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What Does Forgiveness Do for Us?

Luke 6:37: (NASB) *Do not judge, and you will not be judged; and do not condemn, and you will not be condemned; pardon, and you will be pardoned.*

Everyone hurts someone at some point in their lives, whether it is intentional or not. Many of us carry the scars of past disappointments, broken trust, or just plain tragedy with us for our entire lives. Even though we know what forgiveness is, sometimes it seems too hard to truly exercise it because it seems that if we forgive, then we are somehow letting the other party off the hook. Is this true? Stay with us as we look into what forgiveness is and what it is not and try and get our arms around one of the greatest earthly powers that God ever gave us!

Are there different types of forgiveness?

 Introduction, *Victim Story Restorative Justice*, Theresa O'Leary on youtube.com

- Ann Marie Hagan at 19 lost much... This is where the house was, this is where it all began - my childhood memories - all the happy times - and yes, it is where my father was murdered, but it's still home in my mind.

Four key New Testament words regarding forgiveness:

Forgive: Strong's #863 - to send forth, away This word is very broadly used and covers both Godly and human forgiveness - it is this word that most clearly reflects our forgiveness of one another. Matthew 18:21: (NRSV) ²¹Then Peter came and said to him, "Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I **forgive <863>** As many as seven times?

Forgiveness: Strong's #859 - freedom, pardon This word is never used in connection with us forgiving one another. It is only related to the pardon granted through Jesus' sacrifice. Ephesians 1:7: In whom we have redemption through his blood, the **forgiveness <859>** of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

Forgive: Strong's #630 - to free, relieve, release, dismiss, let die, pardon, divorce This word is broadly used but rarely actually translated as "forgive." Matthew 27:17: Therefore when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I **release <630>** unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ? Luke 6:37: Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: **forgive <630>**, and ye shall be **forgiven <630>**:

Forgiving: Strong's #5483 - favor Broadly used in the sense of having a big heart, not used to describe the taking away of sin. Philippians 1:29: For unto you it is **given <5483>** in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;

 Introduction, *The Power to Forgive*, Steve Hartmann, CBS News

- In a small apartment building in Minneapolis, a 59-year old teacher's aide sings praises to God for no seemingly apparent reason. Indeed if anyone was to have issues with the Lord, it would be Mary Johnson. In February 1993, Mary's son was shot to death during an argument at a party. He was 20 and Mary's only child. The killer was a 16-year old kid named O'Shea. "My son was gone! I wanted justice! He was an animal and he deserved to be caged." And he was. Tried as an adult and sentenced to 25 1/2 years, O'Shea served 17 years before being recently released.

Regarding forgiveness, the basic premise we will work with is the definition of sending away - when you send something away, it still exists, though it is no longer relevant to your life. Therefore, to forgive is to make someone's sin against us lose its relevance in our life!

Are there different types of repentance?

 Contact and Love, *The Power to Forgive*, Steve Hartmann, CBS News

- He lives next door. How a convicted murderer ended up living a doorjamb away from his victim's mother is a story - not of horrible misfortune as you might expect - but a story of remarkable mercy. A few years ago Mary began to meet with O'Shea. As a devout Christian, she wanted to see if there was some way, somehow, she could forgive her son's killer. O'Shea: The first thing she said to me was, you don't know me, I don't know you, so let's just start with right now. I was befuddled myself. They met regularly after that. When he got out, Mary introduced him to her landlord and invited him to move into the building.

We have a choice. Mary was plagued with a way of trying to find out how to forgive him. The only way to do that was to establish a rapport with him. That ended up in a relationship where they now live next door.

What about the responsibilities of those needing forgiveness? Is it a "free lunch" or is repentance required?

Acts 17:30-31: (NRSV) ³⁰While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to **repent <3340>**, ³¹because he has fixed a day on which he



will have the world judged in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.

There are different shades of meaning to the word "repentance," captured in three primary words in the New Testament:

Repent: Strong's #3338, *metamelomai*, to care afterwards, i.e. regret

Repent: Strong's #3340 *metanoeo*, to think differently or afterwards, i.e. reconsider (morally, feel compunction)

(compunction: uneasiness of mind due to feelings of remorse or guilt; twinge of conscience)

Repentance: Strong's #3341, *metanoia*, compunction (for guilt, including reformation); by implication reversal (of [another's] decision): (similar to #3340)

Examples of the "regret" part of repent (#3338): Matthew 21:28-32: (NRSV) ²⁸What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today. ²⁹He answered, I will not'; but later he **changed his mind <3338>** and went. ³⁰The father went to the second and said the same; and he answered, 'I go, sir'; but he did not go. ³¹Which of the two did the will of his father? They said, The first. Jesus said to them, Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. ³²For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not **change your minds <3338>** and believe him.

Matthew 27:3: Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, **repented himself <3338>**, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,



Murdered, Victim Story Restorative Justice, Theresa O'Leary on youtube.com

- It was Sunday afternoon. A young man from next door dropped in. We had just finished our dinner and I remembered, he walked in with the axe and attacks my father. I couldn't believe what I was seeing. Within three to four minutes it's all over. We never live in the house again. We left the community, everything changed.

Matthew 3:1-2: (KJV) ¹In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, ²And saying, **Repent ye <3340>**: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Acts 5:31: Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give **repentance <3341>** to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

McClintock & Strong's Cyclopedia explains the distinction often given between these is:

#3338 refers to an emotional change	#3340 to a change of choice
#3338 has reference to particulars	#3340 to the entire life
#3338 signifies nothing but regret, even mounting to remorse	#3340 that reversal of moral purpose known as repentance
#3340 is the fuller and nobler term, expressive of moral action and issues. It is indicated not only by its derivation, but by the greater frequency of its use and by the fact it is often used in the imperative.	



Transformed, Victim Story Restorative Justice, Theresa O'Leary on youtube.com

- On that terribly dark day there was no thought of forgiveness. Ann Marie and her family had suffered an unspeakable loss. As time passed, she appeared to move forward. She became a nurse and got married. But inside, she saw the world from the perspective of a victim - from the perspective a girl who had witnessed the death of her father in the most violent way possible and who had been attacked herself and escaped death. From that day forward, Ann Marie was transformed from a sweet, innocent young woman to an unhappy, bitter person.

The forgiveness of God: Psalms 103:6-13: This gives us a sense of the justice of God but it is tempered by his mercy, love and wisdom. When all work together, we get the full picture of what God is about.



))) Forgiveness is for me, The Power to Forgive, Steve Hartmann, CBS News

Today they don't just live close, they are close. Clearly Mary was able to forgive. Unforgiveness is like cancer - it will eat you from the inside out. It's not about that other person. Me forgiving him does not diminish what he has done - yes, he murdered my son, but the forgiveness is for me. It's for me. For O'Shea, it hasn't been that easy. "I haven't learned how to forgive myself yet."

How is it that God can remove our sins so far from Him? (Justice) Hebrews 9:22: And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no **remission <859>**. **God through Jesus satisfied justice - a life (Jesus) for a life (Adam). This provided true forgiveness:** Luke 4:16-21: (NASB) ¹⁶And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up; and as was his custom, he entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up to read. ¹⁷And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. And he opened the book and found the place where it was written: ¹⁸The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, Because he anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim **release <859>** to the captives, And recovery of sight to the blind, To set free those who are oppressed...

The release here is not just an opening of the prison door of sin and death. It is a **full pardon** - an opportunity to go on and live without the previous consequences of sin. Jesus satisfied the justice requirement of God.

This is our third story - the first (and still ongoing) is about Ann Marie Hagan and her loss of father to an axe murderer when she was 19. The second was about Mary Johnson's forgiveness towards the killer of her 20-year old son. Now we look at another kind of loss...

))) Unforgivable, Philip Yancey Forgiveness Story, Debbie Morris, author of "Forgiving the Dead Man Walking"

- *When I was 16 years old, my boyfriend and I were kidnapped by two men and over the course of 36 hours, they tortured my boyfriend, shot and left him for dead, and then they raped me repeatedly before they finally let me go. So many people would consider that alone unforgivable, and then after I was released, I found out that they had also kidnapped another girl three days earlier and they murdered her. So when you look at some of the things these two men did, most people would put them in the category of "unforgivable."*

Ephesians 4:25-32: (NRSV) ²⁵So then, putting away falsehood, let all of us speak the truth to our neighbors, (**honesty, truthfulness in our forgiveness**) for we are members of one another. ²⁶Be angry but do not sin; (we can be angry but not sin as a result of our anger - revenge) do not let the sun go down on your anger, (**work through the anger, don't let it fester.**) ²⁷and do not make room for the devil. ²⁸Thieves must give up stealing; rather let them labor and work honestly with their own hands, so as to have something to share with the needy. ²⁹Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear. ³⁰And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with which you were marked with a seal for the day of redemption. ³¹Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, ³²and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, **forgiving <5483>** (**favoring**) one another, as God in Christ has **forgiven <5483>** (**favored**) you. We are to rise above being hurt. "Living Forgiving."

))) Obsessed, Victim Story Restorative Justice, Theresa O'Leary on youtube.com

- *Ann Marie became obsessed with making sure her father's killer, Ronald, would never be free. Ronald suffers from schizophrenia and he says voices told him to kill Thomas Hagen, a man who had treated him like a son. Ronald lived next door and had lost his mother at an early age, so the Hagens had grown close to the young man. After the murder, Ronald was sent to a mental institution and stayed there for 17 years. Not a day passed that Ann Marie did not think about him.*

If we hold onto an unforgiving attitude, it WILL affect us physically and emotionally, as our thinking and life will be continually influenced by its clear and powerful influence. Because we are affected physically and emotionally, we WILL be affected spiritually. That will directly detract from our ability to follow after Christ. **Forgiveness releases us from damaging emotions:** Proverbs 14:29 Proverbs 25:23 Ecclesiastes 7:9 Proverbs 19:11 Philippians 1:21

For a practical tip, we can have a scripture on our lips ready to contemplate when we are made angry.



Forgiveness, Victim Story Restorative Justice, Theresa O'Leary on youtube.com

This man has got all the condemnation and the ridicule and the shame. Here he is at 47 years old. He has been detained for 17 years and is looking for his first chance, maybe his last chance - and who am I to take it? When he started to cry and says, "I'm to blame! I'm to blame!", I couldn't take it anymore. I had to rush around the table, I had hug him and touch him and embrace him and tell him I forgave him. It was like suddenly I could see what he'd been through.

Live a forgiven life of changed direction: Acts 9:1-6: Here is a man, who later became the Apostle Paul, who believed that evil was good! Saul was confronted with the truth. This created a crossroad of choice - do I follow my previously focused path or do I face the humiliation of its sin and go exactly the opposite direction? When faced with an opportunity of forgiveness, we have to think, is my bitterness serving me or anyone else? It is no accident that Saul was blinded - for that blindness not only revealed the pathway of his sin, but it also revealed the open door of repentance. By being blinded, he now was able to "see." He had several days to refocus on serving God the right way. A truly repentant life needs to change direction, as does a life struggling to forgive.

No earthly Justice, Philip Yancey Forgiveness Story, Debbie Morris, author of "Forgiving the Dead Man Walking"

- We get confused about the healing effect of justice. Justice is not what heals us and it certainly didn't heal me. I doubt that was ever any more clear to me than the morning after one of the men was executed. I thought surely this would be the end and I would feel completely satisfied and completely healed. But what happened was in the weeks before his execution, I was feeling very anxious about it and uncertain. I realized then that there is no such thing as justice here on earth for what that man did.*

Once we can pass through the open door of repentance, we will develop a willingness to right the wrongs we have done: Luke 19:1-10: This experience illustrates how our heart can sometimes be overrun by our experiences and we can forget what is most important - until our eyes are opened to repentance and forgiveness.

God's Grace Healed, Philip Yancey Forgiveness Story, Debbie Morris, author of "Forgiving the Dead Man Walking"

- The power in my story is in being able to show others how God's grace changed my life. That's the story I was willing to tell. Before I got to that point, I wasn't able to share what had happened with people I knew. There was still so much shame involved in it. When I was able to forgive, not only did the hate and anger and the pain go away, the shame did too.*

Acts 9:10-19: Here is an example of a man (Ananias) who is asked to forgive someone who has a publicly stated intention to harm him (Saul), yet he is instructed to trust this man with no physical evidence of his repentance. This is the classic "win - win" scenario...both were faithful to truth, no matter what the cost! It is a great example of how to put true forgiveness into action. We shouldn't take God's responsibilities upon our own shoulders.

Understanding, Victim Story Restorative Justice, Theresa O'Leary on youtube.com

- Once people get talking face to face, for me what happened in that room was he became a person. As a victim, I just saw him as an axe murderer - nothing else was important. Don't tell me anything else about him, he murdered my father. When I was put together with him face to face, I started to hear more about his life and he became a person. When we see someone as a human being, it's natural to want to move forward and to not persecute him.*

Acts 7:58-60: And so, the forgiveness that Stephen prayed for was directly focused on Saul - God answered his prayer and forgave Saul as was just discussed, but it was not with any lack of testing that Saul - now Paul - would prove his faith. Think about it...Saul was a persecutor of Christians, then he became a leader of Christians and finally he personally suffered the wrath of his previous allies! **Romans 12:14-17:** This is our calling! When we take on the name of "Christianity," we take on the name of having and living a forgiving attitude in our lives. Let us live repentance in our lives when we do wrong and apply these principles in our lives and get rid of the bitterness.

***So what does forgiveness do for us?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions,
Think about it...!***