



## 4. Father, Forgive

**When Forgiveness Knocked**

Behold! See! Lo! If you hear and open, I will come... Revelation 3:20

Today, we are going to look at a passage of scripture that has been one of the most profound ones in my life with regards to the area of **forgiving others whose actions have caused deep wounding**. The scripture that I am referring to is something that Jesus said on the cross and it has literally set me and many others free from the bondages that can come from offenses. This was a significant turning point for me a while back in finally having victory and peace in my spirit after several years of obedient forgiving. It's not that I had been forgiving reluctantly, but that the wound inflicted as a result of other's actions did not seem to ever heal. Even though I was forgiving and even praying blessing on those who had caused me pain, I could not shake the grief & sadness from all

that was lost. The situations continued to haunt my mind & heart. I came to the conclusion (finally) where I knew I needed God's intervention. Human effort and good will was simply not cutting it this time! I started begging God to release me from the hold of this wounding...

This process took 3 years and it was at this point (the point of my begging...) that God revealed a profound truth to me. I was then able to give everything to Him. He was the only One who could handle this situation.

Let's press on and I'll try to explain what I am talking about.

Isaiah 53:12 says this: Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because He poured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

*Look up Luke 23:34 and write it out below.*

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What is the context of this verse?

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Let's break this verse apart and look at what the current context might be for us as we continue to learn how to forgive.

► **"Father"**

□ Where was Jesus' focus? \_\_\_\_\_

Look up [Matthew 26:39](#). What does Jesus say?

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This had to have been the climax for Jesus, ranking the most difficult situation He had ever faced on earth and yet His focus remained. He was here to do His Father's will. We can learn much from this.

► **"Forgive them"**

□ Even Jesus had to forgive. He was bound by the same spiritual laws that we are today.

Look up the following verses and write what stands out to you:

Matthew 6:15

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1 Peter 2:23-25

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2 Corinthians 5:20-21

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Just ponder this for a moment... Jesus took on every sin imaginable. He must have felt them, thought them, even knew the desire and pull of them! He had to forgive (from His heart) or He would not have been released from all the sin that He now carried for all of us. (2 Corinthians 5:21) He, who became sin, could have died! Think of it. If Jesus had quit right there, He would have become a sinner like us... because God cannot forgive us if we do not forgive those sinning against us. He would have forfeited everything for Himself and for us. I can hardly imagine this – it takes my breath away.

► “They know not what they do”

Here’s the clincher!

This is what hit my spirit a while ago and changed my heart’s destiny!

Galatians 1:12 says: For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ. God had been hearing my heart’s cry for a long time. He knew that I wanted forgiveness to be operating, and that I had in fact verbally and consciously forgiven those who had betrayed me. He also knew my limitations and that I could not truly do this deep work without His help. I needed Him to take it to the next level.

- **They know not what they do ... they didn’t fully understand!** Some things cannot be accomplished apart from the Spirit of God. The revelation for me that day was this: those who had hurt me could not have fully understood what they were doing. Now, think about it. Do any of us really understand the full ramifications of our actions, the domino effects of our choices even to generations that follow after us? It’s impossible for us to. We can’t even count the hair on our head, let alone know what tomorrow’s responses will be. I would even dare to say that I don’t even think that the worst offenders of all time (you can insert names here), could have truly understood the devastating consequences that their actions would have on souls, cultures, and nations, even to this day. The same principle applies for those who give sacrificially and love as Jesus loved. Hurt begets hurt and blessing begets blessing.
- **The enemy is short sighted.** He is a deceiver and tries to manipulate circumstances to bring down the body of Christ. We must see that it is satan & his cohorts that are behind every negative action taken. Some people work intelligently with Him, but most are naively deceived into thinking that his ways are truth. Only God is omnipresent (Psalm 139:7-13) and therefore only God can clearly see the past, present and the future. Even the enemy is limited. Do you think satan would have still prompted so many to kill Jesus if he could see the outcome?

You know, the reverse is true for those of us who will not forgive others. This is a hard but great thing to realize. (Remember... the truth sets us free!) When we hold on to grudges, **we create** a domino effect in our lives and others around us. It is a proven fact that unforgiveness causes stress and eventually will bring us bodily harm. This, in turn is a burden that we may place on others around us. If our bodies become sick, they need more attention and consideration. But... if our spirits become sick as well, we become more needy and crave attention. This is one way the enemy works and, may I say, quite effectively!

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Let's continue...

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- Look up Psalm 32:2-4. Is silence always a good thing? Why?
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- Now, go to 1 John 1:9 and James 5:16. How do we find forgiveness *and* healing from the damage of offenses?
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- Write down the first part of Daniel 7:25.
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- Where do the offenses come from?
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(Here it is from the NKJV: "He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change times and law... The footnote for the word 'persecute' says to 'Literally wear out'. )

- Here are some powerful reminders: 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 and Ephesians 6:10-17.  
This is a spiritual war and we must be advised of the enemy's tactics!!

*You know, when I was sunk in the pain, I became a tremendous burden to those around me. I realized (through a loving friend) that I was in fact 'wearing out the saints' around me! What a terrible realization for me. I was aghast! ... and broken. I also realized that I was wearing myself out. I had digressed to a point of having stroke-like symptoms, but all medical tests showed that there was nothing physically contributing to the symptoms. It was through the above scriptural revelations that I realized the true cause of my suffering. I repented, released the things that I had been holding silent to God, and stood my ground; taking back what I had allowed the enemy to steal from me.*

- Now, let's go look one more time at Luke 23:34. Take note of the end of the verse...
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*Do you see the love of Christ?  
He was watching those who had killed Him bargaining off His clothing!  
...and He still forgave!*

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## In Conclusion...

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How are these truths affecting you today? Is there someone that you need to forgive? Is it possible that they did not really comprehend or even intend the amount of hurt they have caused you?

I encourage you to pray what Jesus prayed: Father, forgive them for they do not know what they do.

Write down your thoughts.

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“Behold, He stands at our door and knocks.” He already sees what’s on the inside and yet He asks to come in and have a meal with us. He asks to be our friend. He offers to be our Saviour. He brings to the table all that we need to live this life to the max!

Will you open the door today?



## THE HEALTH BENEFITS OF FORGIVENESS

Excerpt from: [forgivenessandhealth.org](http://forgivenessandhealth.org)

Research has shown that no matter how awful the offense, the ability to forgive is a technique that can be learned. And learning to forgive can...

- lower your blood pressure,
- improve immune system response,
- reduce anxiety and depression,
- improve your sleep,
- improve self-esteem and sense of empowerment,
- help you to have more rewarding relationships, both professionally and personally,
- reduce stress by releasing toxic emotions,
- reduce dysfunctional patterns of behaviour,
- increase energy for living and healing,
- improve relationships and social integration,
- increase peace of mind,
- aid peaceful death.

Chronic anger, hurt, guilt, hostility can have a debilitating effect on us. These toxic emotions create an avalanche of stress hormones. For instance, cortisol makes you feel speeded up, tense and overwhelmed. Over the long run, heightened cortisol levels impact the immune system. And recent brain research has demonstrated that excess cortisol levels impair your cognitive ability and damage cells in the memory centers of your brain.

Researchers have also looked at the actual physiological effects associated with granting forgiveness or harbouring grudges.

A study of 13,000 men and women showed that anger-prone people were three times as likely to have heart attacks or bypass surgery as less-angry people.

A seven-year study of 2,100 men showed that those who were better at diffusing anger had half as many strokes as those who were angrier. The results showed that "unforgiving thoughts prompted more aversive emotion and significantly higher [forehead muscle tension], skin conductance, heart rate, and blood pressure changes over baseline." These physiological changes persisted even after the participants stopped remembering the hurtful events.

On the other hand, forgiving thoughts were associated with a lower physiological stress response.

These findings might explain why unforgiveness may contribute to disease -- and why forgiveness may enhance health.

At The University of Tennessee, psychology professor Kathleen Lawler studied the effects of anger and hostility on the heart. After 25 years of study, she found the health dangers of anger and resentment so striking that she wondered what people could do to short-circuit the damage. So Dr. Lawler turned her attention to forgiveness.

After measuring adults (ages 28-70) for their baseline blood pressure, heart rate and forehead muscle tension, she asked each person to tell a story of betrayal. She also asked each one to fill out a questionnaire about physical and mental health. Everyone showed increased blood pressure, heart rate and muscle tension as they recounted their story. But for those who had not forgiven their offenders, the increases were 25% higher than for those who had.

Nonforgivers were also more likely to report illnesses and symptoms -- such as colds, infections, fatigue, and headaches -- that had sent them to the doctor in the previous month. The non-forgivers also took 25% more medications than those who had forgiven.

The data keep coming in. And they all point to one conclusion: forgiveness is one of the most important things you can do for your long-term health and quality of life.