

The importance of forgiving others

Being quick to forgive others is a great key to maintaining a sweet spirit and to seeing our prayers being consistently answered

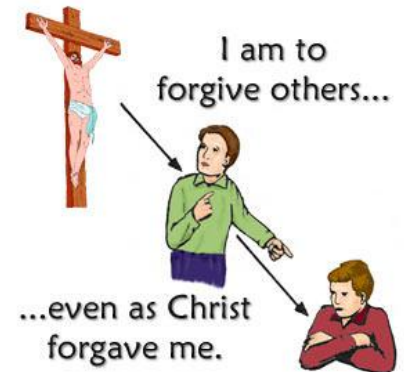


Having a forgiving spirit is also a great key to maintaining healthy relationships in our life



Jesus clearly emphasised the importance of forgiving others on many occasions

- Often our prayers can be hindered if we hold on to unforgiving attitudes.



- Sometimes the only barrier to seeing the breakthroughs in our life that we have been seeking and praying for is our unforgiveness towards someone, *sometimes even unknowingly*
- It is only when we are still before God that He can reveal to us the people from the past that we have not yet truly forgiven FROM OUR HEART

Jesus Himself said, “Have faith in God. For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.” **(Mark 11:22-24)**



“And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.” **(Mark 11:25-26)**

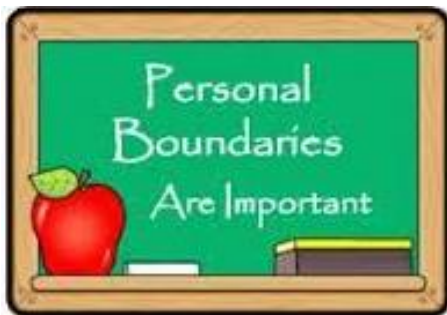
- Before sharing quickly nine consequences of unforgiveness, I will highlight 4 things that can cause us to become unforgiving and resentful.

These are:



- 1) Having poor boundaries in our life.**
(When we allow people to take advantage of us)
- 2) Making wrong choices as a result of peer group pressure and then having to live with the consequences (regrets for past wrong choices)**
- 3) Making poor choices in our friendships (hurt people will hurt us), and**
- 4) Allowing people to control us (This can happen if we are people pleasers or fear being rejected)**

- **We can minimize the opportunity for the enemy to get us offended and resentful (unforgiving) if we:**
 - 1) Maintain healthy (God given) boundaries in our life**
 - 2) Choose healthy friendships (people who will encourage us to reach our full potential in Christ)**
 - 3) Seek God for wisdom to make right choices in life**
 - 4) Are more concerned about pleasing God than other people (God always has our best interests at heart)**



5) Always ensure that our security comes from who we are in Christ. (He will never leave nor forsake us)



6) Continually commit to following God's plan for our life (We will be most fulfilled living for the Lord), and



7) Always have a right attitude to life's trials and disappointments (Choosing to become better rather than bitter)

The Apostle Paul wrote,

“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.”

(Romans 8:28-29)



Jesus also said,

“You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavour, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.” **(Matthew 5:13)**

“You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.



Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. **(Matthew 5:14-16)**

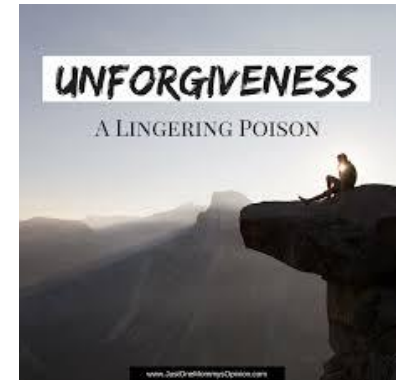
We want the world to see Christ in us and nothing reveals His heart more than when we forgive others. Since this is God's goal in our lives, you can bet your bottom dollar **you will have more than enough opportunities to display His heart!** We all have been called to this. (and you were wondering what's your calling) We are all called to a ministry of reconciliation and forgiveness is the greatest tool in your belt. *(Beth Moore quote)*



I will now look at nine consequences of unforgiveness based on two teachings by Beth Moore and Charles Stanley

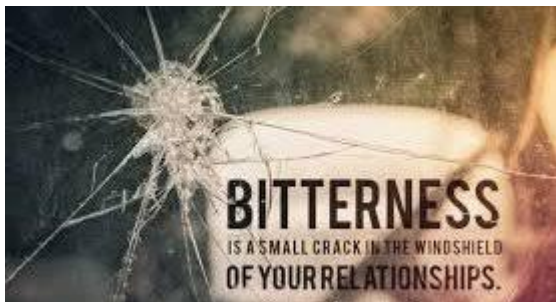
1 – Unforgiveness left untreated becomes like spiritual cancer.

Bitterness will pollute all your fruit. You might teach what you know, but you will impart who you are. If you are carrying around an offense, eventually so will those around you. It's toxic and pollutes the atmosphere in ministry.



In the book of Hebrews we read,

“Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord; looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled;” **(Hebrews 12:14-15)**



2 - Unforgiveness harms family interactions.

Have you ever tried to maintain a growing relationship with an individual who's rooted in bitterness? You can't do it, because that person is fixated on unhealthy feelings about someone else. Moreover, it's hard to spend time with anyone consumed by resentment, because such people simply cease being likable.



3 – Unforgiveness hinders our prayer life.

Unforgiveness is sin, and unconfessed sin creates “static” in a believer’s relationship with God. So it’s important to forgive others before we enter into a time of prayer and worship (Matthew 5:23-24)



4 – The Holy Spirit is grieved (Ephesians 4:30-32)

When the Holy Spirit is grieved our thinking can become distorted. Refusal to forgive means God steps back and let's us cope with our own problems in our own strength.



5 – We lose the potential of our anointing

The anointing is lifted when unforgiveness settles in. We as leaders need to strive to keep the strife out!

1 Corinthians 13 gives a very vivid picture of what it is when we lack love – that we become clanging cymbals, profiting us nothing!



The Apostle Paul wrote,

“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. 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, but have not love, I am nothing.”
(1 Corinthians 13:1-2)



6 – Unforgiveness damages our personal witness.

The highlight of our testimony is salvation, which centres around the truth that the Lord has forgiven us of all of our sins. How can we stress the importance of this if our listener can't even see a hint of forgiveness in our own life?



7 - Unforgiveness thwarts our spiritual growth.

God will not bless sinful actions. So, if we are living a life mired in unforgiveness, we cannot expect Him to shower us with His blessings. By persisting in disobedience, we disrupt intimate fellowship with the Lord and put ourselves in a dangerous position spiritually.



8 – We are left to ourselves.

Unforgiveness speaks of pride. It is in essence saying I want to have the final say on what is justice for this person. We all know God is not attracted to pride, but to the humble. Pride repels God, humility attracts His power. This is why unforgiveness will leave us having to do things in our own power and strength.

Maybe the reason for all the tiredness that many people experience is the weight of all the offenses that they carry.



In the book of James we read,

“But He gives more grace. Therefore He says:

“God resists the proud,

But gives grace to the humble.”^[a]

(James 4:6)

AND



9 – We end up having no authentic fellowship with the Father.

This the biggest tragedy of hanging on to offenses. Think about this for a moment. Unforgiveness shows an indifference to the greatest God act! God paid a severe price for your forgiveness. He displayed incredible amounts of mercy to each one of us, that none of us deserved. When we hang on to unforgiveness and offenses it is like thumbing our noses at the greatest sacrificial act of the universe. How intimate do you think your fellowship with God will be in that state of mind?



In the book of Proverbs we read,

**“Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it
spring the issues of life.” (Proverbs 4:23)**

- May I encourage you today to keep a soft heart by always choosing to forgive others quickly



- As believers we always have the ability to choose to do so



The Apostle Paul wrote,

**“Now hope does not disappoint,
because the love of God has been
poured out in our hearts by the
Holy Spirit who was given to us.” (Romans 5:5)**



So may I encourage you again to maintain good boundaries in your life and to exercise godly wisdom in your *decisions and choice of friends*. That you would always be more concerned about pleasing God than people. In doing these things it will greatly reduce the Devil's ability to inflict pain upon you and to cause you to become offended

- One of the greatest keys to maintaining a soft and loving heart towards all people, including even our enemies, is to have a lifestyle of worship. In doing this we will always have God's love and compassion for all people



**I will finish with the words of King David,
“Delight yourself also in the Lord, And He shall
give you the desires of your heart.” (Psalm 37:4)**