

*Avoiding the Land of the Unforgiving*  
*Series on forgiveness (5)*  
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**Introduction:** This world will not teach you the way to real peace.

- A. The world speaks very clearly about the value of revenge. **(Jer 20:10)**
  - 1. Jeremiah enemies looked for an opportunity to hurt him!
  - 2. David also had enemies that wanted to rejoice in their revenge.  
**(Psa 35:12-15, 19-21)**
  - 3. How did Jeremiah respond? **(Jer 20:11-13)**
  - 4. How did Jeremiah and David respond? **(Psa 35:12-24, 27)**
- B. True peace can only come in trusting God and His way.
  - 1. Many are tempted to live in the land of the unforgiving. **(Rom 1:31, 2 Tim 3:3)**
  - 2. This is not a place where you want to live.
  - 3. I have met Christians who chose to go to this land to their own destruction.

***I. How should I respond when I am wronged?***

- A. It is very difficult to respond by faith in these circumstances. **(Prov 16:32)**
  - 1. Satan wins at both ends when men choose revenge and bitterness.
  - 2. It is very difficult in the short term to choose to practice what God has said. It is infinitely more difficult in the long run to ignore God's way.
- B. I must unconditionally give all vengeance to God. **(Rom 12:14, 17-21)**
  - 1. Do we really have faith in a living God?
  - 2. It is not wrong to desire justice and thus want vengeance.
  - 3. God knows us and instructs us to give vengeance to Him. **(1 Pt 2:21-23)**
  - 4. This must be done regardless of what others may or may not do.
- C. We also must forgive others when they repent. **(Lk 17:3-5)**
  - 1. Forgiveness goes further than the release of vengeance to God.
  - 2. God has never asked us to forgive others unconditionally.
  - 3. When Jesus asked God to forgive those at the Cross, it was not unconditional. **(Lk 23:34, Acts 2:36-38)**
  - 4. We can desire that another be forgiven before God, but we also must have the courage to address their sin so that they may repent and be forgiven.
  - 5. Those who forgive without repentance endanger their own soul as well as the souls of those they wish to have God's forgiveness. **(Ezk 3:17-18)**

***II. Genuine forgiveness is truly difficult***

- A. In real forgiveness you take the loss or hurt and write it off.
  - 1. We are a people who do not want to be cheated! It is with the utmost difficulty that we let go of a real debt!
  - 2. "What if God treated my debt to Him as I am treating others?" **(Mt 18:23-35)**
  - 3. Notice the great emphasis of the scriptures here. **(Mt 6:14-15, 18:35)**
- B. Humility is a must for one to truly forgive. **(Col 3:12-13)**
  - 1. A proud person will pursue the one who injured him for as long as it takes!
  - 2. In humility we recognize who we really are. Let go!
- C. Self-deception is very strong when it comes to forgiveness. **(Jas 1:26)**

1. We can say we "forgive" while at the same time harbor bitterness in our hearts.
  2. Even though we say the right words, it is plain to others that we have a vendetta.
- D. Things which men substitute for forgiveness.
1. **To ignore both the wrong done and the person who did it.**
    - a. If we can by love cover a fault then all is well. **(1 Pt 4:8)**
    - b. But if we bury a hurt and then snub and avoid another, we are in trouble.
  2. **To go by the "eye for an eye" approach.** After I get even then all is well!
  3. **To put the person on probation.**
    - a. I will forgive you but if you do this again...be extra good or else!
    - b. We may think we have forgiven but in truth we have not! **(Heb 8:12)**

### ***III. The hard road of the unforgiving heart.***

- A. The unforgiving lives a life of pain.
1. They think if they forgive that they will be cheated. In truth they have taken a road far harder than anything God would put us through. **(Deut 6:24)**
  2. Over time the unforgiving heart becomes a hardened heart. **(Eph 4:19, 32)**
  3. The desire for revenge gives way to relentless masters of bitterness and anger.
  4. In time you will act like a crazy person! You may know the right words to speak but your heart will be revealed! Consider the Pharisees. **(Mk 15:10; Jn 18:28)**
- B. The family of the unforgiving pays a high price.
1. In the family of the unforgiving you must line up or be punished.
  2. To have association with the unforgiving you must shun who they shun, participate in the "critical talk" they talk or be cut off.
  3. This taught bitterness and unreasonableness is common in those who are alcoholics and other kinds of addicts.
- C. The church of one who is unforgiving also pays a price. **(Heb 12:14-15)**
1. Most church problems have their origins here.
  2. Forgiving people pursue peace. Unforgiving people pursue allies.
- D. The unforgiving and their allies will go to hell. **(Mt 18:35; Jas 2:13)**
1. It is not enough to say: "I have been bitter." You need to make it right!
  2. King Saul admitted his wrong but never repented. **(1 Sam 24:17-19)**
  3. Many choose liberalism because they have not dealt with their hurts and therefore want "no more conflict." Here they want to run and hide!

### ***IV. The healing power of genuine forgiveness***

- A. Forgiveness releases us from unnecessary burdens! **(Mt 11:28-30)**
- B. Forgiveness restores relationships! **(Col 3:12-13)**
- C. Forgiveness lets us partake of the character of God! **(2 Pt 1:4)**

### ***Conclusion:*** Test to determine if we have forgiven. **(Mt 6:14-15, 18:35)**

1. Do we get pleasure in their hurt?
2. Do we intentionally avoid being in their presence?
3. Do we vividly remember what we have suffered?
4. Are we uncomfortable when they are praised?
5. Do we go out of the way to be helpful to that person?
6. Are we willing to pray for the person?