



FORGIVING/FORGIVENESS

SCRIPTURE VERSES (NIV)

Colossians 3:13

¹³ Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

Matthew 6:14-15

¹⁴ For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Luke 17:3-4

³ So watch yourselves. "If your brother or sister sins against you, rebuke them; and if they repent, forgive them. ⁴ Even if they sin against you seven times in a day and seven times come back to you saying 'I repent,' you must forgive them."

Ephesians 4:31-32

³¹ Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. ³² Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Isaiah 1:18

"Come now, let us settle the matter,"
says the Lord.

"Though your sins are like scarlet,
they shall be as white as snow;
though they are red as crimson,
they shall be like wool.

Daniel 9:9-10

⁹ The Lord our God is merciful and forgiving, even though we have rebelled against him; ¹⁰ we have not obeyed the Lord our God or kept the laws he gave us through his servants the prophets.

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Don't Repeat Hurt. Delete it!

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Forgive, then Move On

Forgive Because You are Forgiven

Requirements for a Restored Relationship

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DON'T REPEAT THE HURT. DELETE IT!

Rick Warren

“Whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him and let it drop (leave it, let it go), in order that your Father Who is in heaven may also forgive you your own failings and shortcomings and let them drop.” (Mark 11:25 AMP)

When people hurt us, we have two natural tendencies: remember and retaliate.

But that’s not what 1 Corinthians 13:5 tell us to do: *“Love keeps no record of being wronged”* (NLT).

So how should you respond to the people who have hurt you? How do you handle all of those wounds and hurts that you’ve stockpiled in your memory?

You don’t repeat them; you delete them. Let it go. Forgive, and get on with your life.

When we get hurt, we tend to repeat that hurt in three ways: emotionally in our minds, relationally as a weapon, and practically by telling other people.

First, we repeat it by going over and over it in our mind. But resentment is self-destructive. It only perpetuates the pain. It never heals. It never solves anything. Whatever you think about most is what you move toward. If all you think about is how much you’ve been hurt in the past, you’ll only move toward the past. But if you focus on the future, you move toward the future. If you focus on potential, you move toward the potential.

Second, we repeat our hurt in relationships. We use it as wedges and weapons. “Remember when you did that?” “But you did this!”

The Bible says in Proverbs 17:9, “Love forgets mistakes. Nagging about them parts the best of friends” (LB). It also parts marriages and every other relationship you have. Nagging doesn’t work.

Third, we repeat our hurt by telling it to other people. It’s called gossip! We tell everybody else except God and the person with whom we have the problem.

Did you know that God hates gossip? He hates it as much as he hates pride, because that’s what gossip is. Gossip is pure and simple ego — trying to make ourselves look and feel better. Every time you share gossip, you are being prideful, and God hates pride and gossip.

Love keeps no record of wrongs. Love doesn’t repeat a wound so that it turns into resentment or gossip or pride. Love responds to hurt by letting it go.

Talk It Over

- ◆ What hurt have you rehearsed over and over in your mind that you need to let go of today?
- ◆ Why do you think it’s easier to nag about a mistake rather than forgive it? Is it really easier in the long run?
- ◆ What do you need to change about the way you respond to gossip?

LET GO OF YOUR HURT

Rick Warren

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

Many of us have someone in our lives who has done some crazy, hurtful thing to us or, maybe even more importantly, to somebody that we love. In our minds we think, “I know the Christian thing to do is to forgive, so I will. I will forgive him as soon as he gives me an apology.”

The problem with that is, you’re still holding on to the hurt. Truth is, that person may never ask you for forgiveness. He may never say he’s sorry, because he doesn’t get it, or she may not even realize what she’s done. So you end up stewing over something that the other person has long ago forgotten. And it’s eating you up inside!

Never hold on to a hurt, because resentment tears you up. Resentment is like drinking poison and hoping it’s going to kill someone else. It doesn’t work. You have to decide that, before anything else happens, you are going to forgive that person.

Jesus said this even in the most extreme of circumstances, as he’s hanging on the cross: *“Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing”* (Luke 23:34a NIV).

So what do you do? When you struggle with forgiving, remember the great gift of God’s forgiveness.

Remember a verse like Colossians 3:13: *“Make allowance for each other’s faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others”* (NLT). It’s not a bad one to memorize and carry with you throughout the day, because you’re going to have plenty of chances to use it.

That phrase “make allowance” is the Greek word that means *“to bear with, to endure, to be tolerant.”* Basically it means to cut people some slack. Jesus said, *“Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy”* (Matthew 5:7 NIV). I want God’s blessing in my life and your life. One of the ways you receive that is by being merciful.

Talk About It

- ◆ What hurt are you still holding onto?
- ◆ What do you need to do today so that your hurt does not turn into resentment?

FORGIVE, THEN MOVE ON

Rick Warren

“Still, if you set your heart on God and reach out to him, If you scrub your hands of sin and refuse to entertain evil in your home, You’ll be able to face the world unashamed and keep a firm grip on life, guiltless and fearless. You’ll forget your troubles; they’ll be like old, faded photographs.” (Job 11:13-16 MSG)

As long as you focus on someone you resent, that person controls you. You’re worrying about something he or she has already forgotten about.

Long before psychology came along, Job said there are three steps for inner healing:

1. Put your heart right. If you want to be emotionally healed from a hurt, you have to release the offender — whether you feel like it or not. Don’t try to get even. Forgive that person, then release him or her.

2. Reach out to God. You need to invite Christ to come into your life and fill you with his forgiveness. Why? I don’t think you can manufacture enough forgiveness in your life to handle all the hurts you’re going to face, not only those of the past but those you’ll have between now and when you die.

Do you remember the story of Corrie Ten Boom? She hid Jews in her apartment to protect them from the Nazis during World War II. When they were caught, not only were the Jews shipped off to the concentration camps, but Corrie and her family were, too. Everyone in her family was killed in the concentration camps except Corrie, and she endured torture and abuse. She later went back and met the guards who had abused her, and she forgave them. You can’t do that with human forgiveness. You need God’s supernatural power in your life in order to let it go and be able to say, “It wasn’t good. It wasn’t fun. It was bad. But I believe that God can bring good out of the bad, and somehow the rest of my life is going to be the best of my life.”

3. Face the world again. When we’re hurt, we’re tempted to withdraw into a shell, put up a wall, and decide never to let anyone else get close. You’re really only hurting yourself when you do that. Letting what happened to you in the past define your identity is like driving a car looking into the rearview mirror. You’re going to crash. You have to face the future and resume living. It doesn’t matter as much where you’ve been as it does where you’re headed.

Talk About It

What hurtful memory are you choosing to hold onto — something somebody said, did, or thought about you?

Pray this prayer today: “Jesus, I want my heart to be right. Please take this resentment out of my life. I choose to forgive [this person]. Help me to face the world again. Help me to focus on you in the future. Replace my pain with your peace. Replace my hurt with your healing. Replace my bitterness with your love. In Jesus’ name. Amen.”

FORGIVE BECAUSE YOU ARE FORGIVEN

Rick Warren — November 2, 2016

“Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others” (Colossians 3:13b NLT, second edition).

The Bible says there are three reasons you have to let go of your past and the people who've hurt you, and the reasons have nothing to do with whether that person deserves it or not.

1. You have to forgive those who've hurt you because God has forgiven you. Colossians 3:13 says, *“Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others”* (NLT, second edition). If you want to be a forgiving person, you need to first accept the forgiveness of God through Jesus Christ. The Bible said that God came to Earth in human form in Jesus in order to forgive everything that's ever been done wrong. He paid for it so we don't have to. That's Good News!

2. You have to forgive those who've hurt you because resentment controls you. The Bible says in Ecclesiastes 7:9, *“Only fools get angry quickly and hold a grudge”* (CEV). Resentment makes you miserable, and it keeps you stuck in the past. And when you're stuck in the past, you are controlled by the past. Every time you resent something, it controls you. Some of you are allowing people who hurt you five, 10, or even 20 years ago to hurt you to this day. That's stupid. Don't let it happen. They can't hurt you any more. Your past is past. You've got to let it go.

3. You have to forgive those who've hurt you because you're going to need more forgiveness in the future. Jesus said in Matthew 6:14, *“For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins”* (NIV). Forgiveness is a two-way street. You cannot receive what you are unwilling to give.

Talk It Over

- ◆ In what situation do you need to offer forgiveness so that you can move on from your past?
- ◆ What is a sin that you believe you could never forgive?

REQUIREMENTS FOR A RESTORED RELATIONSHIP

Rick Warren — April 24, 2016

“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose” (Romans 8:28 NIV).

Forgiveness is not resuming a relationship without change. In fact, forgiveness and resuming a relationship are two different things. One of them is what you do as the offended person. Resuming the relationship is what the other person does in order to get back into your good graces. Saying “I’m sorry” is not enough.

In fact, the Bible teaches three things that are essential to resume a relationship that’s been broken. These are all what the offender has to do.

- 1. Restoring a relationship requires repentance.** In other words, you’re truly saddened about what you did. That’s not just saying, “I’m sorry.” It means saying, “I was wrong. Please forgive me.” You can be sorry that the weather was bad or something like that, but repentance is admitting wrong and being truly sorry.
- 2. Restoring a relationship requires restitution.** Sometimes you have to do some kind of physical or material restitution. Even when you’re forgiven, it doesn’t mean you’re off the hook. You still have to pay a debt to society or to someone for what was damaged or destroyed by your actions.
- 3. Restoring a relationship requires rebuilding trust.** That, friends, takes a long, long time. When somebody hurts you, you have to forgive him or her immediately. But you don’t have to trust that person immediately. Forgiveness is built on grace and is unconditional. Trust has to be rebuilt over a period of time.

Most people in our culture don’t get the difference between forgiveness and rebuilding trust in a relationship. Whenever a political or religious leader gets caught in a scandal, there will always be people who say, “We’re all imperfect. We’re all human. We need to just forgive him and keep on going.”

No! You must forgive him immediately, but you don’t have to trust him. The Bible says trust is built with time. Credibility is what a leader leads with. All leaders must have trust; it’s the currency they live in. If you lose trust, you have lost your right to lead at that moment. You may have the title, but you’re not the leader until you rebuild trust. And that isn’t going to happen instantly.

Talk It Over

- ◆ What does it take for someone to regain your trust? What are you willing to do to regain someone’s trust?