

Overcoming The Problem Of Forgiveness (Part 2)

Genesis 50:15-21; 2 Corinthians 2:6-11

Introduction:

- Forgiveness is a problem in the Christian life because it is so hard to do. It is one of the most difficult things to do, yet one of the most needed.

Why is forgiveness such an important issue for the believer?

1. Because unforgiveness allows Satan to gain ground in our lives.
2 Corinthians 2:10-11
2. Because unforgiveness can destroy the person that we refuse to forgive.
3. Because unforgiveness hinders the entire body of Christ. 2 Corinthians 2:9

Why is it so difficult to forgive when we have been wronged?

1. Because we want to see them suffer. 2 Corinthians 2:6; cf. Romans 12:19
2. Because, if we forgive, we feel as if we are letting them off the hook.
3. Because of stubbornness. cf. Proverbs 13:10
4. So how do we forgive? Let's look at five key principles from the life of Joseph that will help us to be victorious!

Five principles concerning forgiveness from the life of Joseph

(Genesis 50:15-21)

1. Bitterness is a _____ work of the flesh, but forgiveness is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit. vs. 15
2. Forgiveness acknowledges the offense, but refuses to use it _____ the offender in the future. vs. 20
 - Forgiveness is not forgetting, but rather it is an act of the _____ – a definite choice. Don't wait until you **feel** like forgiving, because you most likely will never get there. Feelings will _____ after the choice to forgive is made.
3. When we forgive, we are allowing God to be the _____. vs. 19

- Forgiveness does not deny guilt, nor does it allow the guilty to be released from divine retribution. Forgiveness releases the offender to _____ to be dealt with fairly.
4. Forgiveness is not merely words. It is _____. vs. 21
- Notice that Joseph comforted them and spoke kindly to them. This would demonstrate that he was truly sincere.
5. The basis of our forgiveness to others is _____ forgiveness of us.
- The Bible is clear that we should forgive on the basis of God's mercy and forgiveness that He has extended to us.
 - "...forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" **Ephesians 4:32**
 - "...having forgiven you all trespasses... Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another... even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye." **Colossians 2:13, 3:13**
 - Because of the cross, God can forgive me. And, because of the cross, I can forgive _____.
 - Where is the justice? The cross makes forgiveness legally and morally _____.
 - Here is a practical suggestion – make a list of those who have offended you. Take that list and lay it before the Lord. Imagine yourself facing the cross of Jesus Christ where He paid for the sins and offenses of mankind. As you are doing this, pray something similar to this: "God, since you have forgiven me freely, I can forgive them too. I make a choice of my free will to extend grace and forgiveness to [_____] right now."
 - Joseph ended up living to 110 years old (vs. 22). He could live with the joy of knowing that his heart was free from the bondage of bitterness and revenge. He was truly free!! You can know this _____ too!