

Chapter 3 Unforgiveness, Judgment, and Accusation

In teaching about the last days, Jesus said, “*And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another*” (Mat. 24:10). Unforgiveness may be the single, biggest roadblock preventing the healing of the spirit. Forgiveness can be defined as, “the act of setting someone free from an obligation to you—that is a result of a wrong done against you.”

Why must we forgive? (Scriptural admonitions follow)

1. We are commanded to forgive (Lev. 19:16, Luke 6:37, Mark 11:27, Jas. 5:9, Col. 3:13, Eph. 4:32).
2. If we do not forgive, God will not forgive us; Jesus’ death on the cross is for naught and our salvation may be in question (Mat. 6:12-15 and 18:15).
3. If we do not forgive, we may be eating and drinking condemnation to our souls when we partake of Communion (1 Cor. 11:28-30).
4. If we do not forgive, God will deliver us over to the “*tormentors*”—hurts and wounds turn into hard feelings, self-pity, bitterness, resentment, and ultimately hate (Mat. 18:33-34).
5. Healing from sickness and forgiveness are tied closely together. We may not be healed unless we choose to forgive (Is. 33:24, Mat. 9:2-6, Mark 2:5-9, Luke 5:20-23, Jas. 5:15).
6. We cannot offer anything to the Lord at His altar unless we first forgive and try to amend and reconcile (Mat. 5:25, Luke 17:3).
7. The law of the “*aught [anything] against any*”—“*And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any; that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses*” (Mark 11:25).
8. We are told to forgive “*seventy times seven*” (Mat. 18:21-22), until we develop a forgiving nature.
9. When we don’t forgive we are saying to ourselves and to God, “I am going to hold these people captive with my anger until they have made complete restoration to me, until I’ve collected my IOU’s” (the law of binding and loosening identified in Mat. 16:19).

There are two other laws also at work within the act of unforgiveness: (1) the law of offenses (Mat. 5:26, Luke 17:3 and 18:15, Mark 9:40, Col. 3:13, Eph. 4:32) and (2) the law of judgment (Mat. 7:2, John 7:24).

Concerning Offenses

1. There are two elements to an offense: (1) the injury—the act of being hurt—and (2) the debt—or IOU—the offended person **feels** they are owed something as a result of the injury. As a victim or as the recipient of an offense, we want the offending person to apologize, to say they are sorry, to take back the words they said or the things they did, and to accept responsibility for making restitution or for amending the offense.

2. Offenses sometimes occur because of unrealized expectations. In expecting a certain behavior from someone, we can be setting ourselves up for feeling offended. (An example would be an aunt who lives out of state sending a baby shower gift and expecting, but not receiving, a “thank you acknowledgment.” In this instance, the aunt’s well-grounded, traditional expectation of a courtesy thank you note is met by a less-established or unintentionally forgotten reply.) When we have certain expectations of others (whether they are well-grounded or not) we often set ourselves up for offense by expecting specific behaviors or actions from them. When others do not act accordingly, as we believe they should, we conclude they have let us down, and feelings of irritability may follow. This happens often between parents and children or between spouses. Individuals with a spirit of control will have significant problems in this area. The offender didn’t do what we thought he should, or what we wanted him to do, so we become offended and the spirit of anger enters.
3. Offense also comes through false, unrealistic, or exaggerated expectations of ourselves—such as when we seek recognition, affirmative acceptance, or confirmation, and it doesn’t occur (a spirit of rejection is at work in this example).
4. Those who have been rejected since birth are more susceptible to being wounded by these types of offenses.
5. The closer the relationship, the more severe the feelings of offense (such as in divorce). Only those you care about can hurt you deeply.
6. We misjudge the offender. Most offenses occur innocently, without the offender’s intention or awareness, but we usually believe the offense was intentional.
7. We become angry and resentful. Satan sees (and uses the fact) that we take the words and actions of others in ways “not intended.”
8. When a person is deceived, he or she “believes” they are right, even though they aren’t.
9. There are two categories of offended people: (1) those treated unjustly and (2) those who *believe* they have been treated unjustly.
10. Pride will keep us from admitting our true condition.
11. When we are offended, we become bound, and “*whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven...*” (Mat. 16:19). When we develop resentment against an offender we not only become bound ourselves, we bind them as well.
12. When we become offended we develop a hardened heart—to protect us, we begin to build walls around our heart. These walls may reduce the hurt of future offenses but they also keep out the love of God, which heals us. (For additional information about tearing down these walls, see the section on “Healing from Vows and Death Wishes.”)
13. The normal response to being offended is to try to deny it, forget it, or bury it in our subconscious. This condition is only temporary; offenses surface again in another form—such as physical illness, lack of peace, etc.
14. Some of the conditions which cultivate one’s sense of being offended include: insults, attacks, wounding, division, separation, broken relationships, betrayal, and backsliding.
15. When we allow an offense to remain in our heart, it causes severe spiritual consequences.
16. We tend to betray those who offend us—and talk about and criticize them (behind their back) to others.
17. We tend to collect more offenses, from that person and others.

18. Unhealed offenses eventually turn into hatred, bitterness, and hardness of heart.
19. We ultimately end up with a wounded spirit.
20. An offense is the ultimate cause that directs many to leave their church fellowship and/or to fall from the faith.
21. Many individuals seek revenge. However, scripture advises, “*Recompense to no man evil for evil... Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord*” (Rom. 12:17-19).
22. Bitterness develops from unfulfilled revenge; it is a “root.” Hebrews 12:14-15 cautions us: “... lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled.” If roots are nurtured (watered, protected, fed, and given attention), they increase in depth and strength. They become hard to pull out. The harvest they reap includes anger, resentment, jealousy, hatred, strife, hardness of heart, and discord. When we become offended, our ability to produce righteous fruit is stagnated.

Concerning Forgiveness

When a serious sin has been committed against a person, particularly against a child (such as sexual, physical, or verbal abuse), or when a life-threatening, frightening, or a highly unsafe experience or traumatic event occurs (such as a divorce), the one offended remembers the panic, violation, trauma, pain, sense of disloyalty or abandonment, confusion, shame and guilt, and later revisits the situation over and over again in his or her mind. This recalling of a traumatic memory (known as PTSD—post-traumatic stress disorder) scientists now believe may be even worse than the disabling physiological response suffered at the time of the initial event. It is believed this recalling of a traumatic memory or event reconsolidates the memory, writing it more strongly into the mind. PTSD is suffered by up to 6% of boys and 15% of girls (refer to http://www.medicinenet.com/posttraumatic_stress_disorder/article.htm). In these cases, forgiveness is extremely difficult for the traumatized person without the help of an intercessor and inner healing.

When offenses are not forgiven, unforgiveness sets in and eventually opens a door for a spirit of unforgiveness to take residence in the soul of the person. This dark spirit has acquired the spiritual legal right to be there, because it is feeding off the perceived or realized impression of injustice and the repeated visitation to the memory of the trauma. This spirit of unforgiveness can become very entrenched. However, when the offended person extends forgiveness, the legal right of the dark spirit to stay has been removed and it must leave when commanded to do so in the name of Jesus.

The one offended and seeking healing will find it very difficult to forgive until the experience is healed and the spirit of unforgiveness is cast out. Make note that, should the one offended sincerely forgive their abuser, “feelings” of unforgiveness may return because the spiritual ground has not been renounced and given to the Lord. This step (returning ground to the Lord) is vital to the process of inner healing and is discussed more fully in the section titled “Healing of Hurts, Emotions and Memories.” Other noteworthy fundamentals include:

1. If we want to close the open gate of unforgiveness and be released from this bondage, we first must accept that Jesus Christ forgave us of our sins—He cancelled out our IOU’s (debts) and we must do likewise (Mat. 6:12, 15; Mat. 18:35).

2. Forgiveness isn't free. In the Old Testament, animals, doves, fruit, and grain were offered in sacrifice for sin. In the New Testament, Christ offered his life for forgiveness of sin.
3. Forgiveness is similar to being given an “executive pardon,” where the offender is forgiven the crime and does not have to pay the resultant debt for the offense.
4. Forgiveness is an act of our agency and will; it is not a feeling; however, the feeling of forgiveness does follow as we forgive others.
5. When we exercise our agency to forgive, all the powers of heaven (by His design) come to our aid.
6. Forgiveness may also require forgiving God.
7. We must also forgive ourselves and accept God's forgiveness for ourselves, as we are similarly to “*love thy neighbor as thyself*” (Mat. 22:39).
8. Know that, as soon as we confess, God forgives us (1 John 1:9).
9. If the offending person is a Christian, Mat 5:25-27 requires you to reconcile with your brother before bringing a gift to the altar. Forgiveness is not however dependent upon reconciliation. Your forgiveness doesn't require the offender's cooperation or their act of reconciliation. But scripture does remind us that we are to “*bless and curse not*,” so offering a prayer of blessing upon them should follow.
10. Expect Satan to try to deceive you at a later time, to make you “think” you have not forgiven or that it takes a very long time to forgive—both of which are lies.
11. Many people are bound by bitterness against dead people. You must forgive them also.
12. If someone is holding a sin against you, it is their problem, not yours. They have to get it right before God, just like you do. Forgiveness doesn't require reconciliation. Whether they get it right with God really doesn't have anything to do without because you are standing alone before God in the integrity of your heart.

Parable of the Unforgiving Servant

In Matthew 18, Jesus sheds expanded light on the consequences which result from the sin unforgiveness. The servant that refused to forgive the debt was “*delivered . . . to the “tormentors”*” (v34.). ***till*** he should pay all that was due unto him.” Some scholars interpret the word “tormentors” within this passage to mean “unclean spirits” that come in through the open door of unforgiveness and cause, bitterness, hatred, anger, turmoil, unrest, judgment and a loss of peace, which remain till the debt is forgiven.

Concerning Judgment

1. Despite the fact that being offended and being judgmental have similar (but not identical) characteristics, their consequences are the same. Once severely offended, the person may be open to a “spirit of unforgiveness,” “a spirit of hate,” “a judgmental spirit,” and/or the “root of bitterness,” now collecting offenses and being overly-critical and judgmental of all others.
2. If we do not deal with the offense quickly, it produces fruit in opposition to that promoted by God—the fruit of sin, hurt, anger, outrage, jealousy, resentment, strife, bitterness, hatred, and envy, all which serve only to harden the heart, creating a loss of sensitivity and a blurring of our spiritual vision.

3. If Satan can convince us to make judgments out of (for instance) resentment or anger, or a critical and negative attitude, we will promptly begin hearing from an occult spirit. The occult spirit will tell us of all kinds of “things” that are “wrong” with everyone; it will come and whisper to us, even give us negative visions and dreams about this or that person, that ministry, etc. The occult spirit begins to confirm and justify our negative feelings, causing us to feel as if we are God’s “policemen”—called to keep the Body of Christ in order.
4. When we judge, Satan draws us into another spiritual realm in which we can be more easily manipulated. We are deceived into believing the wrong things; we begin, for example, to selectively believe the negative about people and their actions, which brings about division within relationships. We also physically and emotionally separate ourselves from others. Sometimes the spirits of deception and delusion enter, to further deceive and bind us.
5. When in bondage to a “spirit of judgment,” we judge others by what we see with our natural eyes and not as Jesus sees. “.. *the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart*” (1 Sam. 16:7). We then “act” upon what we see in the natural, which is tainted by this evil spirit.
6. Sometimes, through the gift of the Holy Spirit, we see another’s sin. We may conclude that “if we see this sin, surely they do also.” We may then question why their actions are not in agreement with what we believe is correct, moral, ethical, or righteous behavior. At this point, it is wise to remember that it is not our responsibility to bring correction—correction, or conviction, is the responsibility of the Lord. Those with the gift of discerning of spirits are particularly susceptible to this trap of the adversary.
7. We judge the motives of others, thereby discrediting their worth (which is great in the sight of God).
8. Sometimes we judge groups of people, ethnic groups, or certain cultures. While we would not admit to being “prejudice,” that is actually what is taking place.
9. Sometimes we judge another’s ability to minister by what we see through this judgmental spirit. We thereafter choose not to receive this person’s ministry, to only receive ministry from those whose spirituality, we believe, is “up to par” (equal or superior to our own).
10. When we exercise a critical and judging nature, we are actually in rebellion against God (Num. 12:1).

Now is a good time to take stock of, or to examine, your own life. If you have ever been the victim of false accusation or judgment, inspect what’s on your heart and ask yourself, "Have I ever sowed the seeds of accusation or false judgment into someone else's life? Have I ever had a critical, fault-finding attitude towards someone else?" Sometimes we experience such a “sense of conviction” with our perceived judgments that we are sure we have understood God's heart. This is not always the case. We can be sincere, not realizing that we are sincerely wrong about another individual. We are all susceptible to these varying kinds of deception if we are not mindfully aware of these forms of entrapment and ever humbly repentant in our relationship with God.

Root of Bitterness

If we do not deal in a timely manner with our unforgiveness and judgment (Eph 4:26) it may eventually turn into bitterness. *“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”*. (Heb 12:15) This can eventually lead to resentment, retaliation, anger, hatred, and perhaps even violence or murder (character assassination or verbal abuse). For more on this specific problem see John & Paula Sanford’s book *The Transformation of the Inner Man*, Victory House, 1982 ISBN 0-932081-13-4, pg 237-268. Bitterness comes with several other spirits: hatred, unforgiveness, resentment, anger, retaliation. They all may need to be cast out.

We May Need To Forgive God

Sometimes we become offended and angry with God, as when He doesn’t do things according to our expectations (as when letting a family member or relative die, when letting bad things happen to good people, etc.) or He doesn’t heal us when we think we have the faith to be healed. We need to be aware that we cannot see God’s plan for us or for others. We may be making a false judgment before its time. We need to release God to be God—to relinquish our will to Him and our expectations of Him. In these instances, we need to tell God we are sorry and to ask for His forgiveness.

We May Need to Forgive Ourselves

When traumatic events happen, such as if we are sexual abused for example, the devil will try to convince us that it was our fault. Then we begin to condemn ourselves. We may be sorry for our behavior in relationship to others. We may have been responsible for an injury to someone else. This can lead to our judging ourselves. We may eventually feel we have done so many “bad” things” that God could never love us. Our image of ourselves begins to deteriorate. We need to forgive ourselves in order to have spiritual freedom.

For Those Who Have Offended Others

When someone is obedient to the commandment in Matt 5:26 and confronts you with an offense you have committed against them, you must remember to humble yourself. Pride defends, but humility agrees and says, “You are right. I am sorry that I’ve offended you. Please forgive me.” You can be sincerely sorrowful for the thought of your having instigated offense. This must be your response even though you feel you have done nothing wrong and that you have been falsely accused.

Healing Relationships

Deliverance may not occur if the seeker has problems in their relationships with their father or mother.

- a. We must honor them (Ex. 20:12, the 5th commandment). This is the first commandment with a promise that if we honor our fathers and mothers, it will go well with us for the rest of our life.
- b. We must forgive them (Mat. 15:4, Mark 10:19, Eph. 6:2)
- c. We cannot be a disciple if we hate our father or our mother (Luke 14:26)

- d. *“Whoso curseth his father or his mother, his lamp shall be put out in obscure darkness”* (Prov. 20:20).
- e. *“Cursed is the one who treats his father and mother with contempt”* (Deu 27:16)

You are required to love (have loving respect for) your father and your mother, but you are not required to enjoy their company. When individuals—even family members—are not “safe” to be around, it is healthy to detach from their presence. This means respect them, and be willing to do anything to help them. It means that we must follow their directions as long as we live under their roof. If one or both of their parents did not spend time holding the seeker, or telling them they were loved, or if they were conceived out of wedlock rejection is likely to be present. Other inner healing may be required if verbal, physical or sexual abuse is revealed. The minister is looking for hurts, or emotional reactions to hurts such as resentment, anger, rejection, self-pity or depression.

Other sources of possible unforgiveness in relationships includes: brothers, sisters, employers, teachers, present spouses, previous spouses and children. When ministering to seekers, ask them early about these relationships with father and mother, and any unforgiveness.

Becoming Unoffendable

As spiritually mature adults, our goal should be to develop an unoffendable heart, to become unoffendable. In several places, the scriptures tell us not to be offended (Ps. 119:165, Luke 7:23, Rom. 14:21, 1 Cor. 8:13). While none of us can achieve this goal immediately, the following guidelines may be helpful:

1. We are exhorted not to let the sun go down on our wrath (Eph. 4:26). We are to reconcile quickly; the longer we delay, the harder it becomes.
2. When you are offended, don’t talk about offenses to everyone; go directly to the one who sinned against you, as Jesus told us to do. (Matt 5:26) (If you have problems with your tongue, see the section on “Healing Your Tongue.”)
3. Extend forgiveness—which is required, but we are not obligated to trust. Forgiveness is mandatory; trust must be earned.
4. Don’t feel guilty if you still do not like to be associated with a person. The Lord calls us to love them, not necessarily to enjoy their company.
5. Our goal should be to develop the “fruits of the spirit” sufficiently enough to create a permanent cushion of love around our heart, such that no offense can penetrate it.

How to Forgive

1. It takes effort to be free of unforgiveness. You have to recognize you are hurt (through conviction) and confess it.
2. Be willing to tear up all the IOU’s (debts) of people who have offended you.
3. Take a pencil in hand and pray to God that He will reveal anyone for whom you have unforgiveness. Write their names below. Do not be surprised at the number God reveals.

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4. Share your list (in confession) with a trusted friend or pastor.
 5. Ask this trusted friend or pastor to pray with you, that the Holy Spirit would further reveal to you any persons for whom you may still harbor unforgiveness—though you may have already forgotten them. (We seldom see all of our own "stuff.")
 6. Remember, the Lord does not require you to reconcile with the person if they are unwilling to do so. Reconciliation requires forgiveness on the part of both parties. Know, though, that God does require you to be willing to reconcile.
 7. If you have difficulty in forgiving someone tell the Lord, "I am willing to be made willing by an act of my agency and will." This process works like an IOU. He will forgive you now, and free you, while you work on forgiving the person you have agreed to forgive. Make sure you are able to forgive this person or get help by asking others to pray for you to accomplish this commitment.
 8. If you have a hard time forgiving someone, ask Jesus to fill you with His own understanding and love for the other party (to do for you what you cannot do for yourself) and to pour out His forgiving love into your heart. Ask God to let you see the other party as He sees them.
 9. Sometimes the unforgiveness has a root in a previous traumatic or abusive experience. In such cases, the above steps may be insufficient for releasing your offender and the assistance of a knowledgeable intercessor, who can pray for inner healing, may be required. (If you have tried to forgive and the unforgiveness keeps returning, inner healing prayer is probably required.)
 10. In faith believing, pray the prayer stated in Ezek. 36:26, prefacing it with, "Lord, I believe your promise in Ezekiel is also available to me." "*A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh.*"
 11. If the seeker has difficulty forgiving the one who hurt them, have the seeker repeat every hurt or offense against each offender one at a time, or talk to the offender as if they were there. If they continue to have extreme difficulty forgiving, postpone the forgiveness until the end of the deliverance prayer when all other gates are closed, and their spirit is much stronger.

Prayer for Healing From Unforgiveness

If you are angry with God, first pray to Him, asking His forgiveness of your anger toward Him. Then, for each person you listed above (as revealed by the Holy Spirit) pray the following prayer (adapted from *The Bait of Satan*, page 188):

Father, in the name of Jesus, I acknowledge that I have sinned against you by not forgiving those who have offended me. I have been critical and judgmental toward others. I repent of this and ask your forgiveness.

I also acknowledge my inability to forgive without your help. Therefore, from my heart, I choose to forgive _____ (insert person's name—release each one individually).

I bring under the blood of Jesus all that they have done wrong toward me. I release them from owing me anything. I remit their sins against me.

Heavenly Father, as my Lord Jesus asked you to forgive those who had sinned against Him, I likewise pray that your forgiveness come to those who have sinned against me.

I loose them from bondage, and I know that what is loosed on earth is also loosed in heaven. I ask that you bless them and lead them into a closer relationship with you.

I pray these favors in the precious name of Jesus. Amen.

Resources

1. Rodney Hogue, *Forgiveness*, 2008, available from Community of Grace, 380 Elmhurst St. Hayward, CA 94544. 81p.
2. John Beveré, *The Bait of Satan* (Charisma House, 1994). ISBN 0-88419-374-8.
3. Susan Gaddis, *Help, I'm Stuck with These People for the Rest of Eternity* (Arrow Publications, 2004). ISBN 1886296332.
4. Kathie Walters, *The Spirit of False Judgment* (Faith Printing, 4210 Locust Hill Road, Taylors, SC 29687, 1995). ISBN 0-9629559-5-7.