

Forgiveness Is a Lifelong Commitment

Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge. **—Psalm 51:4**

When I consider the fact that our Lord Jesus Christ knows all about my sin but promises to keep what He has forgiven a carefully guarded secret, it increases my gratitude to Him. God does not blackmail us. And when a person is guilty of blackmailing someone else, it gets God's attention. He won't stand for it. To hold another person in perpetual fear by threatening, "I'll tell on you," will quickly bring down the wrath of God. When I ponder the sins for which I have been forgiven, it is enough to shut my mouth for the rest of my life.

Making a lifelong commitment to total forgiveness means that you keep on doing it—for as long as you live. It isn't enough to forgive today and then return to the offense tomorrow. I heard of a person whose wife said, "I thought you forgave me." He replied, "That was yesterday." Total forgiveness is a lifelong commitment, and you may need to practice it every single day of your life until you die. No one said it would be easy.

I have seen some people cave in and return to the offense after they extended their forgiveness to someone. But it is not total forgiveness unless it lasts—no matter how great the temptation is to turn back.

If you are prepared to make a covenant to forgive—and to forgive totally—you must realize you will have to renew that covenant tomorrow. And it may be even harder to do tomorrow than it is today. It could even be harder next week—or next

year. But this is a lifetime commitment.

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