

Why Is It So Hard to Forgive?

Forgiveness is one of the most foundational, yet often under-practiced habits in life. Without forgiveness, we'd never experience intimate relationship with God and healthy relationships with others.

Our health and wholeness depend on our ability to forgive, yet when you look at the landscape of our world, it seems that people all around are manifesting the aftermath of someone not being willing or able to forgive.

For those who know how to forgive every day, they will be the most healthy people to be around. The true peace they carry invades every place they go to. They are great to have relationship with, especially because they don't keep score. Yet it seems one of the most challenging things for people to do is to live as forgiving vessels.

So why is this happening? I have observed some trends over the years contributing to why we hold something against someone and withhold forgiveness.

1. We don't think forgiveness is that important. Somewhere along the line, people have bought the lie that they can receive forgiveness from God, but withhold it from others. In today's world of Christianity, we like to fester in our wounds without considering forgiveness at the soonest possible point. We don't see it as critical as it should be.

2. We justify it away. It's so easy to call offense and bitterness something else. Call it irritation or frustration with someone, but we lose sight of what the problem can really be. We get so focused on the drama and details of events that we lose sight of bitterness forming below the surface.

3. We don't see people with spiritual eyes. Most of the time the biggest problem is that we stop seeing our life and

struggles through spiritual eyes. We forget to keep in mind that bitterness and offense are spiritual assaults from the enemy. We do not wrestle against each other, but against spiritual forces that seek to separate and divide relationships. When angry and bitter against someone, how easily we forget that the enemy is pulling those bitter strings. Unless we maintain a spiritual grid of war, we will always keep ourselves focused on the wrong and not on the source of those bitter thoughts and feelings.

4. Our hearts have become numb. There's nothing worse than someone who has experience hurt after hurt without allowing healing to come into their lives. Many times I've worked with people, who if they had learned to practice forgiveness years ago, could have avoided the numbness they are currently struggling with.

Jesus warned us that the love of many will grow cold (Matthew 24) resulting from unresolved relational issues. If we don't deal with healing the pain in our lives, we can expect that pain to torment us down the road.

An unhealed pain will protect the right to stay bitter and eventually, numbness will set in.

5. No one taught us ... I think the biggest reason we struggle to forgive is because we were not taught the importance and we were not taught how to actually process forgiveness. Do you ever remember your parents showing you how to process forgiveness? Did any mentors growing up ever walk you through the mechanics of releasing someone? What about conflict resolution? Aren't these critical habits to possess?

6. We don't realize what it means to be forgiven. In the moment when our pain is red hot and our feelings are bitter, we quickly lose sight of what it means to be forgiven by God through Christ.

Many teachers say that forgiveness is free. This is partially

true. God's forgiveness is free, as long as we freely forgive others. When did we make it OK to receive God's forgiveness while holding others with contempt in our hearts? We've been deceived.

7. We spend too much energy defending our case and protecting ourselves. The biggest way an organization can suffer is when people get sidetracked by relational arguments and disputes. Relationships suffer the most when the focus is on hurt and pain. Those who walk into freedom know the wisdom of overlooking an offense. (Proverbs 19:11) Keeping a light load of records helps us to focus on what is healthy for our lives.

When we focus on the hurt, we become trained to feel justified for our hurt. Our discussions involve getting people on our side, rather than healing. Bitterness trains us to get focused on the hurt and protecting ourselves at all costs. So our mission becomes feeling validated in our pain more than really pursuing healing.

I find that too often we put so much energy into not being taken advantage of. When in the Scriptures, Jesus taught us to put that aside. If you get taken advantage of, don't sweat it. Turn the other cheek. Go the extra mile. Stop sweating what everyone seems to be doing. Keep a low account of negativity on others. For in it, you will find greater health for your life and journey.

I am not minimizing pain, nor am I encouraging people to be doormats. But we have become so toxic with our bitter perspectives that health is moving farther away. A forgiving heart learns to let things go in the earlier stages, so that these problems do not follow us. For if we hold on to them, everyone else goes on with their lives, while we simmer in poison.

Let's choose to be free.

Be quick to forgive and let go ...

Mark DeJesus has been equipping people in a full time capacity since 1995, serving in various roles, including, teaching people of all ages, communicating through music, authoring books, leading and mentoring. Mark's deepest love is his family; his wife Melissa, son Maximus and daughter Abigail. Mark is a teacher, author and mentor who uses many communication mediums, including the written word, a weekly radio podcast show and videos. His deepest call involves equipping people to live as overcomers. Through understanding inside out transformation, Mark's message involves getting to the root of issues that contribute to the breakdown of our relationships, our health and our day-to-day peace. He is passionately reaching his world with a transforming message of love, healing and freedom. Out of their own personal renewal, Mark and Melissa founded Turning Hearts Ministries, a ministry dedicated to inside out transformation. Mark also founded Transformed You, a communication platform for Mark's teachings, writing and broadcasts that are designed to encourage people in their journey of transformation.

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