



Principles of Healing 1:

Forgiveness and Healing

Most of us long and search for healing; we want an end to our suffering. We travel long distances, and pay large quantities of money, to see the 'best' in the field, looking for relief. While seeking wholeness in spirit, soul and body we may have overlooked a key biblical principle in our search: **Forgiveness**.

Without forgiveness there is no real healing. It is always a vital part in the process. We have ministered with countless people who failed to understand the incredible value of this powerful healing tool.

In the 'Lord's Prayer,' **Matthew 6:12**, Jesus tells us to ask our Father to forgive us **as we forgive** those whom we hold a debt against.

Two verses later the Lord makes it very clear.

***"For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.
But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."***

Forgiveness is a choice we have, but it is also an act of obedience, an act of trust and love toward God.

John 14:15, 23, 24

15 "If you love Me, keep My commandments.

23 Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.

24 "He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me.

NKJV

Forgiveness may be one of the hardest tests of obedience we face in our Christian walk. It can literally feel like laying down one's life.

How do I let go of the hatred and bitterness for the one who has harmed me or one I love?

How do I deal with the constant reminder of the loss of virtue, of dignity or the loss of a loved one?

How do I forgive the person who has abused and violated me?

How can God ask me to forgive and not avenge myself on the one who has robbed me or wounded me so deeply? So often we still want the taste of retribution, the satisfaction of having the other pay for their sin.

Jesus says that we are to forgive, to let go of our desire for payback, and give it to Him. But do we really trust Him to deal with our pain, or our loss?

Forgiveness puts our faith to the test. It is an act of trust that He will deal fairly with our complaint knowing that no sin escapes God's justice, no matter how insignificant it may seem.

Romans 2:6 "God 'will give to each person according to what he has done.' "

NIV

Unforgiveness keeps us looking outwardly at others, rather than at our own lives. It releases bitterness, and resentment in us, directing our anger and energy at the one who hurt us; and it validates our own sinful attitudes. It poisons us, spiritually, emotionally, mentally and physically.

"I have a right!" We say.

There is a story I heard many years ago that illustrates this point very clearly.

In Africa, there is a type of monkey that people love to have as a pet. However, they are very difficult to capture.

The hunters have devised a clever way to trap them. They take a hollow log, narrow enough so the monkey can't climb in. They drill a hole in the middle (just big enough for the monkey's paw) and drop some nuts into the hole. The young monkeys will eventually get curious about the log and when they see the nuts will reach through the drilled hole to grab them. Once they have a hold of a nut they won't let go, but their paw is now too large to remove from the hole. The hunter can now simply walk up and throw his net over the monkey. The monkey values the nut too much to let it go. That which the monkey values and holds on to, becomes the

cause of his captivity. Unforgiveness is very much like this; we hold on to that which will trap us.

Unforgiveness often feels good; it feels right, it gives us an excuse and a focal point, but it is a trap. It always creates a breach in our relationship with God.

Many times, even after we have worked through the difficulty of this command by forgiving others, and receiving His forgiveness for our own transgressions, we still struggle in one key area of forgiveness, thereby failing to fulfill the requirements of the Lord.

We do not forgive ourselves.

When we do not forgive ourselves, we are in effect disobeying the command of the Lord.

Mark 11:25 *Whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven will also forgive you your sins.*

We release others to God, but we fail to release ourselves to walk into the freedom of God's forgiveness.

In our years of ministry this has been, and continues to be, an area where people seem to struggle the most. They can extend grace to others, but find it most difficult to extend it to themselves.

We walk in disobedience when we refuse to forgive ourselves. We speak words of condemnation into our own lives and defile the one who is the object of God's love and favor. By doing this we rob ourselves of life.

Proverbs. 18:21 *"the tongue has the power of life and death..."*

Unforgiveness brings judgment with it, and keeps us in bondage. It causes us to forget the mercy we have received and we become captive to our transgression.

When we choose not to forgive ourselves, we are putting into question the very work of Jesus on the Cross. In essence we are saying that the Blood of Jesus is not enough for us and we call judgment upon ourselves. **Matthew 18: 32-35**

Believing we are being holy and pleasing to God, in reality, we are giving the enemy a wide open door to accuse and torment us.

To forgive one's self may be one of the hardest things to do, but without it we are blocking the grace and mercy of God.

Forgiveness is always a choice. We seldom feel good about it; if anything, we may feel worse. But as we release our own sin to God, (repentance), the sins of others against us (forgiveness), and release ourselves (self forgiveness), we open the door for God to release healing and wholeness in our lives and those we love.

When God flows freely through us there is healing and life.

“Lord as you have forgiven me, I now also choose to forgive those who have hurt me, and I particularly choose to come into agreement with you and forgive myself.”

Amen