

**General Topics :: Abuse and forgiveness**

**Abuse and forgiveness - posted by lwpray (), on: 2004/7/15 16:02**

My telephone rang this afternoon.

A man asked for help. His father had abused this man's two daughters, two of the girls' cousins of the same age, about one year to five years. Other girls had been targeted over the years.

This man phoning me, had arrived at a level at which he seriously, very seriously considers ways of forgiveness. He asked for help finding something to read, no theology, no sloppy agape – the real thing concerning how to forgive and how to express forgiveness.

Many men are theologically conversant, but spiritually ignorant in this area as well as in other areas. I cannot find books in my language dealing with this issue. We need to find something good, something solid to put in this man's willing hands.

Are you able to help?

Lars

**Re: Abuse and forgiveness - posted by philologos (), on: 2004/7/15 17:42**

Lars

Some aspects of 'What's so amazing about grace?' might be relevant?

It's always ultimately impossible to put ourselves into the shoes of another person; grace is so personal. But grace is 'variagated' (manifold) and there is an aspect which will just exactly meet your friend's need. Encourage him to be honest with God about the way he feels, and assure him that God will not be shocked or offended by his feelings.

He will need a miracle, but God is able.

**Re: Abuse and forgiveness - posted by Chancellor (), on: 2004/7/15 19:19**

No theology? Is that some sort of code phrase for "I don't care what the Bible says because I don't consider the Bible relevant for today"? "Theologically conversant but spiritually ignorant"? What on Earth is that supposed to mean: that what the Bible teaches is not relevant for "real life" and those who insist on Biblical solutions are spiritually ignorant? Or was it intended to be an insult to pastors, Bible teachers, and church elders?

I presume the man in question understands that Jesus commands us to forgive and that Jesus will not forgive us if we don't. So, let's just accept that as a given that doesn't need to be reiterated. The question then becomes one of "Yes, but how?"

The scripture tells us "In justice, remember mercy." In dispensing justice, we're to also be merciful to the offending party. That doesn't mean that we just let him get away with his crime but it does mean that we are merciful in the dispensing of justice (keeping in mind that every human deserves nothing except for eternity in the lake of fire). The child molester must be held accountable for his crime under the law but, as Christians, we are not to seek vengeance, we are not to feel or display animosity or hatred toward the criminal, we are not to harbor bitterness in our hearts toward that person, and (though I said we didn't need to reiterate this) we must forgive that person. What does it mean to forgive? Go study what it meant for God to forgive you of your sins and you'll understand what it means for us to forgive one another.

Grace is God giving us what we, in a positive sense, do not deserve.

Mercy is God not giving us what we, in a negative sense, quite rightly deserve.

Re: - posted by KeithLaMothe, on: 2004/7/15 19:47

Quote:

-----Chancellor wrote:

No theology? Is that some sort of code phrase for "I don't care what the Bible says because I don't consider the Bible relevant for today"? "Theologically conversant but spiritually ignorant"? What on Earth is that supposed to mean: that what the Bible teaches is not relevant for "real life" and those who insist on Biblical solutions are spiritually ignorant? Or was it intended to be an insult to pastors, Bible teachers, and church elders?

I'm sure no offense was intended. I believe the "Theologically conversant but spiritually ignorant" would include those people very well versed in the Bible and Biblical Theology, very skilled in teaching and discussing even the very complicated issues in Theology, but when it comes to some basic spiritual application, like having to forgive someone who did something terrible to them, they find that all their knowledge doesn't really help them. I believe that would only be the case if they hadn't really been absorbing the Scriptures into their lives, but nonetheless it does seem there are more than a few people who fit this description.

Of course the Bible is relevant to this, as it is to everything. Anyone having difficulty forgiving should remember well

Matthew 18 (NASB)

- 21 Then Peter came and said to Him, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?"
- 22 Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.
- 23 "For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves.
- 24 "When he had begun to settle them, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him.
- 25 "But since he did not have the means to repay, his lord commanded him to be sold, along with his wife and children and all that he had, and repayment to be made.
- 26 "So the slave fell to the ground and prostrated himself before him, saying, 'Have patience with me and I will repay you everything.'
- 27 "And the lord of that slave felt compassion and released him and forgave him the debt.
- 28 "But that slave went out and found one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and he seized him and began to choke him, saying, 'Pay back what you owe.'
- 29 "So his fellow slave fell to the ground and began to plead with him, saying, 'Have patience with me and I will repay you.'
- 30 "But he was unwilling and went and threw him in prison until he should pay back what was owed.
- 31 "So when his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were deeply grieved and came and reported to their lord all that had happened.
- 32 "Then summoning him, his lord said to him, 'You wicked slave, I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me.
- 33 'Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave, in the same way that I had mercy on you?'
- 34 "And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him.
- 35 "My heavenly Father will also do the same to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart."

As I understand it, the man in question isn't unwilling to forgive, but is confused as "how" to forgive. One of the congregants in my church (not an elder, but I keep thinking he is) once expressed similar confusion on "how" to love one's enemies.

Personally I have a hard time relating to those questions, loving and forgiving never seemed to be terribly complicated things to do in the attitude sense (rightly expressing that love and forgiveness can be very complicated, though). I've never had to forgive anything like the offenses in question, though.

Re: Abuse and forgiveness - posted by revival9 (), on: 2004/7/15 19:50

Brother Lars,

First: Is the perpetrator still abusing? Your post does not make this clear. I'm concerned. I'm a victim of this kind of abuse. The perpetrator must be stopped.

This man has a great opportunity to come to Christ himself (if he hasn't yet). Tell him that I believe the Lord means to use his life, his testimony, for the salvation of many, because of what has happened. It has happened for a reason. Praise GOD that he is reaching out to forgive! Only GOD can do that in a person's heart.

Tell him he may have the opportunity to win the perpetrator to Christ, also, by his own walk with God. The girls involved will need healing, too. And much clear teaching about how God, being a male authority figure, is NOT an abuser like this grandfather was. The Holy Spirit will heal them all, if He is welcome in their hearts.

The Anabaptist viewpoint on forgiveness echoes the words of Jesus and the early church. I recommend Johann Christoph Arnold's book "Why Forgive?" Many stories of how victims and surviving family members have forgiven the worst perpetrators, and won some of them to Christ! My favorite quote:

*Forgiveness is the only way out. Even if our adversary chooses to remain in the darkness, that should not hold us back. If we leave the door open for him, he may even follow us into the light.*

Mrs. Fred

**Re: - posted by Chancellor (), on: 2004/7/15 20:21**

Many of the people I deal with in the kind of ministry that I do are those who object to people giving answers to life's problems from God's word. They tend not to want Biblical solutions but some Christianized form of psychology that doesn't really hold them accountable for anything and doesn't really demand anything of them. So, naturally, when someone objects to "theology," I have to question what exactly they're looking for.

As for the "how" of forgiveness, that's where it's important for us to understand what it meant for God to forgive us. The Lord casts our sins into the sea and remembers them no more.

There's a Bible-based 12-step program (a contradiction in terms) up in Niagara Falls that, at the end of each meeting, has a phrase they say. This phrase, I think, is a good place to start:

Quote:

-----"Forgive it, forget it, and don't go back and get it!"  
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**Re: Brother Lars - posted by Gideons (), on: 2004/7/15 21:25**

Brother Lars,

As someone who was literally consumed by the fruits of unforgiveness (i.e. depression, bitterness, etc.), I found a book called "Total Forgiveness" by R.T. Kendall very scripturally solid and both convicting and encouraging at the same time. The Holy Spirit removed this emotional cancer of sorts from my heart but it was certainly one of the most painful periods of my life.

Here's a quote from Brother R.T. that sums up what forgiveness will do in our hearts "Relinquishing bitterness is an open invitation for the Holy Spirit to give you His peace, His joy, and the knowledge of His will." I think the most painful thing I sought repentance for which I honestly didn't know until I started praying about and seeking the Lord earnestly was that much of this bitterness I had toward this particular person was passed into my relationship to Jesus.

In other words, I needed to forgive someone for a very serious offense but I had unconsciously blamed God for what had happened as well.

I don't profess to know what is in this brother's heart but this particular sin causes significant harm to our relationship with God, as well as each other.

**Thank you for replies thus far - posted by lwpray (), on: 2004/7/16 2:04**

Dear friends,  
Thank you for answers and hints.

This abusing grand father is now under police scrutiny – the perpetrator has been stopped. His son – father of the two girls, is together with his wife leaving the stage of anger and direct bitterness and are working on ways to reach out to the grand father. They are all Christians.

Brother Keith explains what I did not state: “I believe the 'Theologically conversant but spiritually ignorant' would include those people very well versed in the Bible and Biblical Theology, very skilled in teaching and discussing even the very complicated issues in Theology, but when it comes to some basic spiritual application, like having to forgive someone who did something terrible to them, they find that all their knowledge doesn't really help them. I believe that would only be the case if they hadn't really been absorbing the Scriptures into their lives, but nonetheless it does seem there are more than a few people who fit this description”.

Mrs Fred reminds me about a book I have forgotten to buy. Friends at the Bruderhof fellowship offered it to me several years ago. I have not read anything authored by Eberhard Arnold's son.

“The Anabaptist viewpoint on forgiveness echoes the words of Jesus and the early church. I recommend Johann Christoph Arnold's book 'Why Forgive?' Many stories of how victims and surviving family members have forgiven the worst perpetrators, and won some of them to Christ! My favorite quote:

Forgiveness is the only way out. Even if our adversary chooses to remain in the darkness, that should not hold us back. If we leave the door open for him, he may even follow us into the light.”

“Chancellor”. My very first assignment as an interpreter was related to a former homosexual some 25 years ago. We both worked with Teen Challenge - he in the U.S. and I here in Sweden. I was impressed indeed with his attitude which was very soft but at the same time to the point. He knew how to apply the instructions of the Lord and how to carry a solid testimony regarding the presence of the Spirit working within forming Christ. It is this combination we seldom find. I have been looking at your web site, and I want you to know that I have gathered enough experience over the years as a counsellor to rejoice over miracles of the kind you represent.

**Re: Thank you for replies thus far - posted by philologos (), on: 2004/7/16 4:06**

Lars

A personal testimony.

Many years ago someone behaved in a way which betrayed my trust and caused serious problems in the church where I was 'leader'. I came to the Lord frequently with this issue and forgave him. As soon as I rose from my knees the memories flooded back in and I was crippled again. This went on for some time. In the end, in desperation, I climbed a hill at night a long way from any houses and prayed again. This time when I rose from my knees I stood on the hilltop and with all my strength I shouted "I forgive him". Somehow in that cry I put my whole being into that declaration and the spell was broken. My cry was 30 years ago, and today I cannot remember what it was that that man did or said.

In a way my action was instinctive. I was not following a procedure. I know those involved will need careful counsel and pastoral care, but I repeat my previous comment... They will need a miracle, but God is able.

**Further definition - posted by lwpray (), on: 2004/7/16 9:04**

Further definition of what we are after:

We want something substantial to read about how to express forgiveness, attitudes and activity, in order to restore the perpetrator. Something to read and ponder and to pray over.

We disqualify shallowness, we are looking for the real thing, the operational thing – restoration of a large family, many victims of various orders and their families and friends.

The father is ready to enter together with his wife into a priestly ministry.

Brother Art Katz describes this kind of need in a perfect way. We want to move into its reality.

Katz has the theology for it – we want to see it in operation. Pray with us.

Lars

**Re: Further definition - posted by Jimm (), on: 2004/7/16 10:20**

Hey all!

Everyone probably read this dozens of times but it is, in my opinion, quite relevant.

Romans 7:14-25 14 For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. 15 For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. 16 If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. 17 Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. 19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. 20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. 22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

Forgiveness is a fruit of the spirit- it is part of "the good that I would". I do not believe that the fruits of the spirit can be reproduced in the "normal man". Our attitude should be that of Jesus Christ who confessed that he could do NOTHING of himself (John8:28). Are the fruits of the spirit really something we can read about in a systematic program? I find this hard to reconcile in myself. I am trying to present a text that, now that I think of it, requires no explanation or introduction:

John 15:1-8 1 I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. 2 Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. 3 Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. 4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. 5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. 6 If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. 7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. 8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples

James

**Re: Further definition - posted by crsschk (), on: 2004/7/16 11:58**

Dear Lars,

Thank you for your kind patience throughout this thread. I have been searching for something just in the manner that you are after...something from someone who has been through this, so far have not found anything substantial but will continue to search. In the mean time just want to echo this call:

Quote:

-----"Pray with us"  
-----

*"weep with those who weep"*

**Re: Further definition - posted by lwpray (), on: 2004/7/16 13:39**

Priestliness

The world is destitute of the sense of things heavenly for the lack of priests who are able to bring that dimension of reality.

Another synonym for heaven is reality. Whatever reality is, then that is heaven. It takes even a priestly mentality to sense that, and to feel for that, and a priestly ministry to introduce that in a world that is inhospitable to heaven.

Earth resists heavenly things, and yet mankind languishes for the lack of priests.

Art Katz

**Why Forgive - posted by lwpray (), on: 2004/7/19 3:02**

Dear Friends,

We found Johann Christoph Arnold's book "Why Forgive?" on this web page:

<http://www.christopharnold.com/e-books/WhyForgive.htm>

E-book to be read for free, using Adobe Acrobat – also to be downloaded at the same site.

An interesting challenge.

Every blessing,

Lars

**Re: What is true forgiveness - posted by moreofHim (), on: 2004/7/19 7:54**

What Is True Forgiveness?

Forgiveness must be a conscious act of the will to deliberately pardon another individual. You may convince yourself that you have forgiven a person and simply don't feel the same fellowship. How can you tell if you have forgiven and the relationship has just taken another direction? If you have any flashbacks of memory, however minor, of what the other person did or said to you-- you have not torn down the stronghold of unforgiveness you have built around this offense.

Those who knew little forgiveness and grace while growing up will erect strongholds around inevitable wounds. The stronghold of unforgiveness can block all mercy and grace from the unforgiving heart. Peace and family harmony can be blocked. Divine healing can be blocked from the body, soul and spirit. It is a fact that the medical profession has documented diseases that are caused from chemical poisons released into the body by unforgiveness, bitterness, anger, resentment, frustration, fear and anxiety.

We've all heard people say, "Don't give it another thought, it's been forgotten." Forgiveness is not forgetting a wrong. You "forgot" the hurt only after you forgive. When you try to turn these two acts around, you only send your feelings about the wrong downstairs to your subconscious. There it drips bitterness into your inner being until it causes something really ugly to surface later in your body or your mental state.

Strongholds of bitterness and resentment are like toxic thorns and thistles that root down in your soul. Roots of bitterness cause torment in your soul, setting up deadly strongholds which the enemy then accesses to torment you further.

The Cost of Forgiveness

When betrayal or a wound from a friend or loved one knocks us down, our old nature wants to rush to our rescue, defend us and place blame. Forgiveness denies our carnal nature any right to cry out for pity, comfort and reassurance of what we have suffered at the hands of another. Forgiveness denies our right to protect our hurt, to pet and stroke it and pack it around for all to see. Forgiveness denies our right to tell our pitiful story.

Forgiveness says we will pay the price for the other person's act. This is what Jesus did when He died on the cross to pay for the forgiveness of our sins. Can't you see what forgiveness meant to Jesus? There was no holding back on His part, no grudges, no silent condemnation, no cessation of love or giving. He paid the full price for our sins- not with words- but with His life.

Much of the world's forgiveness is only empty words. People are very casual about saying, 'Sure, I forgive you,' when they actually bear considerable ill will in their hearts. Often the one who asks forgiveness and the one who says he forgives both know neither is being truthful.

Real forgiveness is not cheap. It carries a very high price tag. When you forgive, you release the one who is guilty and place yourself in their stead. The saying "someone has to pay" really is true. When you forgive, you are the one who has to pay. You are the one to bear the loss instead of the one who caused the wrong. Jesus gave His life to prevent the loss of our lives. He was so serious about forgiveness, He gave His all for us before we knew Him or loved Him or even cared.

#### Nothing Can Replace Forgiveness

You can repent of your sins until you are hoarse, confess your faith to all, pray without ceasing, give everything you have to the work of God, read the bible everyday and STILL block God's forgiveness by an unforgiving heart. Jesus said, "...If you forgive people their trespasses (their reckless and willful sins- leaving them, letting them go and giving up resentment) your Heavenly Father will also forgive you. BUT if you do not forgive others their trespasses- neither will the Father forgive your trespasses". (Matt.6:14-15) When you refuse to forgive, you cut yourself off from forgiveness.

Forgiveness is not:  
tolerance.  
pretending.  
forgetting.  
generosity of spirit.  
looking the other way.  
making a joke of a wrong.  
a passive non-response.

Forgiveness is something much deeper!

Forgiveness is:  
a deliberate act of the will.  
a full pardon.  
a substitutional act.  
obedience to God's word.  
the key to freedom.

#### God Will Take Care of The Details

Trust God to take care of whatever else needs to be taken care of- trust him to work out His will and purposes in every situation. Jesus did. "When they hurled their insults at Him, He did not retaliate; when He suffered, He made no threats." The world wants us to believe we must be recompensed for every wrong. This is a message our old nature loves and it will lay hold of any validation, affirmation and reinforcement. The world says, 'You are entitled to your hurts and anger and destructive behavior! Look what happened to you.'

God says, "You can't hold onto those things, child. I cannot allow these sins to be covered over, you must destroy them before they help Satan destroy you. Let Me show you how to make room to receive My mercy and grace. Let Me show you how to forgive. Submit your will to mine and I will give you a new will. Submit your mind to the washing of my Word and the mind of my Son and I will give you a new mind. I will give you peace and power and freedom." This is God's way.

-L. Savard (Breaking Strongholds)



This helped me greatly with an issue of unforgiveness. -Chanin

**Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2004/7/19 11:59**

Hi Chanin

Forgiveness is:  
a deliberate act of the will.  
a full pardon.  
a substitutional act.  
obedience to God's word.  
the key to freedom.

I think perhaps I missed something. What does 'a substitutional act' mean in this context?

**Re: forgiveness - posted by moreofHim (), on: 2004/7/19 12:15**

Hi Ron,

As to your question, I honestly don't know since I didn't write this article. :-(

I only know how much it hit me in the face about how i thought I had forgiven someone - but still had a hard time not wanting to tell my "pitiful story". This really hit home for me. Sorry if it is not doctrinally or theologically exactly correct- just trying to help. ;-)

In His perfect love, Chanin

**Re: A substitutional act. . . - posted by lwpray (), on: 2004/7/19 12:31**

A substitutional act. . .  
This caught my attention and got my mind working as well as my heart pounding.  
This belongs to the area of priestliness.  
To go between. To carry a burden. To bring in the dimension of the Altar.

We handle the concept of forgiveness with a slight twist of selfishness Â– to forgive is to come to grips with and to bring in a sense of relief for personal benefit.

But, to forgive includes much more, very much more. It is a weapon of war to be wielded of behalf of the one who commits sin, for the sake of opening for repentance and spiritual intervention from Heaven.

But, to forgive includes much more, very much more. It touches God's heart, Someone there to share the burden. Someone there to care for the vindication of God.

A substitutional act. . .

Thank you Chanin . . .

(Would rather use a real name than this. . . )

Lars W.

**Re: - posted by Xoda (), on: 2004/7/19 15:07**

When I read it, I connected the substitutional act to this part of the text. Which I hope makes sense. :=(

Quote:  
-----Real forgiveness is not cheap. It carries a very high price tag. When you forgive, you release the one who is guilty and place yourself in their stead. The saying "someone has to pay" really is true. When you forgive, you are the one who has to pay. You are the one to bear the loss in stead of the one who caused the wrong.  
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/Daniel



**Re: - posted by Chancellor (), on: 2004/7/20 17:23**

I'm familiar with Paul's writing about the FRUIT of the Spirit but I don't remember ever reading anything about the FRUIT S of the Spirit. Tell me, what is this strange new doctrine you're teaching?

**Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2004/7/20 17:39**

Quote:  
-----I'm familiar with Paul's writing about the FRUIT of the Spirit but I don't remember ever reading anything about the FRUITS of the Spirit. Tell me, what is this strange new doctrine you're teaching?  
-----

It was actually Jesus that used the term:

**Matthew 3:8** - Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:

**Matthew 7:16** - Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

**Matthew 7:20** - Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

and yes Paul used the term too:

**2 Corinthians 9:10** - Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness;)

**Philippians 1:11** - Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

Also James the brother of the Lord:

**James 3:17** - But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

**Re: - posted by Chancellor (), on: 2004/7/21 11:42**

The scriptures you cited are not the same thing as the "fruit of the Spirit" being referred to here. The tendency to refer to the list as the "fruits" of the Spirit make it seem as if the list is a buffet and that we can pick and choose which items we're going to have (and this is exactly how this is played out in the lives of many who refer to the "fruits" of the Spirit). We must have every item on the list or we do not have the "fruit of the Spirit." The scripture says, "the fruit of the Spirit IS..." not "the fruits of the Spirit are." Doctrinally, there is a difference.

There are certainly other fruits besides the fruit of the Spirit but there is only **ONE fruit** of the Spirit.