

TD Jakes: God Does Not Want Us to Be Victims

“Withholding forgiveness is like drinking poison and waiting for your perpetrator to die.”

These words are anathema to the faint of heart. Most of us have blindly accepted the precept that forgiveness is a debt owed. We yearn to hear those magic words, ‘I’m sorry,’ with the right mix of sincerity, ensure that the injuring party is well acquainted with the magnitude of grief inflicted.

Most are shocked to learn that the power of forgiveness was never in the hands of the perpetrator.

This is not to say that a wrong was not committed or that one was not hurt in the process. True forgiveness is often enmeshed with accepted colloquialisms, like “forgive and forget” or “sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me.” While these ditties may conjure up schoolyard bravado, as we mature, we find them lacking in medicinal powers.

Instead, unforgiveness incarcerates the victim with absolutely no impact on the injuring party. It sentences the victim to a prison of “what was,” overriding any opportunity to move beyond the pain.

I recently met a man who’d been incarcerated more than half his life for a crime that he did not commit. Despite vehement protestations of innocence, the doors of justice nevertheless slammed shut, drowning out his pleas. His sentence was finally overturned once DNA evidence corroborated his claims. He’d admitted being angry for nearly half of his 31 years behind bars.

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