

Things that Steal our Joy (3): A Bitter & Unforgiving Spirit



Matthew 18:21-35

Introduction

- ◎ **An unforgiving or bitter spirit will steal the joy of salvation.**
- ◎ *“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*

I. The Pattern of Forgiveness

A. Peter's Question

- ⦿ **“How many times do I have to forgive my brother if he sins against me?”**
- ⦿ **Is it 7 times?**
- ⦿ **He was being generous because the Jewish standard was 3 times.**

I. The Pattern of Forgiveness

B. Jesus' Answer

- ⦿ **Not 7 times, but 70 X 7!**
- ⦿ **The disciples were shocked! No limits to forgiveness?**
- ⦿ **That takes faith—"Lord increase our faith."**
- ⦿ **No, you don't need more faith—what you need is *obedience*.**

I. The Pattern of Forgiveness

B. Jesus' Answer

- ⊙ Jesus tells a parable about forgiveness in Matthew 18.**
- ⊙ The point is that God has forgiven us so much that no offense against us can ever begin to compare with the magnitude of our offense against God.**

I. The Pattern of Forgiveness

B. Jesus' Answer

- **The evidence of a forgiven believer is the possession of a forgiving spirit (cf. Matt.6: 12).**
- **A person who adamantly refuses to forgive his brother has no biblical basis for considering himself a Christian (cf. 1 John 3:14-15)**

II. The Practice of Forgiveness

A. Granting of Forgiveness to Others

B. Seeking Forgiveness from Others

II. The Practice of Forgiveness

A. Granting Forgiveness to Others

1) What is forgiveness?

- ⦿ **Generally, forgiveness is a decision to let go of resentment and thoughts of revenge.**
- ⦿ **Forgiveness is not pretending you are not hurt.**

II. The Practice of Forgiveness

1) What is forgiveness?

- **Forgiveness doesn't mean that you deny the other person's responsibility for hurting you, and it doesn't justify the wrong.**

II. The Practice of Forgiveness

1) What is forgiveness?

- ◎ **Forgiveness is a command to our will, not an option or a suggestion:**
- ◎ ***“forgiving each other, even as God in Christ has forgiven you” (Eph. 4:32).***

A. Granting Forgiveness to Others

2) *Two Aspects in Forgiveness*

Vertical Forgiveness — is about establishing a forgiving spirit before God

- ***²⁵ And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.***
- ***²⁶ But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses (Mark 11: 25-26)***

A. Granting Forgiveness to Others

2) Two Aspects in Forgiveness

Horizontal Forgiveness – is the actual granting of forgiveness

“If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him” (Luke 17:3).

Summary

Forgiveness is choosing to remove the record of others' debt to us and to restore our relationship with them as far as the consequences of their sin will allow.

Why is it so easy to hold a grudge?

- If you dwell on hurtful events or situations, grudges filled with resentment, and hostility can take root.
- And you might find yourself swallowed up by your own bitterness or sense of injustice.

What are the effects of holding a grudge?

- ① **Bring anger and bitterness into every relationship and new experience**
- ② **Become so wrapped up in the wrong that you can't enjoy the present**
- ③ **Become depressed or anxious**

What are the effects of holding a grudge?

- ① **Feel that your life lacks meaning or purpose, or that you're at odds with your spiritual beliefs**
- ② **Lose valuable and enriching connectedness with others**

What are the benefits of forgiving someone?

Forgiveness can lead to:

- ◉ **Healthier relationships**
- ◉ **Greater spiritual and psychological well-being**
- ◉ **Less anxiety, stress and hostility**
- ◉ **Lower blood pressure**

What are the benefits of forgiving someone?

Forgiveness can lead to:

- ◉ **Fewer symptoms of depression**
- ◉ **Stronger immune system**
- ◉ **Improved heart health**
- ◉ **Higher self-esteem**

How do I reach a state of forgiveness?

- ① Consider the value of forgiveness and its importance in your life.
- ② Reflect on the facts of the situation, how you've reacted, and how this has affected your life, health and well-being.
- ③ Forgiveness can be challenging, especially if the person who's hurt you doesn't admit wrong.

How do I reach a state of forgiveness?

- Be aware that forgiveness is a process and even small hurts may need to be revisited and forgiven over and over again.
- **By God's grace, choose to forgive the person who's offended you.**
- **Forgiveness is a commitment to obey God.**

FAQs

- ① **Does forgiveness guarantee reconciliation?**

FAQs

- ① **What if I have to interact with the person who hurt me but I don't want to?**

FAQs

- ① **What if the person I'm forgiving doesn't change?**

FAQs

- ① **What about things like abuse, or rape, or immorality?**
- ② **Does forgiveness mean that it's all over and we are to go on as if it never happened?**

II. The Practice of Forgiveness

B. Seeking Forgiveness from Others

1) Seek God's forgiveness.

II. The Practice of Forgiveness

B. Seeking Forgiveness from Others

2) Ask forgiveness from offended party.

II. The Practice of Forgiveness

B. Seeking Forgiveness from Others

3) Accept corrective measures.

Conclusion

- **If God has forgiven you, then it is only reasonable for you to forgive those who sin against you.**

Challenge

- ① **Are you extending to others the same kind of forgiveness God has extended to you?**

Challenge

- ① **Have you sought forgiveness from those you have sinned against?**