

Forgiveness: the decision to release a person from the obligation that resulted when they injured you.

Forbearance: the patience to endure the annoyances of imperfect people without offense.

Forgiveness is not necessary where forbearance is strong.

Are you often in a place where you have to deal with forgiveness because you are not good at forbearance?

Read Proverbs 11:19. What annoyances are you facing that could be resolved with increased forbearance? What is the relationship between maturity and forbearance? Would you agree that forbearance is a mark of Christian maturity?

1) When should we forgive? Every time I remember I've been hurt.

Which of the following offense have you had to forgive or are currently dealing with? Has it been hard for you to forgive? Why or why not?

- Lied to
- Promise broken
- Neglected by grown children
- Neglected or abandoned by parents
- Violence against you or someone you love
- Taken up an offense for someone you love
- Treated unfairly by an employer
- Parents divorce
- Your divorce
- Falsely accused
- Slandered against
- Adultery of spouse of former spouse
- Stolen from
- Cheated in business
- Rebellious children
- Public humiliation
- Abuse (physical, verbal, sexual)
- Unjust court ruling

Which of the following statements reveal you still have a need to extend forgiveness?

- Every time I think of him/her, I still feel angry?
- I refuse to think of him/her at all?
- I have a secret desire for him/her to pay for what he/she did to me?

- I wouldn't grieve if I found out something bad happened to him/her?
- When his/her name comes up, I am more likely to say something negative than positive?

2) **Why must we forgive? As forgiven people, we must forgive.**

Read Psalm 103:10-12. Describe the amazement of one who has been forgiven.

Unforgiveness causes great harm to us, our family, our relationship with God, and the mission of the church. Describe the harm you have seen from unforgiveness.

Forgiveness is not pretending the hurt didn't happen. Forgiveness is not enabling hurtful people. How can you exercise forgiveness without enabling hurtful people?

Have you ever used these excuses for not extending forgiveness? Expose the myth in these statements...

- "Time heals all wounds."
- "The offense is too big."
- "I'm waiting for an apology."
- "I can't forget what I cannot forget."
- "I can't just let them get off the hook."

Read 2Corinthians 7-12. What does unforgiveness have to do with being outwitted by Satan?

3) **How can we forgive?**

Joseph is a great example of one who had every reason to exercise revenge on those who had hurt him. Read Genesis 50:20. What does his response reveal about his view of God? Do you share his view when someone hurts you?

Do you need to take the following step toward forgiveness with someone? Ask your group to hold you accountable to do it.

- Make a list
- Thank God for each person who has hurt you.
- Confess your wrong responses to God as sin.
- Release each person from the perceived debt.
 - "I will not dwell on it."
 - "I will not bring it up."
 - "I will not talk to others about it."
 - "I will not let it destroy uncommon community."
- Begin to build a bridge of trust.
- Communicate your love.
- Trust God to execute justice.

4) **Who will we forgive?**

Additional Scripture

- Psalm 103:10-12
- Matthew 18:21-35
- 2Corinthians 2:7-12
- Hebrews 12:15