

Why Believers Must Choose to Forgive After Remarkable Betrayal

I sat quietly in my church office relaxing in the office chair as I confirmed last-minute details before going home. At that hour, there weren't too many people left around.

The door to my room opened, and one of my students, a young teenage girl, came into my office to ask me some questions about her grades. I communicated with her in a professional manner, making sure that there was some distance between her standing next to my desk and me sitting in the chair. Oddly, she came a little closer to me, and I instantly felt awkward and somewhat frightened—I am a married man, and she a 16-year-old student.

Without touching me in any way, she attempted to “push up” her chest toward my direction. I eyed the wooden door with a glass window in the center and prepared to flee. The next moment I was on my feet leaving everything behind, breezing past the girl and out the door. Practically leaping into the hallway, I ran right into another staff pastor, but not just any staff pastor—this pastor was my best friend. Instant relief!

“Thank God you're here,” I said to my best friend. The girl grabbed her things and out the door she went. Had my best friend not been there, this young girl could have attempted to frame me or something. Thank God nothing came of it.

A few weeks later, this same girl came into my office, this time during office hours. She was crying, and I could tell that something had broken her heart. Sitting beside me (appropriately this time), she began to relive the entire story above and begged for my forgiveness, which I quickly offered. Then she preceded to tell me something like this:

“You were set up. I was asked to come into your room after hours and attempt to seduce you to try to get you to make a move on me or anything that could be used against you. The reason you ran into that pastor when you opened the door was because he was the one behind all of this, and he set me and you up to try to destroy your reputation.”

She continued, “That pastor approached me privately and said he wanted to test your morals to see if you will fail and if you should even be at this church. He asked me to make passes at you in front of your desk while he watched all of this go on through the glass in your office door. He was standing right outside your room the entire time.” Weeping bitterly, she stated, “He set you up—and he used me to do it.”

A huge part of my heart was ripped apart, while the remainder of it willingly fell to pieces. The breath that once fueled my life was sucked right out of me.

Betrayal Wounds Deep

This wasn't just any pastor; he was my best friend of many years. We'd been through everything together. I trusted and loved this pastor. He was a friend I laughed with, cried with and opened my heart to in the most private, man-to-man details.

I was hurt badly. The pain of this occurrence was something that felt worst than a dagger being plunged into my back, ripping flesh from top to bottom. Anger, hate, occasional rage and an awful season of isolation put me in an up-and-down roller-coaster for several months. I was brutally wounded! Betrayal wounds deep and takes time to recover from.

Betrayal: “The action of betraying one's country, a group, or a person; treachery.”

From pandemic shutdowns to the riots, then a most bizarre election, there are many people who feel as though they have

been betrayed now in America and other countries. Chances are that you, some of your family members, church members and many of the people who you pass by while out in the community are somehow trying to deal with betrayal in some of the most sinister ways that they have ever faced.

There are some deep wounds among us—people are hurting severely. So where do we go from here?

A Few Thoughts

For starters, I think we need to pause for a moment. I know you don't want to hear this on the cusp of escaping 2020, when everything stopped for most of the year. Just because the world paused for a virus, doesn't mean that we have slowed down long enough to bring all of this hurt and betrayal into proper perspective—laid down at the Lord's feet.

"Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord" (Ps. 27:14, NIV).

Second, we must choose to forgive. You cannot change the end results and outcomes of 2020 and the beginning of 2021. I can't change the fact that my best friend turned on me for whatever reason. I can, however, change my heart about the situation. Together, we must learn how to forgive those who recently betrayed us within our country, churches and communities.

"And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins" (Mark 11:25).

Finally, somehow we will heal. If the body of Christ isn't healed, then how can we heal those around us?

"He sent out his word and healed them; he rescued them from the grave" (Ps. 107:20).

Though I don't understand or agree with a lot that has

recently happened in America, I'm choosing to move on and make the most out of every opportunity in life (Eph. 5:16). I am asking you to do the same. Let's walk with Jesus together.

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