Luke 6:22–23)

Lord, according to Your Word, love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. (1 Cor. 13:4–8) Father, I acknowledge to You that I don't begin to possess this kind of love on my own. The only way I can experience and express love like this is to surrender my heart to You, and ask You to empty it of all its fleshly contents and make it a vessel of Your love. Use my heart to love the unlovely and those who have hurt me, dear Lord. I am desperate for You to work a miracle in and through my heart.

**Moore, Beth. Praying God's Word B&H Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.**