

Forgive Me for not Being Perfect

Asking forgiveness is not taking the blame for the past, it is clearing the way for the future.



One problem with unforgiveness is that often times we are barely aware that unforgiveness has crept in or that we are paying a price for keeping it in. Most of us keep a secret list of small injuries and each time our feelings are injured we add to the list. These secret lists of small almost forgotten bruises often rob entire families of the joy God intends. We fail to forgive our children and our spouses, our parents and our siblings. We do not ask forgiveness for not being perfect...should we not give it...keeping in mind that asking forgiveness is not taking the blame for the past, it is clearing the way for the future.

And so after reading this article every parent 30-90 will ask their children to forgive them for not being perfect. Every child will forgive their parents for past hurts both large and small. And my job here would be done. But it is not...because in our own strength we can't forgive.

I think of Corrie Ten Boom imprisoned by the Nazi's as a child, lifelong evangelist and author of many books including "The Hiding Place" and "In my Father's House". As an adult traveling through Germany she encouraged one and all to seek healing from the war... to forgive and be forgiven. But on one occasion she met one of the guards where she had been imprisoned and where her Sister Betsy killed. The man held out his hand without recognizing her and asked her to forgive him. The forgiveness she had just preached to thousands froze in her heart. She could not forgive. She could not move her hand to take his. She knew that she did not have to feel forgiveness, that forgiveness was a decision not a feeling but she still could not move her hand to take his. But she prayed and in a miraculous flood God washed away the unforgiveness and filled her with love. Forgiving others became the theme of a lifetime. I offer here just two of many quotes she entrusts to the rest of us.

"Forgiveness is setting the prisoner free, only to find out that the prisoner was me."
And "You never so touch the ocean of God's love as when you forgive and love your enemies."

So we do our best to forgive but next day the problem is back and we must pray again for God's help to forgive again...to go to the core of our unforgiveness and give up/release our desire to hurt the ones who hurt us or at least hope for justice, to see God punish them.

One sad fact of life in the preschool or the adult world is that we hurt each other, even those closest to us and in the end must choose between being hurt or being lonely. It's a hard choice. It is the one Christ made. He chose to endure the hurt and keep on loving. Even MORE than enduring the hurt he chose to IDENTIFY with those who hurt him (put himself in their place...our place). In other words Christ looked down from the cross of his own hurt and CHOSE to see past our behavior to our need. And so with every parent, every child every sibling everyone we choose to love we must look past their behavior to their need.

The above thoughts are collected from many sources and very critical to all of us. We must forgive BUT there is no call to allow anyone, spouse, parent or child to CONTINUE physical or emotional abuse. We can forgive and move on. May God give each of us the wisdom to pursue healing, to forgive...to rebuild love but also to protect ourselves.

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