

Overcoming Unforgiveness

Satan seeks whom he may devour (1 Peter 5:8). People who don't forgive are among those he may devour.

2 Corinthians 2:10-11 "Anyone whom you forgive, I also forgive....to keep Satan from _____ over us, for we are not ignorant of his devices."

I. Forgiveness is a _____ of the _____.

We don't have to _____ like forgiving in order to forgive.

We are completely in control of whether we forgive or not.

God is not waiting for us to *feel* a certain way.

God is waiting for us to make a decision.

In fact, He gives us a deadline:

Eph. 4:26b do not let the _____ on your anger, give no place to the devil...

Eph. 4:26b (NEB) do not let sunset find you still nursing it...

A happy marriage is the union of two good forgivers.

**II. You must remove the log from your _____
(that is, you must refuse to play the video again)**

Too often we make offenses into videos.

"You have become a prisoner of your past pain; you are locked into a torture chamber of your own making. Your own memory is a replay of your hurt -- a videotape within your soul that plays unending reruns of your old rendezvous with pain. You are lashed again each time your memory spins the tape. **Forgiving stops the reruns of pain.**" (L. Smedes, Forgive and Forget)

Matthew 7:1-5 Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get. Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, "Let me take the speck out of your eye," when there is a log in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and **then you will see clearly** to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

The hurt and bitterness will remain

as long as the log remains in your eye.

It is impossible to forgive while still viewing the offense.

When we don't forgive, we can't even think of the offender without seeing them through the log. The other person becomes defined in our minds as having one overriding truth about them: "This is the person who hurt me." Just as a physical log in our eye would blind us, an offense blinds us spiritually.

1 John 2:11 He who loves his brother abides in the light, and in it there is no cause for stumbling. But he who hates his brother abides in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

Obstacles to Forgiveness

1. The "I can't" lies

a) I can't forgive. I don't know why.

God commands us to forgive. Therefore, the thought "I can't forgive" is a lie. Whatever God commands us to do, He _____ us to do.

b) I can't forgive because the offense is too big; I've been hurt too deeply.

God is concerned about what happens to us even more than we are, but He's much more concerned about how we _____. We're responsible for our responses.

"The mark of maturity is the realization that what happens to us is not nearly as important as how we respond to it."

"You don't lose your peace over _____, but only over your own."

c) I can't forgive like God forgives because I'm just human.

Col. 3:13 If anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; _____ has forgiven you, _____ must forgive.

Likewise, reject any thought that suggests forgiving is burdensome, grievous, or difficult. That flaming dart will make forgiveness seem very difficult if you don't ward it off with the shield of faith.

1 John 5:3b-4 His commandments are not _____ for whatever is born of God overcomes the world.

2. The "I won't" lies

a) I won't forgive because I'm unforgiving by nature. I want to hold on to this anger.

2 Cor. 5:17 If any man be in Christ, he is a _____.
The old has passed away.

New creatures delight to do God's will.

b) I won't forgive because I don't want to be hurt again.

When I listen to Satan's advice to disobey God, I have subconsciously swallowed the biggest lie of all--that Satan is on my side. He says, "Build protective walls so you won't be hurt again. I certainly don't want you to be hurt again. God's will (i.e. forgiving) is not good. My will for you is better."

Satan always points to paths of death and calls them paths of life. God, on the other hand, points to paths of life and calls them paths of life. The question is, Who are we going to believe?

Unforgiveness is a way to _____ our sorrows. When we have the offense on video, we can be hurt by it a multitude of times instead of just once.

If we call Him "Lord," we should do what our Lord says. Our Lord commands us to forgive--no matter what the offense.

c) I won't forgive because I'm trying to teach this person a lesson.

Revenge can take a variety of forms (more socially acceptable than murder):

1) the "_____ treatment"

2) refusal to establish _____.

3) _____ in the relationship (the loss of _____ to treat the person well).

Romans 12:19 Beloved, never avenge yourselves but leave it to the wrath of God; for it is written, "_____ is Mine, _____, says the Lord."

Vengeance is not our job.

3. I know I can forgive and I will forgive...eventually

_____ obedience is disobedience. It leads to _____ of heart.

Matthew 19:8 He said to them, 'For your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.'

Unforgiveness is never justified.

At the judgment seat, all excuses for disobedience will die in our throats.

There's a difference between tolerance and forgiveness. It is not always appropriate to tolerate what another person does, but it is always appropriate to forgive. If we do not do so, unforgiveness will destroy us and our effectiveness for God's Kingdom.

Playing Rejection

Playing rejection-- _____ kidding around, telling jokes at someone else's expense.

Satan's flaming darts can be thrown by a third person. Satan wants to use us to plant seeds of rejection in others through our teasing or careless humor. Ephesians 5:4 says to put away "foolish jesting." God doesn't want us to make jokes at somebody else's expense. We must be willing to give up a laugh. God forbid that we should ever be a mouthpiece for God's enemy.

Ephesians 4:29 Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for _____, as fits the occasion, that it may impart grace to those who hear.

Answers for Fill-in-the-Blank Questions on Overcoming Unforgiveness

Page 1

gaining the advantage
decision; will
feel
sun go down
eye

Page 2

(not applicable)

Page 3

enables
respond
somebody else's sin
as the Lord; so you also
burdensome

Page 4

new creature
multiply
silent
eye contact
passivity; energy
Vengeance; I will repay

Page 5

Delaying; hardness
destructive
edifying