

How Do I Forgive?

Letting Go Of Resentments - Lesson 1

“Resentment is the ‘number one’ offender. It destroys more alcoholics than anything else. From it stem all forms of spiritual disease, for we have been not only mentally and physically ill, we have been spiritually sick. When the spiritual malady is overcome, we will straighten out mentally and physically.” (*Alcoholics Anonymous*, “How It Works”)

The need:

Matthew 5:43-45 – “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.”

James 3:9-12 – With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be. Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? My brothers, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.

[God is in the forgiving business. God's children are going to be following in their Father's business.]

Matthew 6:12-15 – Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins. [Holding onto resentment closes us off from receiving forgiveness.]

The good news:

I John 1:6-7 – If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. [Jesus died on the cross to pay for our sin of unforgiveness, along with all other sins.]

Psalms 51:7-11 – Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice. Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity. Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. [God can replace our resentful spirit with a forgiving spirit]

So what do I do?

Luke 22:33-34 – When they came to the place called the Skull, there they crucified him, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” [Don't look to yourself for the ability to forgive; give the job to God.]

Galatians 6:1,3 – Brothers if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted... If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself.” [What do I have in common with the person who has done me wrong? Does he need help more than avenging anger?]

What else?