

FORGIVING AND FORGETTING: IT CAN BE SO HARD!

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We Have All Been Wronged At Some Point In Our Lives, A Wicked Heart Wanting Payback, Old Man Of The Flesh Versus New Man Of The Spirit, Transformed And Renewed In Our Minds, Challenge Of Letting Go Of Past Events, Jesus' Admonitions To Forgive, If It Is Possible Distance Yourself From Your Antagonizer And Avoid Them, Jesus And Apostle Paul's Examples, The Scriptural Approach, Avoid The Unrepentant And Incurables Who Reject Godly Counsel, The Old Testament Requirement Of Two Or Three Witnesses, In The Multitude Of Counsellors There Is Safety, Ideal Christian Behavior According To The Scriptures, There Is None Righteous, Closing Comments, Suggested Reading List

My friends, it is a fact of life that we all have people in our lives who at some point have wronged us in some way. It may have simply been a harsh exchange of words, or an unjust action against us, or maybe even something worse. Sometimes, they do this more than once, and sometimes, certain people will even do it on a continual basis just to annoy us. So how should we react to such situations? Now while we already know what we should do as Christian Believers, there is one major problem. That problem is laid bare for all to see in the following sample verses:

"And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."

Genesis 6:5, KJV

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"

Jeremiah 17:9, KJV

"But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are

the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man."

Matthew 15:18-20, KJV

"And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man."

Mark 7:20-23, KJV

Yes, my friends, sadly, that is so true. Due to the wicked and unforgiving nature of our own hearts, while we already know what we should do, forgiving and forgetting can be a very difficult task; particularly if the offender is still doing the same thing to us, and happens to be a member of our own immediate family. It is a little easier to forgive and to forget when the event is in the past, or when the guilty party is a stranger to us who we may never even see again. As they say, time heals all wounds. Well, usually. But when the antagonist is still up front and center in our lives, wow! It is fireworks, isn't it? Be honest with yourself and admit it. God already knows anyway.

I would like to believe that it is easier to forgive than it is to forget. However, if we have not forgotten the incident, then have we really and truthfully forgiven the person(s) who caused the offence or harm to happen in the first place? That is a very good question. Let's face it. We are all human, and we all possess a very sinful nature, exactly as the previous verses clearly describe. That nature makes us want to strike back at someone. We want revenge. We want to make that person who offended us or harmed us in some way to pay. We keep our little list of offences buried in our hearts, don't we? Of course, that kind of a violent, vengeful attitude is merely a reflection of our old sinful man of the flesh. It is not our new man that is born of God's Spirit. The Apostle Paul said a lot about the old man of the flesh which serves sin in verses such as the following:

"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin."

Romans 6:6, KJV

"Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye

should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace."

Romans 6:12-14, KJV

"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not."

Romans 7:18, KJV

"I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin."

Romans 7:25, KJV

"That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;"

Ephesians 4:22, KJV

"Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;"

Colossians 3:9, KJV

In contrast to the previous verses, Paul advises us to be transformed, and to be renewed in our minds through the Spirit of Christ. He tells us to put on the new man, and to become new creatures in Christ, and to put on the mind of Christ, as we can determine by the following group of verses:

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

2 Corinthians 5:17, KJV

"And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."

Ephesians 4:24, KJV

"And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:"

Colossians 3:10, KJV

"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that

good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

Romans 12:2, KJV

"And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;"

Ephesians 4:23, KJV

"For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace."

Romans 8:6, KJV

"For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ."

1 Corinthians 2:16, KJV

"Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;"

2 Corinthians 10:5, KJV

Wow! What a challenge! Truly, it is an ongoing process for us all. Honestly speaking, even though I have known the Lord and His Word for so many years, and even though I know what the Lord expects of me, I continue to struggle with certain events which happened in my life years ago. Such things are just so hard to let go of, particularly if they affected our lives in a profound, negative way. To make matters even more difficult for all of us, Scriptural admonitions such as the following ones do not make it any easier for us to feel less guilty about having a hard time letting certain things go in our lives:

"For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

Matthew 6:14-15, KJV

"Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven."

Matthew 18:21-22, KJV

"Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven:"

Luke 6:36-37, KJV

"Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him."

Luke 17:3-4, KJV

To those of you who may find yourselves in similar difficult situations where you are continually harassed by someone, all I can say to you is the following: If a person continually harasses you, mistreats you or says nasty and untrue things about you, there really isn't much that you can do about it, other than to try to distance yourself from them, and avoid them. If a problem exists at your place of work, then you need to seriously consider whether or not to approach upper management. However, if you choose to take that route, it is important that you count the cost first. The reason why I say this is because if you happen to be the new kid on the block, there may be unintended negative consequences if management favors the other employee. When it comes to the Gospel, even Jesus said the following regarding avoiding the unreceptive reprobates:

"Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you."

Matthew 7:6, KJV

Likewise, when the hardhearted Jews refused to embrace the Gospel of Jesus Christ, what did the Apostle Paul tell them? Consider the following verse, as well as the sound advice he gave to the Christians who resided in Rome:

"Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."

Acts 13:46, KJV

"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them."

Romans 16:17, KJV

As we all know, certain people are simply bent on being as annoying and as mean as they possibly can, no matter how nice

and how loving you try to be towards them. They seem to wear their nastiness as if it is some kind of badge of honor. If that happens to be the case, then it is on them. It is not on you. Sometimes, you simply have to love certain people from afar. What else can you do in such a case, other than pray for them? Of course, if said individual is also a Christian Believer, then you might want to try the following Scriptural approach, as we see here:

"Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."

James 5:19-20, KJV

"Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift."

Matthew 5:23-24, KJV

"Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican."

Matthew 18:15-17, KJV

"Open rebuke is better than secret love."

Proverbs 27:5, KJV

"Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear."

1 Timothy 5:20, KJV

Please notice once again, that in the previous verses, Jesus advises that after multiple counseling sessions, if a person remains unrepentant and incorrigible, to just avoid them. I believe that is what the Lord means when He says "let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." If you happen to be wondering why Jesus specifically mentions taking two or three witnesses, it is because that is the precedent that was established during Old Testament times, as we can easily determine by the following group of verses:

"Whoso killeth any person, the murderer shall be put to death by the mouth of witnesses: but one witness shall not testify against any person to cause him to die."

Numbers 35:30, KJV

"At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; but at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death. The hands of the witnesses shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterward the hands of all the people. So thou shalt put the evil away from among you."

Deuteronomy 17:6-7, KJV

"One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established."

Deuteronomy 19:15, KJV

This is why in Acts chapter seven, where Stephen is stoned to death by the stiffnecked, unbelieving Jews -- which, as you may know, the young Saul of Tarsus [later to be known as the Apostle Paul] witnessed -- we read the following account:

"And cast him [Stephen] out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep."

Acts 7:58-60, KJV

Following are some additional verses which are found in both the Old and the New Testaments which establish the importance of making decisions based on a multitude of counsellors:

"Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety."

Proverbs 11:14, KJV

"Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counsellors they are established."

Proverbs 15:22, KJV

"For by wise counsel thou shalt make thy war: and in

multitude of counsellors there is safety."

Proverbs 24:6, KJV

"Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

Matthew 18:18-20, KJV

"This is the third time I am coming to you. In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established."

2 Corinthians 13:1, KJV

"Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear."

1 Timothy 5:19-20, KJV

"He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses:"

Hebrews 10:28, KJV

While according to the Scriptures, the onus is always on the guilty party, at the same time, we cannot ignore the fact that God also holds us Christians to a very high standard as well. Regarding general Christian behavior and our manner of comportment, we all know what it is. But as a reminder to us all, it is clearly defined for us in such Bible verses as the following ones:

"With the merciful thou wilt shew thyself merciful, and with the upright man thou wilt shew thyself upright."

2 Samuel 22:26, KJV

"With the merciful thou wilt shew thyself merciful; with an upright man thou wilt shew thyself upright;"

Psalms 18:25, KJV

"Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins."

Proverbs 10:12, KJV

"Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy . . . But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other

also . . . But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;"

Matthew 5:7, 39, 44, KJV

"But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

Matthew 9:13, KJV

"But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless."

Matthew 12:7, KJV

"Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

Matthew 22:36-40, KJV

"Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you."

Luke 6:28, KJV

"Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise."

Luke 10:36-37, KJV

"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

John 13:34-35, KJV

"As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends . . . This is

my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you . . . These things I command you, that ye love one another."

John 15:9-13, 12, 17, KJV

"Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another . . . Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men."

Romans 12:10, 17-18, KJV

"Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law."

Romans 13:8-10, KJV

"And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing . . . And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."

1 Corinthians 13:2, 13, KJV

"For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

Galatians 5:14, KJV

"With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love . . . And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

Ephesians 4:2, 32, KJV

"And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you:"

1 Thessalonians 3:12, KJV

"But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another."

1 Thessalonians 4:9, KJV

"See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men."

1 Thessalonians 5:15, KJV

"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;"

Hebrews 12:14-15, KJV

"Let brotherly love continue."

Hebrews 13:1, KJV

"If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well:"

James 2:8, KJV

"Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:"

1 Peter 1:22, KJV

"For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:"

1 Peter 2:19-23, KJV

"Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing."

1 Peter 3:8-9, KJV

"And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins."

1 Peter 4:8, KJV

"For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another . . . And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment."

1 John 3:11, 23, KJV

"If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well:"

James 2:8, KJV

"Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love . . . Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us."

1 John 4:7-8, 11-12, KJV

"And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another."

2 John 1:5, KJV

Considering such a plethora of Scriptures, it is easy to see that we all have a lot to work on in our personal lives. As the Apostle Paul so wisely wrote when he quoted from Psalm 14, "There is none righteous, no, not one." Before concluding this article, let me leave you with one final set of verses:

"But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away."

Isaiah 64:6, KJV

"They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one."

Psalm 14:3, KJV

"If thou, LORD, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?"

Psalm 130:3, KJV

"But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap:"

Malachi 3:2, KJV

"For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."

Matthew 5:20, KJV

"And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

Luke 18:9-14, KJV

"As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one . . . But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;"

Romans 3:10, 21-23, KJV

With these wonderful verses, I will bring another article to a close. It is my hope that you have found it to be both informative and enlightening, and I pray that it has been a blessing in your life as well. If you have an account with Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr or with any other social network, I would really appreciate if you would take the time to click or tap on the corresponding link that is found on this page. Thanks so much, and may God bless you abundantly!

For additional information, you may want to refer to the list of reading resources below which were also mentioned in this article, or which contains topics that are related to this article, and which are likewise located on the Bill's

Bible Basics web server.

Love, Mercy, Forgiveness and Chastisement

The Royal Law: Thou Shalt Love

"Avoid Unreceptive Reprobates" KJV Bible Verse List

"Be Examples to Each Other" KJV Bible Verse List

"Be Slow to Anger" KJV Bible Verse List

"Be Slow to Speak" KJV Bible Verse List

"Blessed Are the Meek" KJV Bible Verse List

"Blessed Are the Merciful" KJV Bible Verse List

"Brotherly Christian Love" KJV Bible Verse List

"Christian Servant's Attitude" KJV Bible Verse List

"Don't Render Evil for Evil" KJV Bible Verse List

"Lift Up Your Brother" KJV Bible Verse List

"Love Forgiveness and Mercy" KJV Bible Verse List

"Love the Unlovely" KJV Bible Verse List

"Love: The Greatest of These" KJV Bible Verse List

"Rebuke is a Form of Love" KJV Bible Verse List

"Rebuke Wayward Brethren" KJV Bible Verse List

"Reprove and Rebuke" KJV Bible Verse List

"Unbelieving Reprobates" KJV Bible Verse List

"Wicked Heart" KJV Bible Verse List

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