

# How Unforgiveness Can Rob Your Physical Health

At church recently, our pastor asked people who were struggling with forgiving someone to come down to the altar to receive prayer for releasing it.

I was shocked when nearly half our congregation went down.

Mind you, the issue itself didn't shock me, but the number of people struggling with it did.

However, after reflecting on this situation, I don't believe our congregation is unique.

So I ask you: Do you have a "them" that you need to forgive?

Sin has tainted this world. Many people are hurting because of it. Some of the things stolen from us may include:

- Our childhoods
- Innocence
- Ability to love
- Ability to trust
- Our identity
- Our self-worth
- Material goods

I understand this issue. Many years ago, I had issues with forgiving my father. He abandoned my mother when I was just a baby, so I never knew him. For years I harbored anger against him.

I was in torment, wondering how my life would have been different if only I had known a father's love growing up.

I did not realize that unforgiveness was eating away at me—literally! Like many, my excess weight was a result of

emotional eating. The excess weight was also a form of emotional insulation. In my mind, the excess fat was protecting me from further hurt.

It was only through Jesus' love and power that I was finally able to forgive my father and release the excess weight I was carrying.

The skill of forgiveness is even more urgent for Christians today. Scripture describes our current world accurately:

*"Know this: In the last days perilous times will come. Men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, slanderers, unrestrained, fierce, despisers of those who are good, traitors, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God" (2 Tim. 3:1-4).*

So offenses are going to come. The question is, will we be able to forgive them?

As Jesus' disciples, our love is our calling card to unbelievers. In John 13:34-35, Jesus says:

*"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."*

In the following article, I will share how to forgive any of "them" in your life. You'll explore an uncommon teaching of Jesus and most important of all, learn from His example.

Not only is learning to forgive critical for your spiritual health, but it's also important for your physical health. Science has discovered a shocking link between cancer and unforgiveness. According to Dr. Michael Barry, over 61 percent

of cancer patients have forgiveness issues.

So this issue is killing people—literally. Here is what you can do to remove the cancer of unforgiveness from your life.

### **Jesus' Teaching on Forgiveness**

In Matthew 18:21-35, Jesus tells a parable about forgiveness after the apostle Peter asks how often he should forgive a brother who has sinned against him.

I recommend you read this parable, asking the Holy Spirit in prayer to illuminate it so that you see the relevancy in your own situation.

As you read, consider these principles from the parable:

- Forgiveness does not mean you approve what the other person did. When you forgive someone, you are not saying that what they did to you was acceptable. It was wrong. It also does not mean that you need to become best friends with that person or trust them. The Bible says that you must have discernment in your dealings with others according to Matthew 10:16.
- Forgiveness does mean releasing the person from the debt they owe you. When one person hurts another, they take something from them. The one who has been hurt feels that the other person should restore what they took.

So that person is written in their life's ledger as a bill unpaid! However most of the time, that person is either unable or unwilling to pay.

Do not continue to let that loss define and ruin your life. This person already took from you; do not let them steal your future too!

If you do not forgive them, then not only will your Father not forgive you, but your heart will become hardened to the Holy Spirit's leading over time as you persist in disobedience. The

enemy would love that.

Now you might think, "If I forgive their debt, that means they got away with it! It's not fair."

But Romans 12:19 tells us that the Lord will handle it:

*"Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to God's wrath, for it is written: 'Vengeance is Mine. I will repay,' says the Lord."*

Trust the Lord for healing and restoration. Focus on doing what Jesus commands:

*"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good and sends rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matt. 5:43-48).*

You love people as an act of obedience to Christ, knowing that you are not going to like everyone's ways.

You can only love your enemies when you recognize and meditate upon Jesus' love for you. Recall John 13:34 in which He says:

*"Even as I have loved you, that you also love one another."*

Loving your enemies and treating them kindly is a much more powerful testimony to them than returning evil for their evil. After all, the world does that, doesn't it?

But we are called to stand out, not fit in. Our love enables us to shine in a dark world and will become even more important as the world gets darker.

When you treat others kindly in spite of how they treat you, it is your opportunity to demonstrate the excellence of your faith in Jesus.

Jesus taught this principle in Luke 6:32-35. He said:

*“For if you love those who love you, what thanks do you receive? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what thanks do you receive? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what thanks do you receive? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much in return. But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return. Then your reward will be great, and you will be the sons of the Highest. For He is kind to the unthankful and the evil.”*

So we follow our Lord's instruction when we forgive others, just as Jesus followed the Father's example. Jesus did not just teach about this principle. He gave us an example. He lived through it from how He endured the cross.

### **Jesus' Example on the Cross**

If you have seen the movie *The Passion of the Christ*, then you saw the things the Bible described that Jesus went through on the cross: He was rejected, insulted, His own abandoned Him, and He was beaten, spat upon and nailed to that cross. Imagine the extreme torment and pain He went through at the hands of others.

And yet in the midst of that pain and sorrow, Luke 23:34 records what Jesus said: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

Consider this: Every stripe and wound inflicted upon Jesus represented the sins mankind committed against God, including the very ones responsible for nailing Jesus to the cross.

No one who has ever walked this Earth was left out.

- The sin the other person committed against you was included in those stripes.
- The sins you have committed against yourself and others were included in those stripes also.

The only possible difference between you and the other person is that you accepted Jesus' payment for your sins.

You declared Him as your Savior and Lord. As a result, you can move forward as a beloved, forgiven child of God.

Meditate on your gratitude that God released your sin-debt to Him because Jesus paid it all! In Psalm 32:1-2, King David wrote:

*"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man against whom the Lord does not count iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit."*

The more you meditate on how much you have been forgiven, the more your ability to forgive and love increases.

In the story of the woman with the Alabaster box (Luke 7:36-50), Jesus said of her:

*"Then He turned to the woman and said to Simon, 'Do you see this woman? I entered your house. You gave Me no water for My feet, but she has washed My feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head. You gave Me no kiss, but this woman, since the time I came in, has not ceased to kiss my feet. You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with ointment. Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little.'"*

Then He said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."

In summary on how to forgive “them”:

- You can only forgive when you know that God has forgiven and redeemed you.
- You can only love your enemies out of the love Jesus has for you. From that love, you obey Jesus by blessing those who curse you, doing good to those who hate you, and praying for those who spitefully use you and persecute you. Pray for their salvation if they are not already saved.

After all, Jesus is not asking you to do anything He was not willing to do Himself! He is a compassionate High Priest. While He has suffered as you have, you have not suffered as He has.

So you can trust Him with your pain.

As a child of God, recognize that this sick and sad world is not our home. At the end of this life, you will change residences and live with your Lord and Savior forever.

In Revelation 21:4, the Word promises:

*“God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. There shall be no more death.”*

Walk forward in freedom and newness of life with your Savior. He already paid the price for your blessing.

Accept it, enjoy it and pass it on. {eoa}

*Once 240 pounds and a size 22, **Kimberly Taylor** can testify of God’s healing power to end binge eating. She is an author and the creator of the Christian weight-loss website . Visit today for inspirational health and weight-loss tips.*

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