



*By Jeanne Sheffield Estrada, Th.D.*

## ARTICLE 1: Why Should I Forgive Someone Who Has Hurt Me?

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Sometimes we just refuse to forgive. Does this sound like you? Sometimes we try, but we just cannot do it in our own strength, but we have a friend who is closer than a brother to help us. His name is Jesus and He wants to help set you and your captive free! Let Him show you the way and take you by the hand.

Jesus said, "If you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive you." Matthew 6: 14-15

C. S. Lewis wrote, "To be a Christian means to forgive the inexcusable, because God has forgiven the inexcusable." Jesus forgave the inexcusable on the cross for the entire world! Personally, this is something that continues to be a revelation to me because only Jesus could take upon His mortal, human body every sin committed by man since the beginning of time until His last day on earth. He even took upon Himself every human disease and suffered an excruciating death pardoning everyone. No human being is capable of doing this.

Unfortunately, for those of us who have been deeply wounded, the prospect of forgiving those who have caused us pain often seems impossible. Yet, because of Jesus Christ and all the work He so unselfishly did for us of the cross, ALL things are possible, even including full and complete forgiveness.

Have you had those moments when you have forgiven your offender, but you give in and lapsed back into the same ole drama and dialogue in your head blaming and accusing that person? This is when we must turn to Jesus to help us. Apostle Paul tells us that the scriptures fill us with confidence and power. We find what he means when we read Philippians 4:13 which says, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Forgiveness requires strength, but first we need to come to understand what forgiveness truly means. Let's look at how the Bible defines forgiveness. Forgiveness releases and

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removes guilt. It is slow to anger and not puffed up. Forgiveness embraces love and mercy. It is compassionate and gracious.

My friend, please understand this. Forgiveness is one of those things in life that is on-going. It is a work in progress that never seems to end, because as long as we are living in these bodies there is a part of us that is going to be tested again and again and again to make judgments.

Personally, one of most difficult things I have learned the hard way is that the lack of forgiveness kept me attached to incidents which I just could not let go. Unforgiveness kept me in a dark and lonely place with a continual repetitive scenario going 'round and 'round in my thoughts. Have you experienced this dark, lonely place, too? If so, you and I both know it is such a miserable place to stay in. Why would we want to stay there when there is a way out?

I want to talk to you about how forgiveness can take you from darkness into light. From anger to peace. From hate to genuine love. How forgiveness can develop greater insight into your own humanness and how it can allow you to know who you truly are. This may seem impossible right now, but if this is what you really, really want, you will find it.

I want to invite you to come with me and let's go on a bird's eye journey taking time to look up closely at forgiveness together. We will take little steps crossing over an imaginary bridge that will help us find your true spiritual nature and the heart of God. Do you want to go with me? If you do, then ok, let's go exploring!

There will be two main points I want you to remember which are the turning points in our journey. First of all, forgiveness is a 'decision', but not only a decision, forgiveness is a 'process' requiring you to be ready, willing and committed to go through, especially if your wounds of unforgiveness are very deep.

When we forgive, our wounds are healed and cleansed. It's like the sweet fragrance of a rose or a fresh, spring rain. Forgiveness is a great release. It is a gift you not only given to the one who wounded you, but also to yourself.

Let's take note at how Forgiveness takes Action!

- \* Forgiveness STOPS the recycling anger and blame.
- \* Forgiveness Heals our inner and outer life.
- \* Forgiveness Changes how we see ourselves and others.

Forgiveness Ends the inner conflicts we carry with us every day.  
Forgiveness Let's us Experience Christ's Love, His mercy, His Grace.

This is what Jesus wants for you!

The Message Bible reads, *"It's in Christ that we find out who we are and what we are living for. Long before we heard of Christ, He had His eye on us, had designs on us for glorious living, part of the overall purpose He is working out in everything and everyone."* - Ephesians 1:11.

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The bottom line is this. Ask yourself what do I want? Do I want to continue to stay in this never-ending negative merry go 'round in my mind, or do I want to find my way out so that I can find peace?

Jesus says in John 14:27, *“My peace I leave with you; My peace I give you not as the world gives do I give you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be afraid.”* When you search for His peace you will find it. Why do we know this? Because Jesus promises in Hebrews 13:5-6, *“I will never leave you nor forsake you.”*

Each article is written in succession to invite you to contemplate why we as little humans have inner conflicts with unforgiveness, and the reasons we must resolve these conflicts to be right with God. I want to help lead you through your journey through this progressive healing process that will guide you to your desired destination. The destination of freedom, which finally comes when you truly and completely forgive. The only prerequisite is your willingness along with determination!

My friends, there is so much more I want to share with you about forgiveness, so please stay with me and hold the Lord's and my hand as we take these little baby steps together across the “freedom bridge” together!

**Let's pray:**

*Lord Jesus, Please help me to truly come to realize all the hurtful things that were said about you and the suffering you bore on the cross for me and for all the world, and how you forgave them all anyway. I have been hurt, but never, ever as much as you. Help me to let go and forgive so that I can be free. Lord, I ask you to forgive me of my sins, because I want to be like you.*

*In Jesus' holy name I pray, AMEN.*