

The Abundant Life that Comes Through Forgiveness

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Introduction: What is the most appealing fruit that is found in a Christian's life?

A. Jesus plainly stated that He would give every man who trusted Him this life.

(Jn 10:10; Jn 13:34-35)

1. You will find that what Jesus tell us to do will go against the instincts of our flesh! **(Jn 14:27)**
 2. God made us and understands our real needs.
 3. How we think is the key to a life that is worth living. Have you really got to know someone who is miserable and without purpose?
 4. Have you been around a Christian that has a loving, purpose-filled life?
- B. When we have no answers to our hurts, our guilt and our fears then we will live a life that is filled with deception.
1. We have a wonderful Saviour who humbly waits at the door of our hearts with all the answers. Who will open? **(Mt 11:28-30)**
 2. Will we really trust Him? What He asks is understandable but very, very hard to do. We do not want to be cheated.

I. We must learn how to forgive others

A. When the Lord tells us to "put on" something, we are dealing with a learning, growing process. **(Col 3:12-15)**

1. Until we learn to get out of ourselves then these things are impossible.
 2. Will you be "cheated" by showing mercy, longsuffering and considering another better than yourselves? The world says yes!
 3. There is a wonderful burden lifted when you are no longer looking to see how others have cheated you, or how they have let you down.
 4. Going from a child to being a parent gives us perspective!
- B. We must develop an attitude of forgiveness.
1. Why did Jesus and Stephen pray for forgiveness of those in sin? **(Lk 23:34; Acts 7:60)**
 2. Did they receive forgiveness without any repentance in their own hearts?
 3. No, they were later given opportunities to repent. **(Acts 2:36-38)**
 4. Can we release our desire for personal vengeance and give it to God under all circumstances? **(Rom 12:17-21)**
 5. This goes against every instinct the world has taught us. Our failure to learn this will guarantee a defeated life.
 6. This is a must for us to move forward in a life of faith! **(Phil 3:13-14)**
 7. Can you do this "one thing?" Without it we will be burdened beyond measure and will be enslaved to past hurts.

II. We must extend forgiveness when others repent and confess their sins

- A. God forgives others following repentance and confession.
(Acts 8:22; 1 Jn 1:9)
 - 1. There is no forgiveness without repentance.
 - 2. Anything you can do to help another see the guilt of their sin and turn to God in repentance is a great act of selfless mercy. Please do not let another die in their sin. (Jn 8:24)
- B. We cannot forgive a sin without repentance! (Lk 17:3-4)
 - 1. It would be the ultimate act of personal vengeance to let a person walk in sin and you decide to “let it go.”
 - 2. When some think they are more loving than God and extend forgiveness where God does not is playing into Satan’s hand.
 - 3. There is a big difference between someone hurting you and someone *sinning against you*. (1 Jn 3:4)
 - 4. Longsuffering, bearing with another, kindness, humility, meekness all deal with attitudes that let us quickly move on from *slights and hurts*.

III. Two men respond to those who have hurt them

- A. The first man decides that he will follow the “common sense” of the world.
 - 1. He will take hurts personally and dwell on them.
 - 2. He will seek a broader personal attack on the “transgressor.”
 - 3. Human standards of “punishment” are sought – “eye for eye”; “probation”; “a time of exile.”
 - 4. The fault is never forgotten and can be quickly brought up if “needed.”
- B. The first man will in time experience problems with his relationships.
(Jas 3:14-16)
 - 1. He will live in a world of “throw-away people.”
 - 2. He will learn to trust no one and those that know him will learn not to trust him!
- C. The second man decides to follow the mercy and forgiveness of Jesus.
 - 1. Any faults he sees in others he first remembers what Jesus did for him.
(1 Tim 1:15-16)
 - 2. He wants to restore the offender’s relationship to God and the relationship to himself. (2 Cor 2:7-8, 11)
 - 3. He lets the past go and has confidence in future path of his brother.
(2 Cor 2:3-4; 2 Thess 3:4; Philemon 1:21)
 - 4. He will find his marriage, his children, his brethren and his friends to be blessed by his being a “son of encouragement.” (Acts 4:36)
 - 5. His hurts become an opportunity to build a stronger faith and come even closer to God. (Job 42:5-6; Ps 51:16-17)

Conclusion: Which man are you?

- A. Years ago I read a tract called “a better world begins with me.”
- B. Are you ready to let go of your hurts and start trusting God!