

## 12 THINGS YOU MUST KNOW ABOUT FORGIVENESS

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Love is the life of God which He gave to all believers in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, and expects His people to live out. The scripture teaches that God is love, and anyone who loves dwells in love, and anyone who does not love do not know God.

*1 John 4:7-9*

*7 Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.*

*NIV*

*1 John 4:16*

*God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him.*

*NIV*

God is love. He dwells in love. His whole essence is love. All He does, He does out of love. He never acts outside of love. All the commandments He gave, He gave out of love. All His disciplinary actions are all in love. He never acts outside of love, always in love. The same way as His children, He expects us to always think, speak and act in love.

Forgiveness is a vital part of love. Without it, love will not survive the pressures of relationships. God is in constant relationship with us because He is constantly, patient in hope, forgiving us. Think about what it will look like to remove forgiveness from the relationship we have with God. It will be terrible, for God will just wipe us all out in one moment of anger. But He chooses to forgive and bear with us until we become what He wants us to be. In the same way, He wants us to constantly forgive those who offend us no matter the gravity of the offence. He wants us to forgive the same way He forgives us.

*Eph 4:32*

*32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.*

*NIV*

### FORGIVENESS

Forgiveness is an essential part of love. It is easy to say, "I love you." Anyone can say it. It is in moments and incidents of offence, that true love is to be displayed. It is in times of great offence that love is to be proven to be love. At such a time, forgiveness must come in for love to be expressed and sustained. Without offence, love is but words until proven to be genuine through wholehearted forgiveness.

Forgiveness is the healing balm of relationships. Without it no relationship survives. Yours will not survive the pressures on it except forgiveness is freely practiced.

Forgiveness is the end of a matter. It is the conclusion or closing of a case. When God forgives, the matter is closed and He does not remember or recall it again. In the same way we are not expected to revisit an issue that has been trashed and forgiven.

## TWELVE THINGS YOU MUST KNOW ABOUT FORGIVENESS

### **1 If you forgive others, your own forgiveness is guaranteed.**

*Matt 6:12-15*

*12 Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.' 14 For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.*

*NIV*

*Matt 5:7*

*7 Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.*

*NIV*

Forgiveness is serious business to God. It is only in the matter of forgiveness that God says He will not forgive someone. All other sins, He will forgive, but the one who refuses to forgive will not be forgiven. If you forgive, your Heavenly Father who loves you so much will forgive you, but if you do not forgive, you will not be forgiven your sins. You may leave His presence in faith with a false assurance that you have been forgiven, but you are not. Your forgiveness will be pending until you forgive the one you are nursing a grudge against. It is so serious that your offering will not be accepted until you resolve the problems you have with another.

*Matt 5:23-24*

*23 "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.*

*NIV*

### **2. Forgiveness will enable you love those who hurt you and even those who hate you.**

*Luke 6:27-31*

*27 "But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, 28 bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. 29 If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also. If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic. 30 Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. 31 Do to others as you would have them do to you.*

*NIV*

*Luke 6:35-36*

*35 But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. 36 Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.*

*NIV*

It is obvious that without forgiveness it will not be possible to love our enemies, those who hate, persecute, curse and hurt us. It is important that we understand that what Jesus is asking for is that, we like our Father in heaven, should show mercy to all who wrong us as He shows mercy to us daily. He does not want us to hate nor have enemies. He does not want us to pay evil with evil, rather, he wants us to “turn the other cheek”, which means, to pay evil with good and prove by so doing that we have the life of God flowing in us. The difference between you the believer and the unbeliever is the love in your heart manifested in wholehearted forgiveness.

### **3. Forgiveness keeps you connected to God.**

Unforgiveness disconnects a man from God and his grace. If when you don't forgive, God does not forgive you, it means that your relationship with God is not in order, and that is dangerous. The blessings of God will be hard to come by as a result of the impasse.

### **4. Forgiveness helps you not to keep record of wrongs.**

When God forgives, He does not keep records of wrongs, He wipes the records clean - He blots it out. He doesn't remember nor does He remind us of our past offences that He has forgiven us. When He forgives, the case is closed. In the same way He expects us to forgive. And when we do forgive, He does not want us to keep records of wrongs done against us by others. Forgiveness deals with bitterness.

*Mic 7:18-19*

*18 Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance? You do not stay angry forever but delight to show mercy. 19 You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea.*

*NIV*

*Isa 43:25*

*25 I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.*

*KJV*

*1 Cor 13:4-7*

*4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5 It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, **it keeps no record of wrongs.** 6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. 7 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.*

*NIV*

**5. Forgiveness establishes God's protection around the forgiver.**

*Matt 18:34-35*

*34 "And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him. 35 So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses."*

*NKJV*

*Read Matt18:21-35 for the full story.*

If you don't forgive, you don't get forgiven of your own sins by God, and when God is not at peace with you, you are not safe. Jesus said the father will hand you over to the tormentors to deal with you. The tormentors are evil spirits. In other words, God will withdraw His grace of protection to enable the evil ones attack you.

*Eccl 10:8*

*8 He that diggeth a pit shall fall into it; and whoso breaketh an hedge, a serpent shall bite him.*

*KJV*

If you break the defense of God around you through Unforgiveness, the devil will strike you. The devil cannot break the defense of God. Only you can. Sin breaks the hedge, and Unforgiveness is a great sin.

*Eph 4:26-27*

*26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: 27 Neither give place to the devil.*

*KJV*

Anger is simply a state of dissatisfaction about what has been said, done to or against a person or has happened or is happening. It is natural to get dissatisfied or angry. But in your anger don't sin. Have control over your thoughts about the whole situation, and through thought control, control your emotions and actions. We sin when we lose our temper and say things we are not supposed to say. When we curse, insult, fight and quarrel and keep malice. All these give opportunity to the devil. Don't give him a chance to get into your life and afflict you. If you do, you won't like what you will experience. I can assure you of that.

When we refuse to forgive, we grieve the Holy Spirit. We make our lives uncomfortable for The Spirit of God to dwell in and work in us. Bitterness invites evil spirits and discomforts the Holy Spirit.

*Eph 4:30-32*

*30 And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: 32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.*

KJV

**6. Forgiveness nourishes love.**

To nourish is to feed and give life to. Forgiveness gives life to love and keep it fresh. Without forgiveness, love will die with time as events begin to unfold in any relationship.

**7. Forgiveness keeps love from getting sour.**

The middle experience between sweetness and bitterness is “sourishness” or a sour taste. When a relationship gets to a bitter state, one or all involved wants to part ways because they can’t cope any more. Before a relationship degenerates to that state, it has to be sour first. This is a stage where sweetness is lost and you are just enduring but not enjoying your relationship, and you desperately need help and revitalization.

Forgiveness is the healing balm of relationships. It helps to heal broken hearts – internal hurts and wounds. Definitely, forgiveness will keep your relationships from degenerating and losing its sweetness.

**8. Forgiveness strengthens and builds relationship.**

As we practice forgiveness, our relationships become stronger and become established. Forgiveness can be described as the pillar upon which our relationships rest and are built. Practice it and you will discover it is true.

**9. An unforgiving character is the worst character a man will manifest.**

You may be surprised at this statement, but it is true. It is only in the matter of Unforgiveness that God says he will not forgive. Every other sin He is willing to forgive, but refusal to forgive, He condemns and will not forgive such. So, it is the worst character a man will have in life, for you will have problem with God if you manifest it.

To the thief at the cross, He said, *“Today you will be with me in paradise”*. To the adulterer, He said, *“Go and sin no more”*. To the tax collector and cheat, He said, *“Salvation has come to thy house.”* To the unforgiving, He said, *“My heavenly Father will not forgive you”*. Think about it and never forget this truth.

**10. It is to the credit of a man to forgive.**

You are not doing someone a favour when you forgive him. We think that when we forgive someone, we are doing him a favour. That is not true at all. You need to understand that you are helping yourself when you forgive more than the person you forgive. When you forgive, your own forgiveness is guaranteed, you remain connected to God, your relationship is kept intact, your love life is nourished, strengthened, established and protected; your connection line with God is always on. So when you forgive, you forgive for your own sake just as our Father does.

*Isa 43:25*

*25 I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions **for mine own sake**, and will not remember thy sins.*

*KJV*

When you forgive, before God you are rated high and honoured as a true son of your Father in heaven.

*Prov 19:11*

*11 A man's wisdom gives him patience; it is to his glory to overlook an offense.*

*NIV*

**11. Forgiveness is not a feeling that you have.**

If you keep your eyes on the feeling, you will never forgive. Feelings go away with time. Forgiveness is a decision and a commitment from the heart. Forgive even when you don't feel like it. Keep your eyes off the feeling and focus on who you are inside.

**12. Unforgiving thoughts are unhealthy thoughts that destroy the health of the thinker without warning.**

*Job 5:2*

*2 Resentment kills a fool, and envy slays the simple.*

*NIV*

It is now common knowledge in the medical world that there is a strong connection between the thoughts of man and his health. Many diseases and sicknesses are the direct result of bitterness, hate, worry, anxiety and fear. If you want to live healthy, keep no malice or bitter records in your mind and heart. Forgive always as you are offended. Never hate anyone no matter what.

### **CONCLUSION**

From all that we have considered, it is clear that without forbearance and forgiveness, love will not be proven to be love, and relationship will not last long before it crashes. Take out time to work on yourself to put in place this great pillar of love and make your relationships endure all the storms that will come against it. Until we all come to full maturity in Christ, offence will always come no matter how much we profess to love one another. Forbear and forgive always. That is the way it should be.

You must understand that you as a Christian possess the life and nature of God in you, and that nature is love, for God is love. No man struggles to live out a nature; you walk in and manifest it with ease. Since love is a nature, you are to love with ease. You shouldn't find it difficult forgiving and bearing with people. Just as you never pray to manifest a man or woman's nature that you possess, the same way you are not expected to worry about manifesting love as a nature. It is not an issue of prayer but an issue of recognition and submission. If you believe it will be difficult to forgive, then it will be difficult. If you believe it will be easy, then it will be

easy. The truth is that you can forgive any and every offence committed against you by anybody at any time.

Don't love in words only. Be practical. Let everybody see your love. Love is contagious. Spread it. Win friends through love. Affect someone positively through love. Let your faith in God and in our Saviour Jesus Christ be seen through practical love. Make someone happy every day. Say a kind and encouraging word to someone who needs it every day. Visit the brethren. Don't gossip or slander another person. Promote love and peace, and not hate and division. Teach others how to love and serve God by your practical example.

Let your presence be felt in your Church, office, Class and where ever you find yourself. Affect someone positively. Pray for one another. Bless don't curse. Forgive always. Pray for me. God bless you.