



## Not Feeling It | “Forgiving Others: For Me Not Them”

Ephesians 1:7, Mt. 6:9-15, Luke 23:34, & James 4:12

Forgiveness does not come naturally to us. → **Why forgive?**

"Forgive your enemies, but first get even." - Bob Hope

"I'm very forgiving so long as I get my own way in the end." - Margaret Thatcher

"They say forgiveness is the key to a happy marriage. That's why I keep a spare set of keys hidden just in case." - Anon

→ Forgiveness is NOT the way the world works! If you have ever been **betrayed, falsely accused, rejected, abused, or humiliated** you know that forgiveness is counter cultural because it is personally difficult. We would rather get even, then let someone off the hook. Instead, God shows us mercy by forgiving us. Why is it that we want God's grace for us, but God's justice for others? But, God goes beyond forgiving us. He expects us to do the same!

### Misconceptions:

1. Forgiveness doesn't mean forgetting what happened. → YOU DONT FORGET.
2. Forgiving someone doesn't mean excusing their bad behavior. → YOU DONT EXCUSE.
3. Forgiveness doesn't always require reconciliation with the person who hurt you. → YOU STILL HAVE BOUNDARIES.
4. Forgiveness is not always easy or quick; it can take time and effort. → PROCESS!
5. Forgiveness doesn't require an apology from the other person. → YOUR HEART

**Ephesians 1:7** - *"He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins."*

**We've been forgiven.** → I can forgive others...because God has forgiven me.

- **Gospel:** Jesus lived, died, & was resurrected. He took God's justice. Our sins are forgiven. We are forgiven.
- Christianity is unique because we have not earned forgiveness...unlike other religions!
- **VISION:** We are a church built on forgiveness & what God has done for us. → Prayer: ...

**Matthew 6:9-15:** *"9Pray like this:Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy.10May your Kingdom come soon.May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.11Give us today the food we need,12and forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us.13And don't let us yield to temptation, but rescue us from the evil one.14If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you.15But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins."*

**Luke 23:34:** *"Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing.' And the soldiers gambled for his clothes by throwing dice."*

**Jesus taught & modeled forgiveness.** → Are we followers of Jesus? If you aren't a Christian...NO NEED TO FORGIVE!

- Jesus taught us to forgive (Mt. 5:14-15). Jesus tells us that our forgiveness is connected to our willingness to forgive.
- Jesus modeled forgiveness on the cross (Luke 23:34). On his worst day...he forgives.
- **HOW TO FORGIVE:** Reflect on situations / people you harbor unforgiveness..."Im not feeling it!" → 7 x
  - A: ASK God to help you forgive.
  - S: SURRENDER rights to justice.

- K: KEEP forgiving. → EVERYDAY → Tara: Grapes of Wrath: Veggie Tales → 7x70: Mt. 18:21-22 → Dumbell
- VISION: We are a church built on a commitment to Jesus & his teaching. → Prayer: Lord, lead us to YOUR way.

**James 4:12:** "God alone, who gave the law, is the Judge. He alone has the power to save or to destroy. So what right do you have to judge your neighbor?"

**Unforgiveness is baggage we can't carry.** → Tara talks about carrying a big rock!

- **Forgiveness is the only way to be fully free. Do you want freedom?!**
- **Benefits of forgiveness:**
  1. **Improved mental and physical health:** Forgiveness was associated with lower levels of stress and anxiety, as well as lower blood pressure and heart rate, & better sleep quality.
  2. **Increased compassion and empathy:** Forgiving someone led to an increase in empathy and a decrease in anger towards that person. Practicing forgiveness led to an increase in positive emotions and social connection.
  3. **Better relationships:** Forgiveness was associated with improved relationship satisfaction and communication, & increased trust and intimacy in romantic relationships.
  4. **Increased sense of control:** Forgiveness is associated with a greater sense of control over one's emotions and behaviors, and greater perceived control over one's life.
  5. **Spiritual growth:** Forgiveness is associated with increased spiritual well-being, greater feelings of closeness to God, and a greater sense of purpose in life.
- Tara tells a story. → **We choose to forgive!**
- **Forgiveness frees you from having to be the judge. You weren't created to be the judge! You can't carry that!**
- VISION: We want to be a church where people are finding the FREEDOM OF FORGIVENESS!
- Prayer: Lord, lead us to YOUR way.

→ **Forgiven people forgive others!**

**TALK ABOUT IT - Questions to GROW through with family, friends, & myself.**

1. What does forgiveness mean for a Christian? How does it relate to the teachings & example of Jesus?
2. How can we practically apply forgiveness in our daily lives as Christians? What are some examples?
3. What are the challenges that Christians may face when it comes to forgiving others? How can we overcome these challenges?
4. How does the concept of forgiveness relate to justice and accountability? Can forgiveness coexist with consequences for wrongdoing?
5. **PRAYER:** "Father, help me to forgive others just as you have forgiven me!"

## QUOTES / SONGS:

- "Forgive your enemies, but first get even." - **Bob Hope**
- "I'm very forgiving so long as I get my own way in the end." - **Margaret Thatcher**
- "They say forgiveness is the key to a happy marriage. That's why I keep a spare set of keys hidden just in case." - **Anon**
- "Forgiveness is God's invention for coming to terms with a world in which people are unfair to each other and hurt each other deeply. He began by forgiving us. And he invites us all to forgive each other." - **Lewis Smedes**
- "A happy marriage is the union of two good forgivers." - **Robert Quillen**

## ARTICLES / BOOKS:

- **Web Article:** John Hopkins Medicine, "Forgiveness: Your Health Depends on It" - [Click HERE.](#)

## SCRIPTURES: New Living Translation unless otherwise noted.

- **Ephesians 1:7** - "He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins."
- **Matthew 6:9-15:** "9Pray like this:Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy.10May your Kingdom come soon.May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.11Give us today the food we need,12and forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us.13And don't let us yield to temptation, but rescue us from the evil one.14If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you.15But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins."
- **Luke 23:34:** "Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing.' And the soldiers gambled for his clothes by throwing dice."
- **Matthew 18:21-22:** "Then Peter came to him and asked, 'Lord, how often should I forgive someone who sins against me? Seven times?' 'No, not seven times,' Jesus replied, 'but seventy times seven!'"
- **James 4:12:** "God alone, who gave the law, is the Judge. He alone has the power to save or to destroy. So what right do you have to judge your neighbor?"

## STUDIES:

- **Improved mental and physical health:**
  - Worthington Jr, E. L., Witvliet, C. V. O., Pietrini, P., & Miller, A. J. (2007). Forgiveness, stress, and health: A 5-week dynamic parallel process study. *Journal of Behavioral Medicine*, 30(4), 367-377.
  - Toussaint, L., Worthington Jr, E. L., Williams, D. R., & Musick, M. A. (2015). Forgiveness, health, and well-being: A review of evidence for emotional versus decisional forgiveness, dispositional forgivingness, and reduced unforgiveness. *Journal of Health Psychology*, 20(12), 1572-1585.
- **Increased compassion and empathy:**
  - Wenzel, M., Okimoto, T. G., Feather, N. T., & Platow, M. J. (2008). Forgiveness increases empathy and decreases anger: A test of the reduction in indignation model of forgiveness. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 94(5), 824-839.
  - Reed, G. L., & Enright, R. D. (2006). The effects of forgiveness therapy on depression, anxiety, and posttraumatic stress for women after spousal emotional abuse. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 74(5), 920-929.
- **Better relationships:**
  - Fincham, F. D., & Beach, S. R. (2007). Forgiveness in marriage: Current status and future directions. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 21(3), 420-427.
  - Gordon, K. C., Baucom, D. H., & Snyder, D. K. (2005). The role of forgiveness in enhancing relationship satisfaction and longevity. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 24(5), 532-547.
- **Increased sense of control:**
  - Freedman, S. R., Enright, R. D., & Knutson, J. (2005). Forgiveness as a healing intervention: A counseling study. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 83(3), 288-300.
  - Lin, W. F., Mack, D., Enright, R. D., Krahn, D., & Baskin, T. W. (2004). Effects of forgiveness therapy on anger, mood, and vulnerability to substance use among inpatient substance-dependent clients. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 72(6), 1114-1121.
- **Spiritual growth:**
  - Worthington Jr, E. L., Kurusu, T. A., McCullough, M. E., & Sandage, S. J. (1996). Empirical research on religion and psychotherapeutic processes and outcomes: A 10-year review and research prospectus. *Psychological Bulletin*, 119(3), 448-487.
  - Exline, J. J., & Baumeister, R. F. (2000). Expressing forgiveness and repentance: Benefits and barriers. In M. E. McCullough, K. I. Pargament, & C. E. Thoresen (Eds.), *Forgiveness: Theory, research, and practice* (pp. 133-155). Guilford Press.

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