

FORGIVING

Is that possible?



Quotations in pink boxes are by Corrie ten Boom

Forgiving is a beautiful principle, until we come to the crossroads in life where we actually have to forgive someone.

A few years ago we were invited to a Punjabi Sikh family get-together, the mother, brothers, sisters and grandchildren were present.

Suddenly the grandmother, who was 93, speaks up and says, "Mr Johan, can you give us a lecture on religion?" –

"On what subject, Ma'am? Shall I speak about forgiveness?"

Everyone sat up and mother said, "Please continue." I realised that it was a touchy subject in the family. "Forgiveness becomes easier when you yourself are forgiven. We are all sinners and deep down in our hearts we know that we need forgiveness from God.

Taking Concrete Steps

One of the brothers asked, "Okay, but what do we actually need to do and how do we take concrete steps to start the process of forgiving someone?" - "Our words are real things, so you start by saying out loud, 'I forgive them, I forgive him or her.'"

The grandmother pipes up, "**Never will I do that.**"

"Ma'am as humans we want to get even. I can see you have a beautiful family. Maybe someone cheated you out of money or land, or maybe a close family member took advantage of you.

Thoughts like, 'I would have never done that' make it difficult to forgive. Reasoning like, 'They need to know how it feels', and 'Can you imagine what they did to me?' are very human and that's why we need God's help.

Do you by any chance have any candles in the home? We need one big candle and a small candle for each of us."

The atmosphere was charged -

"Gurmeet, run to the shop and get a box of candles." It did not take long before we were sitting in the next room all holding a candle and looking at a big candle burning on the coffee table in the centre of room.



"This big candle represents the Lord Jesus. We will light our candle one by one to the big one and say out loud, 'I forgive them.'"

"I started with an opening prayer. I lit my candle and said, 'I forgive them.' Two others followed. Then it was grandmother's turn. It was quiet and the atmosphere was charged.

"I know, Ma'am, how difficult it is for us as humans to say these words, but may I take the liberty to pray for you?" - She nodded quietly.

"Dear Jesus, I pray for this dear lady, who I have the honour to be with today. I ask that you at this moment come to her aid and send her your help to take that first step in the process of forgiveness, so you can start the healing that forgiveness will bring in her life."

It was again quiet and then the words came, "I forgive them." It was one of those moments when you get goose bumps all over.

We finished the circle and afterwards the grandmother disappeared into her bedroom.

When I finished my tea I went to see her; she was lying quietly on her bed. - "Are you alright, Ma'am?" "Mr. Johan, I don't know what happened to me. I feel so different, I feel so light."

"Mother, this is the love of Jesus that you are experiencing."

No more words were needed, we just held hands.



"You never so touch the ocean of God's love as when you forgive and love your enemies."

We forgive but we will not forget



What this means is that we have buried the hatchet, but we left the handle sticking out, so we can grab it anytime and start the whole process of getting even over again, along with all the pain that we previously experienced.

"God buries our sins in the depths of the sea and then puts up the sign : '**NO FISHING**'"

When we forgive me make a transaction with God, and give the whole messy kit and caboodle into his capable hands, trusting him to take care of it.

"Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God."

The Temptation of Not Forgiving!

"Then came Peter to Jesus and said, Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus says to him, I am not telling you, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven." (Matthew 18:21,22)

In the Lord's prayer Jesus teaches us to pray: "*forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.*" (Matthew 6:12,13)

If we fall for the temptation of not forgiving, we will in all probability not be delivered from evil thoughts haunting us!

The Lord's prayer explains the consequences of us not forgiving and puts the responsibility right back into our lap. *"For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."* (Mat. 6:14,15)

Corrie ten Boom meets her Nazi officer

"This man had been a Nazi guard at Ravensbrück concentration camp where we were sent. (Corrie lost her sister in that atrocious camp) Now in 1947 (two years after the war) he was in front of me, hand thrust out: I stood there with the coldness clutching my heart. Again the hand came out – "Will you forgive me?"



I had to do it – I knew that.

But forgiveness is not an emotion - I knew that too. **Forgiveness is an act of the will, and the will can function regardless of the temperature of the heart.** "Jesus, help me!" I prayed silently. "I can lift my hand. I can do that much. You supply the feeling." And so woodenly, mechanically, I thrust my hand into the one stretched out to me. And as I did, an



Corrie ten Boom
1892-1983

incredible thing took place. The current started in my shoulder, raced down my arm, sprang into our joined hands. And then this healing warmth seemed to flood my whole being, bringing tears to my eyes. "I forgive you, brother!" I cried, "with all my heart!" For a long moment we grasped each other's hands, the former guard and the former prisoner. I had never known God's love so intensely as I did then."

"Forgiveness is setting a prisoner free, only to find out that the prisoner was me."

What if I'm plagued by memories?

The enemy of our soul will not allow us to forget the hurtful incidents that easy and will try to jog our memory time and again.

Yet, every time the spiteful event comes back to mind then close that door and say "I have forgiven them and I will stick to my word!"

Say it out loud, so God can hear it, the Devil can hear it and most important you will hear it and declare to yourself that you will honour your word.

The Amish Massacre

(Adapted from an article by Professor Donald B. Kraybill)

The world was outraged by the senseless assault on 10 Amish girls in the one-room West Nickel Mines School.



Then, questions shifted to the Amish. How would they cope with such an unprecedented tragedy? The Amish don't argue with God. Such resolve enables them to move forward, letting the

analysis rest in the hands of God, without the endless paralysis of analysis that asks "why?".

Make no mistake - death is painful. Many tears are shed. The pain is sharp in the hearts of Amish mothers and fathers like it would any other parents.

Surely some anger – at least some grudges – are justifiable in the face of such a slaughter. A frequent phrase in Amish life is "forgive and forget."

The Amish try to practice Jesus' admonitions to turn the other cheek, to love one's enemies, to forgive 70 times 7, and to leave vengeance to the Lord. Retaliation and revenge are not part of their vocabulary.



"The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is an attribute of the strong." (Mahatma Gandhi)



Seeking Forgiveness



The Joy of Being Forgiven

"Forgiveness is the key that unlocks the door of resentment and the handcuffs of hatred. It is a power that breaks the chains of bitterness and the shackles of selfishness."

Please read: *'Then it was enough and finished'*

Link: [Then-it-was-enough-and-finished-READ.pdf](https://www.johanpeters.in/then-it-was-enough-and-finished-READ.pdf) ([johanpeters.in](https://www.johanpeters.in))

"Learning to forgive will help you remove a major roadblock to your success." (Author Unknown)

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