



## FORGIVENESS – On the Road to Wholeness!

### What Makes Forgiveness So Difficult?

**Summary:** Forgiveness is difficult – what makes it so?

**Bible Verses:** I John 1:8-10; Psalm 92:1-15; Job 40:7-14; Job 42:1-6; Psalm 19:7; Psalm 119:89; John 17:17; I Timothy 3:16; I Peter 1:20-21; Romans 15:13; James 1:5

**Video Clip:** YouTube – “Stories of Forgiveness - Bruce”

**Music:** “A Love Without End, Amen” written by Aaron Barker and performed by George Strait

**Resources:** *FORGIVING THE UNFORGIVABLE* by David Stoop, PhD.; and *CHOOSING FORGIVENESS* by John Loren & Paula Sanford  
August 6, 2015

Forgiveness is the most universal issue with which everyone must deal—learning to both give and receive forgiveness is required on the road to wholeness. Unforgiveness is the root cause of most every relationship problem. If you want to be free, happy, and grow in your relationships with God and others, forgiveness is not an option—it is a necessity. Forgiveness heals broken lives and relationships and restores the integrity of your real self. This study will help you choose forgiveness and turn from guilt, bitterness, and resentment in order to walk on the road toward wholeness and holiness.

### FORGIVENESS OFFERS HOPE

- Where there is pain, there is the need for \_\_\_\_\_. Pain evokes questions:
  - Is there a direct cause/effect relationship between the way you live and the circumstances you experience?
  - Does the Bible teach that godly living protects you from painful trials?
  - Should you assume that God is allowing the suffering you are experiencing because of some sin you committed?
- Because of “\_\_\_\_\_” God is—His character and works—you can be assured that He is faithful. It is possible to have joy and a worshipful heart even in the midst of extreme challenges. Psalm 92:1-15.
- God declares \_\_\_\_\_— Job 40:7-14. Job responds his humility and trust – Job 42:1-6.
- God has given you \_\_\_\_\_, a source to know how to handle your past and present failures:
  - Psalm 19:7 > God’s word has the capacity to transform your heart and make you wise.
  - Psalm 119:89 > God’s word is a firm foundation to build your life.
  - John 17:17 > Jesus prayed that you would be changed through the truth of God’s word.
  - I Timothy 3:16-17 > God’s word is profitable and able to equip you for every good work.
  - I Peter 1:20-21 > God’s word is a divine Book. There is no other like it!

### WHAT MAKES FORGIVENESS SO DIFFICULT?

- \_\_\_\_\_ > Justice appeals to your deepest sense of “what is fair.” “It NOT is right—it’s wrong!” Holding on to a demand for justice may lead to the desire for revenge. Revenge brings no sense of satisfaction; it merely continues the cycle of pain.
- \_\_\_\_\_ > “I want everything to be the way it used to be!” It is a trap to not being able to let go of what has happened because you feel that someone needs to be punished. The choice to not forgive and move on leads to a self-imposed punishment.
- \_\_\_\_\_ > Sometimes people react to horrific and unjust events in their lives by trying to make sure that the same thing doesn’t happen to anyone else. Campaigning can be a positive way to achieve a sense of justice, both for the person lost and for the more general good. You have a choice: to hang on to your very real sense of grievance or find a way to let it go. Is hanging on giving you the peace you long for? For many, hanging on can be a way of hanging on to the identity of victim.
- \_\_\_\_\_ > Many men spend their lives going over the battles of the past. They may even be right, but the demand for justice dominates their lives. Sometimes there is no one to blame when terrible things happen in your life and yet we look for a scapegoat. Often it is impossible to pin down exactly who is to blame for the error that has caused your problems. This is where anger sets in and needs to be part of the story you tell to someone.

### FORGIVENESS: ARE YOU WILLING TO LET GO?

- Forgiveness offers \_\_\_\_\_, but you must let go of the demand for justice!
- Forgiveness requires \_\_\_\_\_, but you must let go of fear.
- Forgiveness helps you \_\_\_\_\_ events and circumstances of pain, but you must let go of the past (Romans 15:13).
- Forgiveness is an \_\_\_\_\_ in the hands of a wise man, but you must let go of foolish demands (James 1:5).

### ACTION: Journal This!

- Who do you know that needs to forgive? What keeps them from forgiving?
- Who do you know that needs to be forgiven? What hinders that from happening?
- What do you wish would be forgiven for you? Why has it not happened?

## Bible Verses

### I John 1:8-10

<sup>8-10</sup> If we claim that we're free of sin, we're only fooling ourselves. A claim like that is errant nonsense. On the other hand, if we admit our sins—make a clean breast of them—he won't let us down; he'll be true to himself. He'll forgive our sins and purge us of all wrongdoing. If we claim that we've never sinned, we out-and-out contradict God—make a liar out of him. A claim like that only shows off our ignorance of God.

### Psalm 92:1-15

<sup>1-3</sup> What a beautiful thing, GOD, to give thanks, to sing an anthem to you, the High God! To announce your love each daybreak, sing your faithful presence all through the night, accompanied by dulcimer and harp, the full-bodied music of strings.

<sup>4-9</sup> You made me so happy, GOD I saw your work and I shouted for joy. How magnificent your work, GOD! How profound your thoughts! Dullards never notice what you do; fools never do get it. When the wicked popped up like weeds and all the evil men and women took over, You mowed them down, finished them off once and for all. You, God, are High and Eternal. Look at your enemies, GOD! Look at your enemies—ruined! Scattered to the winds, all those hirelings of evil!

<sup>10-14</sup> But you've made me strong as a charging bison, you've honored me with a festive parade. The sight of my critics going down is still fresh, the rout of my malicious detractors. My ears are filled with the sounds of promise: "Good people will prosper like palm trees, grow tall like Lebanon cedars; transplanted to God's courtyard, they'll grow tall in the presence of God, lithe and green, virile still in old age."

<sup>15</sup> Such witnesses to upright GOD! My Mountain, my huge, holy Mountain!

### Job 40:6-14

<sup>6-7</sup> GOD addressed Job next from the eye of the storm, and this is what he said: "I have some more questions for you, and I want straight answers.

<sup>8-14</sup> "Do you presume to tell me what I'm doing wrong? Are you calling me a sinner so you can be a saint? Do you have an arm like my arm? Can you shout in thunder the way I can? Go ahead, show your stuff. Let's see what you're made of, what you can do. Unleash your outrage. Target the arrogant and lay them flat. Target the arrogant and bring them to their knees. Stop the wicked in their tracks—make mincemeat of them! Dig a mass grave and dump them in it—faceless corpses in an unmarked grave. I'll gladly step aside and hand things over to you—you can surely save yourself with no help from me!

### Job 42:1-6

<sup>1-6</sup> Job answered GOD: "I'm convinced: You can do anything and everything. Nothing and no one can upset your plans. You asked, 'Who is this muddying the water, ignorantly confusing the issue, second-guessing my purposes?' I admit it. I was the one. I babbled on about things far beyond me, made small talk about wonders way over my head. You told me, 'Listen, and let me do the talking. Let me ask the questions. You give the answers.' I admit I once lived by rumors of you; now I have it all firsthand—from my own eyes and ears! I'm

sorry—forgive me. I'll never do that again, I promise! I'll never again live on crusts of hearsay, crumbs of rumor."

### Psalm 19:7-9

<sup>7-9</sup> The revelation of GOD is whole and pulls our lives together. The signposts of GOD are clear and point out the right road. The life-maps of GOD are right, showing the way to joy. The directions of GOD are plain and easy on the eyes. GOD's reputation is twenty-four-carat gold, with a lifetime guarantee. The decisions of GOD are accurate down to the nth degree.

### Psalm 119:89

<sup>89</sup> What you say goes, GOD, and *stays*, as permanent as the heavens.

### John 17:17

<sup>17</sup> Make them holy—consecrated—with the truth; Your word is consecrating truth.

### I Timothy 3:14-16

<sup>14-16</sup> I hope to visit you soon, but just in case I'm delayed, I'm writing this letter so you'll know how things ought to go in God's household, this God-alive church, bastion of truth. This Christian life is a great mystery, far exceeding our understanding, but some things are clear enough: He appeared in a human body, was proved right by the invisible Spirit, was seen by angels. He was proclaimed among all kinds of peoples, believed in all over the world, taken up into heavenly glory.

### I Peter 1:18-21

<sup>18-21</sup> Your life is a journey you must travel with a deep consciousness of God. It cost God plenty to get you out of that dead-end, empty-headed life you grew up in. He paid with Christ's sacred blood, you know. He died like an unblemished, sacrificial lamb. And this was no afterthought. Even though it has only lately—at the end of the ages—become public knowledge, God always knew he was going to do this for you. It's because of this sacrificed Messiah, whom God then raised from the dead and glorified, that you trust God, that you know you have a future in God.

### Romans 15:13

<sup>13</sup> Oh! May the God of green hope fill you up with joy, fill you up with peace, so that your believing lives, filled with the life-giving energy of the Holy Spirit, will brim over with hope!

### James 1:5-8

<sup>5-8</sup> If you don't know what you're doing, pray to the Father. He loves to help. You'll get his help, and won't be condescended to when you ask for it. Ask boldly, believingly, without a second thought. People who "worry their prayers" are like wind-whipped waves. Don't think you're going to get anything from the Master that way, adrift at sea, keeping all your options open.

## A LOVE WITHOUT END, AMEN

Written by Aaron Barker and Performed by George Strait

I got sent home from school one day with a shiner on my eye.  
Fightin' was against the rules and it didn't matter why.  
When dad got home I told that story just like I'd rehearsed.  
And then stood there on those tremblin' knees and waited for the worst.

And he said, "Let me tell you a secret about a father's love,  
A secret that my daddy said was just between us."  
He said, "Daddies don't just love their children every now and then.  
It's a love without end, amen, it's a love without end, amen."

When I became a father in the spring of '81  
There was no doubt that stubborn boy was just like my father's son.  
And when I thought my patience had been tested to the end,  
I took my daddy's secret and I passed it on to him.

And I said, "Let me tell you a secret about a father's love,  
A secret that my daddy said was just between us."  
I said, "Daddies don't just love their children every now and then.  
It's a love without end, amen, it's a love without end, amen."

Last night I dreamed I died and stood outside those pearly gates.  
When suddenly I realized there must be some mistake.  
If they know half the things I've done, they'll never let me in.  
And then somewhere from the other side I heard these words again.

And They said, "Let me tell you a secret about a father's love,  
A secret that my daddy said was just between us.  
You see Daddies don't just love their children every now and then.  
It's a love without end, amen, it's a love without end, amen."

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# **FORGIVENESS – On the Road to Wholeness!**

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## **FORGIVENESS – What Makes Forgiveness so Difficult?**

“It is impossible to forgive someone if you feel superior to him or her.” - Timothy Keller

**I John 1:8-10**

# FORGIVENESS OFFERS HOPE

1. Where there is pain, there is the need for **forgiveness**. Pain evokes questions:
  1. Is there a direct cause/effect relationship between the way you live and the circumstances you experience?
  2. Does the Bible teach that godly living protects you from painful trials?
  3. Should you assume that God is allowing the suffering you are experiencing because of some sin you committed?
2. Because of "**WHO**" God is—His character and works—you can be assured that He is faithful. It is possible to have joy and a worshipful heart even in the midst of extreme challenges. Psalm 92:1-15.
3. God declares **His all-powerful nature** – Job 40:7-14. Job responds his humility and trust – Job 42:1-6.
4. God has given you **a guide book**, a source to know how to handle your past and present failures:
  1. Psalm 19:7 > God's word has the capacity to transform your heart and make you wise.
  2. Psalm 119:89 > God's word is a firm foundation to build your life.
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# WHAT MAKES FORGIVENESS SO DIFFICULT?

1. **Holding on to the demand for justice** > Justice appeals to your deepest sense of “what is fair.” “It NOT is right—it’s wrong!” Holding on to a demand for justice may lead to the desire for revenge. Revenge brings no sense of satisfaction; it merely continues the cycle of pain.
2. **Longing for the past to be different** > “I want everything to be the way it used to be!” It is a trap to not being able to let go of what has happened because you feel that someone needs to be punished. The choice to not forgive and move on leads to a self-imposed punishment.

# WHAT MAKES FORGIVENESS SO DIFFICULT? – continued.

- 3. Bringing change into the world** > Sometimes people react to horrific and unjust events in their lives by trying to make sure that the same thing doesn't happen to anyone else. Campaigning can be a positive way to achieve a sense of justice, both for the person lost and for the more general good. You have a choice: to hang on to your very real sense of grievance or find a way to let it go. Is hanging on giving you the peace you long for? For many, hanging on can be a way of hanging on to the identity of victim.
- 4. Letting go of the hold that an old story has on your life** > Many men spend their lives going over the battles of the past. They may even be right, but the demand for justice dominates their lives. Sometimes there is no one to blame when terrible things happen in your life and yet we look for a scapegoat. Often it is impossible to pin down exactly who is to blame for the error that has caused your problems. This is where anger sets in and needs to be part of the story you tell to someone.

# FORGIVENESS: ARE YOU WILLING TO LET GO?

1. Forgiveness offers peace, but you must let go of the demand for justice!
2. Forgiveness requires courage, but you must let go of fear.
3. Forgiveness helps you face events and circumstances of pain, but you must let go of the past (Romans 15:13).
4. Forgiveness is an essential tool in the hands of a wise man, but you must let go of foolish demands (James 1:5).

# **ACTION: Journal This!**

1. Who do you know that needs to forgive? What keeps them from forgiving?
2. Who do you know that needs to be forgiven? What hinders that from happening?
3. What do you wish would be forgiven for you? Why has it not happened?