

## Forgiveness

It has been said that our culture has become so non-Christian that we see forgiving people as being weak and unforgiving people as the strong ones. Movies, books, psychologists, and newspaper articles portray the same image, and we scratch our heads and wonder what is wrong. The result of such action is a society filled with bitterness, vengeance, anger, hate, and hostility.

Unwillingness to forgive for a Christian is unthinkable. Paul said to the Ephesians, “And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you” (Ephesians 4:32). If we are unwilling to forgive as Christians it will bring about four very unpleasant results.

First, failure to forgive locks us into the past. It keeps the pain alive, keeps the sore open, and never allows the wound to heal. It feeds anger, resentment, and robs us of present joy. Forgiveness, however, opens the prison doors and sets the believer free from the past.

Second, unforgiveness produces bitterness. The longer believers dwell on sins committed against them, the more bitter they become. It has been said, “Bitterness is not just a sin; it is an infection.” Bitterness can distort one’s whole outlook on life. Bitterness can produce violent emotions, intolerance, and thoughts of revenge. Bitterness robs one of the joy of life. Forgiveness, however, replaces bitterness with joy, love, and peace.

Third, unforgiveness opens the door for Satan. It is no doubt a true statement, “That most of the ground Satan gains in our lives is due to unforgiveness.” If love fulfills the law toward others, lack of love violates it. Unforgiveness is a lack of love. Forgiveness, however, bars the demonic attack.

Fourth, unforgiveness hinders fellowship with God. Forgiveness is a serious matter. All through Scripture forgiveness is seen as a means of blessing. So important is this matter that a whole book of the Bible is devoted to the subject, Philemon.

Scripture: King James Version: II Corinthians 2:10-11; Galatians 5:22-23; Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:13, 19; Hebrews 12:15; Matthew 6:14-15.

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