

Wife HER! Bible Study
January 2019: "Forgiveness in Marriage"

"For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

Matthew 6: 14-15

Based on Matthew 6: 14-15, what do you understand about forgiveness?

Forgiveness is defined as the action or process of forgiving or being forgiven. I love that forgiveness is described as a "process" because it truly is. On occasion, you forgive on the spot and move on. However, in many instances, forgiveness is a daily decision. You must choose to forgive, *daily*.

forgive (v.):

- no longer feel angry about or wish to punish (an offence, flaw, or mistake).
- cancel (a debt).

The Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6: 9-13), a prayer personally taught to the disciples by Jesus, reminds us to ask for forgiveness from God (daily) just as we forgive our debtors (daily).

*"Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil."*

Matthew 6: 9-13

When you think of a “debtor”, what do you think? Which person or persons is/are owed your forgiveness?

“Forgiveness not only cleanses your soul and frees your mind, but also unlocks the chains that hold you captive to the person who wronged you.”

Kay Arthur, David Lawson & BJ Lawson, *Forgiveness: Breaking the Power of the Past*

Forgiveness is for you: it frees you, helps you, and heals you. God is a good father, He does not call us to forgive because He delights when we accomplish hard tasks – no! Instead, God calls us to forgive because He knows that unforgiveness and resentment can lead to sickness, death and an unfulfilled life.

Read Genesis 37 and then Genesis 50: 15-21. If Joseph had decided to harbour unforgiveness in his heart and smite his brothers when they needed him most, what do you think the outcome would have been? Perhaps his whole bloodline would have perished in the famine! Joseph knew by divine revelation that God used his circumstances—the betrayal by his own brothers, the false accusations, the imprisonment—for God’s divine purposes. When you trust in your maker, you see your experiences in a different light.

“Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”

1 Corinthians 13: 4-7 ESV

In a nutshell, love forgives. As Christians, we are to be “*kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave [us]*” (Ephesians 4:32). When Jesus Christ looked out in anguish as He hung on the cross, He cried out, “Forgive them Father, for they know not what they do!” If Jesus could forgive His murderers—those who betrayed Him, those who turned their backs on Him, those who disowned Him, those who let Him down—how much more can we forgive those who wrong us?

Lord,

I thank you for your daughters. I pray that you would go deep into their hearts and minds and uncover the areas of unforgiveness, uncover the resentment, uncover the hurt. Lord, as you reveal, please heal. Heal the wounds of childhood, of divorce, of discord, of church hurt, of self-hurt, of on the job hurt, of each and every hurt that lay hidden and dormant. Lord, heal us fully and completely, and in doing so, please replace our heart of stone with a heart of flesh. Give us a teachable heart and a teachable spirit. Incline our ears to the voice of the Holy Spirit. Please gift us with supernatural discernment and a divine ability to forgive and to release. We are trusting you for our healing. We are trusting you for our wholeness. May we forgive as you have forgiven us. Amen.

Homework

- (1) Search “forgive” in the YouVersion Bible App or online and write down all of the verses that stand out to you. Memorise a minimum of two of them. These verses shall become part of your spiritual weaponry when you are fighting the enemy called “Unforgiveness”.

(2) Think of a person you have not forgiven or find difficult to forgive. Pray for that person for 7 days in the same way you pray for yourself. Declare blessings over his or her life and supernatural protection. You will find that as you pray over the course of the week, God will peel back the layers of your hurt and anger.

“Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed.

The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.”

James 5:16 ESV

(3) Below are several statements on forgiveness. Tick those that are supported by scripture and write the supporting verse. If the statement is not supported by scripture, write the verse that makes it false.

Fact	✓	Scripture(s)
Forgiveness is mandatory for Christians.		
Forgiveness is a daily choice.		
The other party does not need to know you have forgiven them.		
Forgiveness heals. Unforgiveness leads to bitterness and resentment which can have an impact on your relationships, sleep patterns and health.		
We cannot expect forgiveness from God if we do not forgive others.		

Wife Healed, Empowered, Restored!