

LIFE IN THE KINGDOM

19. FORGIVENESS



And forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us. And don't let us yield to temptation, but rescue us from the evil one.

Matthew 6:12-15 NTV

The key to maintaining unity so that any relationship, a family and the Kingdom is maintained is: forgiveness. Forgiveness has two parts. The one that is granted to others when they do us wrong and they have offended us and the one that we ask for when we recognize that we did wrong; when we have offended someone. This is also known as repentance.

Forgiveness is the most liberating tool there is. Without it, love cannot exist because it is the only thing capable of destroying it.

The act of the cross can be described with that word because it was there that the Father sent His son to die for the FORGIVENESS of our sins so that now each of us can receive eternal life. That new birth to a new life is only possible through repentance; when we ask for forgiveness, recognizing that we sin and have no way to pay for our sin. We then understand that only by receiving and accepting the gift of love from Jesus on the cross; it is possible to be in harmony with God.

Forgiveness is a command; not an emotion or feeling. It is not something we should expect to feel or that depends on someone changing or on the recognition of others. Forgiveness is solely and exclusively our decision and is an act that comes as a result of exercising our ability to choose and submit our will to the will of God.

The reason most people have a hard time forgiving is because the enemy has tricked them into believing that if they forgive, they free the offender from guilt or consequences; when in reality the opposite is true. Forgiving frees the offended. It frees them from resentment, the desire for revenge, anger, violence, bitterness and all of its consequences.

Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.

Hebrews 12:14-15 NTV

Forgiveness is part of the culture of the Kingdom that a child of God must have the ability to perform. It is impossible for the Kingdom to exist without forgiveness. The bible says that it is actually an offense that should not be left unresolved or unforgiven, overnight.

An offense begins in our mind when our thoughts tell us "it's not fair". To accuse those who offended us, we demand "revenge." If we do not resolve those thoughts by going before God to forgive the offender, thus disarming all accusatory arguments, those thoughts will descend into our hearts. Once in our hearts, they become words and attitudes that, through emotions, will harm others. This gives room for the devil to manipulate us or destroy us.

And "don't sin by letting anger control you." [a] Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, 27 for anger gives a foothold to the devil.

Ephesians 4:26-27 NLT

Let's think a little about anyone with whom we have had problems that have led to the breakup of the relationship. Could the situation be different if on the same day of the problem, before going to sleep, we had talked to God and had obeyed and forgiven them? Surely the next day we had seen things differently and the result would be different.

Forgiveness is exercised intimately with our Eternal Father, not with the person who hurt us. If we go to talk to that person without having resolved it in our hearts with God, the result is going to be worse: we are going to be more hurt.

Remember, forgiving is a command like not killing, it cannot depend on whether you feel it or not. On the other hand, you are the one who is free to do so, not the one who hurt you. In fact, not forgiving and holding on to anger is a sin and the Lord compares it to murder.

Anyone who hates another brother or sister is really a murderer at heart. And you know that murderers don't have eternal life within them.

1 John 3:15 NLT

Study Questions:

1. The Word teaches us that we must forgive those who offend us. However, what should we do if the offence is not against us, but against the people we love (family, husband, children, etc.)?
2. What should we do if the person who has offended us and hurt us does not come forward to ask for forgiveness? How long should we wait to forgive?
3. What happens if we believe that God has not confirmed to us that it is time to forgive the person?
4. While you were reading this text, who is the person that immediately came to mind? Is it possible that there is some unresolved issue with her? What do you think you should do?