

September 17 Forgiveness - Complete Cancellation

"If God forgave us the way we forgive those who trespass against us sometimes, we'd all be in big trouble, wouldn't we? Because we don't necessarily forgive those people completely, freely and forever. Sometimes we don't forgive them at all. . .Is that the way you expect God to forgive you?" - Elisabeth Elliot

"Forgiveness ought to be like a cancelled note - torn in two, and burned up, so that it never can be shown against one." - Henry Ward Beecher

"Forgiveness is not that stripe which says, 'I will forgive, but not forget.' It is not to bury the hatchet with the handle sticking out of the ground, so you can grasp it the minute you want it." - Dwight L. Moody

"The gospel comes to the sinner at once with nothing short of complete forgiveness as the starting-point of all his efforts to be holy. It does not say, 'Go and sin no more, and I will not condemn thee.' It says at once, 'Neither do I condemn thee: go and sin no more.'" - Horatius Bonar

Psalm 103:11-13 - For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His lovingkindness toward those who fear Him. 12 As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. 13 Just as a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear Him.

Psalm 51:1 - Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; According to the greatness of Your compassion blot out my transgressions.

Isaiah 43:25 - "I, even I, am the one who wipes out your transgressions for My own sake, and I will not remember your sins.

Isaiah 44:22 - "I have wiped out your transgressions like a thick cloud and your sins like a heavy mist. Return to Me, for I have redeemed you."

Colossians 2:14 - having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

Micah 7:18-20 - Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression for the remnant of his inheritance? He does not retain his anger forever, because he delights in steadfast love. He will again have compassion on us; he will tread our iniquities underfoot. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. You will show faithfulness to Jacob and steadfast love to Abraham, as you have sworn to our fathers from the days of old.

Lord, please help me to forgive _____ completely, freely, and forever, just as You have forgiven me.

September 18 Forgiveness - God's Power to Forgive Others

"As long as you live on earth, you won't see the end of injustices. Yet God desires for you to let go of injustices and hold on to His grace. Only He can give you the power to forgive those who have hurt you the deepest." - Paul Chappell

God enables us to forgive by giving us a new nature:

"Forgiveness is costly. It requires us to set aside our selfishness, accept with grace the wrongs others have committed against us, and not demand what we think is our due. All of that runs counter to our natural, sinful inclinations. Even as new creatures, we retain a remainder of sin in our flesh. Sinful habits and desires continue to plague us. That is why Scripture commands us to put off the old man and clothe ourselves with the new (Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3:9-10). And the new man is characterized by forgiveness—it is an essential garment for "the new self" (Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:13)." - John MacArthur

God enables us to forgive by giving us forgiveness and love:

"Even as the angry vengeful thoughts boiled through me, I saw the sin of them. Jesus Christ had died for this man; was I going to ask for more? Lord Jesus, I prayed, forgive me and help me to forgive him....Jesus, I cannot forgive him. Give me your forgiveness....And so I discovered that it is not on our forgiveness any more than on our goodness that the world's healing hinges, but on His. When He tells us to love our enemies, He gives along with the command, the love itself." - Corrie Ten Boom

God enables us to forgive by giving us the Holy Spirit:

"Such forgiveness does not come easy, particularly when it deals with the kinds of sins that destroy lives and relationships. When we're talking about a personal slight or an unkind word, it's relatively easy to forgive. But what if the offense is more serious? Where do people find the strength to forgive when they discover a spouse has cheated, or when a drunk driver causes the death of a loved one? Is it humanly possible to forgive such offenses? It may not seem humanly possible, and it certainly does not lie within the power of fallen human nature alone to forgive such things from the heart. But it certainly is possible for redeemed people, under the influence of the Holy Spirit's power, to forgive even the most serious offenses." - John MacArthur

John 14:16-17 - "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; 17 that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.

Romans 8:26 - In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words;

Galatians 5:22-23 - But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Lord, thank You for the new nature and the Holy Spirit which You have given me to enable me forgive _____. Please fill me with the fruit of Your Spirit. Pour Your love and forgiveness through me, that I might forgive as You have forgiven me.

September 19 Forgiveness - Better, or Bitter

"Frequently the enemy entices Christians to harbor an unforgiving spirit - a very common symptom indeed among God's children. Such bitterness and fault-finding and enmity inflict a severe blow upon spiritual life." - Watchman Nee

"Anger and bitterness are two noticeable signs of being focused on self and not trusting God's sovereignty in your life. When you believe that God causes all things to work together for good to those who belong to Him and love Him, you can respond to trials with joy instead of anger or bitterness." - John C. Broger

"Too many Christians become bitter and angry in the conflict. If we descend into hatefulness, we have already lost the battle. We must cooperate with God in turning what was meant for evil into a greater good within us. This is why we bless those who would curse us: It is not only for their sakes but to preserve our own soul from its natural response toward hatred." - Francis Frangipane

"When you are having a hard time forgiving someone, take time to note how God may be using that offense for good. Is this an unusual opportunity to glorify God? How can you serve others and help them grow in their faith? What sins and weaknesses of yours are being exposed? What character qualities are you being challenged to exercise? When you perceive that the person who has wronged you is being used as an instrument in God's hand to help you mature, serve others, and glorify him, it may be easier for you to move ahead with forgiveness." - Ken Sande

"A bitter spirit will keep you from being a better person." - Woodrow Kroll

Ephesians 4: 31-32 - Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

Hebrews 12:14-15 - Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no "root of bitterness" springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled;

Romans 12:17-21 - Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Psalms 37:8 - Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath! Fret not yourself; it tends only to evil.

Lord, do not let me be enticed into harboring an unforgiving spirit. Keep me from hatefulness, bitterness, and anger. Help me to respond to my trials with joy and to bless those who curse me. Show me how You are using my trials for good and help me to glorify You.

September 20 Forgiveness - Recognizing Unforgiveness

"We all must be reminded that unforgiveness can creep into and lurk around the secret corners of our hearts, and we can give place to it without even recognizing what it is." - Stormie Omartian

"If you're a follower of Jesus but you feel distant from him during this era of your life, if you're having difficulty resting easy in his forgiveness, could it be because you're blatantly refusing to let go of your animosity toward another person." - Lee Strobel

"Uncontrolled temper is soon dissipated on others. Resentment, bitterness, and self-pity build up inside our hearts and eat away at our spiritual lives like a slowly spreading cancer." - Jerry Bridges

"We cannot live with bitterness because it will first manifest itself in our spirit, then in our emotions, and finally in our bodies." - Tom Drout

"Bitterness sentences you to relive the hurt over and over." - Lee Strobel

"When bitterness, resentment, and revenge are allowed to live in the human heart, words of affirmation will be impossible to speak." - Gary Chapman

Proverbs 24:17-18 - Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, and do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles; 18 Or the Lord will see it and be displeased, and turn His anger away from him.

Proverbs 3:7-8 - Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the Lord and turn away from evil. 8 It will be healing to your body and refreshment to your bones.

Proverbs 14:30 - A tranquil heart is life to the body, but passion is rottenness to the bones.

Proverbs 17:22 - A joyful heart is good medicine, But a broken spirit dries up the bones.

1 Peter 3:8-9 - To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; 9 not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing.

Lord, please help me to recognize the symptoms of an unforgiving spirit - whether it is distance from You, spiritual distraction, anger, self-pity, emotionalism, reliving hurt, or an inability to speak words of kindness, encouragement, and affirmation. Once You have revealed the symptoms of an unforgiving spirit to me, help me to deal with my resentment and bitterness appropriately by forgiving immediately and completely.

September 21 Forgiveness - Rights

"Think of the limitless measure of forgiveness that Jesus offers to us. Think of His lovingkindness and tender mercy. Shall we continue to stand on our 'rights,' refusing to forgive?" - Elisabeth Elliot

"Forgiveness is God's command." - Martin Luther

"Following Christ means walking the road he walked, and in order to forgive us he had to die. His follower may not refuse to relinquish his own right, his own territory, his own comfort, or anything that he regards as his." - Elisabeth Elliot

"Forgiving others is not an option. It is a command. When we forgive we are conformed to the image of Christ in attitude and behavior. He forgave. We are to follow His example." - Ruth Server

"If anyone wants to follow in my footsteps, he must give up all right to himself, carry his cross every day and keep close behind me. For the man who wants to save his life will lose it, but the man who loses his life for my sake will save it." - Elisabeth Elliot

"To forgive is to die. It is to give up one's right to self, which is precisely what Jesus requires of anyone who wants to be his disciple." - Elisabeth Elliot

Colossians 3:12-14 - So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. 14 Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.

Zechariah 7:9 - "Thus says the Lord of hosts, Render true judgments, show kindness and mercy to one another,

Mark 11:25 - Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father who is in heaven will also forgive you your transgressions.

Lord, today I will follow Your example. I will give up my rights and choose to forgive _____.
Keep my mind focused on Your lovingkindness and tender mercy so that I will continue to give up my rights and forgive others.

September 22 Forgiveness - Idolatry

"What has to be forgiven is not just what we do but who we are, not just our sinning but our sinfulness, not just our choices but what we have chosen in place of God." - David F. Wells

"Idolatry may not involve explicit denials of God's existence or character. It may well come in the form of an over-attachment to something that is in itself perfectly good... An idol can be a physical object, a property, a person, an activity, a role, an institution, a hope, an image, an idea, a pleasure, a hero, anything that can substitute for God." - Os Guinness

"It's been said, the human heart is an idol factory. And there are so many idols to choose from here in America. There's so much to worship with your affections, trust, time, passion, money and allegiance. But these idols, inspired by demons (1 Cor. 10:20; Rev. 9:20), do not deliver what they promise and what we seek in them. They betray us and harden our hearts toward God. They inspire us to turn to the very behavior that God hates." - Randy Smith

What is an idol? Well, it is the thing loved or the person loved more than God, wanted more than God, desired more than God, treasured more than God, enjoyed more than God. It could be a girlfriend. It could be good grades. It could be the approval of other people. It could be success in business. It could be sexual stimulation. It could be a hobby or a musical group that you are following or a sport or your immaculate yard. ... Or your own looks could be an idol. It could be anything. So Paul puts it like this in Romans 1:25: "They exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature" — anything that is created — "rather than the Creator." - John Piper

"To identify your own idols, ask questions like these: What things take the place of God in my life? Where do I find my significance and my confidence? What things make me really angry? Anger usually erupts when an idol gets knocked off the shelf." - Philip Graham Ryken

Deuteronomy 11:16 - Beware that your hearts are not deceived, and that you do not turn away and serve other gods and worship them.

Joshua 24:14 - "Now, therefore, fear the Lord and serve Him in sincerity and truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord."

Hosea 14:1-3 - Return, O Israel, to the Lord your God, for you have stumbled because of your iniquity. 2 Take words with you and return to the Lord. Say to Him, "Take away all iniquity and receive us graciously, that we may present the fruit of our lips. 3 "Assyria will not save us, we will not ride on horses; Nor will we say again, 'Our god,' to the work of our hands; For in You the orphan finds mercy."

Lord, I confess that I have been loving, wanting, desiring, treasuring, and enjoying _____ more than You. I have worshiped it with my affections, trust, time, passion, money, and allegiance. Will You please forgive my sin of idolatry? Please take first place in my heart and life.

September 23 Forgiveness - Freedom

"Forgiveness doesn't make the other person right, it makes you free." - Stormie Omartian

"Forgiveness is the key which unlocks the door of resentment and the handcuffs of hatred. It breaks the chains of bitterness and the shackles of selfishness." - Corrie ten Boom

"To forgive is to set a prisoner free and discover that the prisoner was you." - Lewis B. Smedes

"The most miserable prison in the world is the prison we make for ourselves when we refuse to show mercy. Our thoughts become shackled, our emotions are chained, the will is almost paralyzed. But when we show mercy, all of these bonds are broken, and we enter into a joyful liberty that frees us to share god's love with others." - Warren W. Wiersbe

"The cleansed person is free to draw near to God in worship, because the defilement of sin has been taken away." - Stephen J. Cole

Romans 6:16 - Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?

John 8:34 - Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin."

Romans 6:6-7 - We know that our old self was crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin.

Romans 8:2 - For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.

Psalms 118:5 - Out of my distress I called on the Lord; the Lord answered me and set me free.

John 8:36 - So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.

Isaiah 58:6-7 - "Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh?"

Lord, help me to no longer live in a prison of my own making, enslaved by thoughts and emotions brought on by an unforgiving spirit. Today, I choose to forgive _____ for _____ and I ask that You forgive him / her also. Please answer me and set me free!