



Way of the Eagle

by Rhoda Collins

Forgiveness Is Not...

Many people have misconceptions about forgiveness and yet the Bible clearly states that forgiveness takes one, repentance takes one and reconciliation takes two. Many people think that forgive and forget is the way to go in the church... to let it go... but there is a process that God requires us to go through.

I am going to list below what forgiveness is not:

Forgiveness is not:

1. **Approving and diminishing sin**--- in this case people's attitude is like: it's OK nobody's perfect, or everybody makes mistakes, or it's not a big deal. Come on! It is a big deal... so big that God died for sins that we must repent of in order to get to heaven. You shouldn't take it lightly. So don't dishonor the Cross of Jesus or take your or anyone's eternity so lightly.
2. **Enabling sin**--- forgiving people includes confronting and rebuking, which most people don't do. For example... wives misunderstand Bible submission under their husbands when they rebel against the Lord. The submissive wife puts up with it, enabling his sin, which endangers his eternal life, because she wants to be submissive and forgiving.
3. **Denying a wrongdoing**--- people say and act like it didn't happen; or say, "I forgot all about it, or I didn't let it affect me". Denial of a sin couldn't be further from the truth! Forgiveness is not denial that you were sinned against or that you didn't sin.

4. **Waiting for an apology**--- "I will forgive when she apologizes!" Get a reality check! Some people will never apologize, and/or they will continue in their destructive, foolish ways. Some people will be stubborn, religious and self righteous and they will never confess or admit their wrongdoing. Some people will move away or die and never get a chance to repent to you. So you forgive them before they apologize.



5. **Forgetting**--- You can't forget those who abused you, mistreated you, abandoned you, neglected you, cheated on you, betrayed you or lied about you. Even when there is forgiveness, repentance and reconciliation, the memory is still there. Perhaps the pain is gone, but totally forgetting sin against you can be impossible. Some quote Jeremiah: "God will remember their sin no more" saying that we should therefore do the same. God is almighty, (we are not) so forgetting by the Blood of Jesus is part of His nature, not ours.

6. **Ceasing to feel the pain**--- Just because it hurts doesn't mean you fail to forgive. Some people had horrible things done to them. It would be cruel to say, "If you've forgiven them it shouldn't hurt anymore". We don't read in the Bible that all the tears are wiped from our eyes until the resurrection of the dead and the final unveiling of the kingdom. Forgiveness doesn't mean pain free!
7. **A onetime event**--- Is not like you forgive one "small" sin but not the other. Some keep sinning so you need to keep forgiving, regardless of what they have done.
8. **Neglecting justice**--- You can forgive someone and call the police and have them arrested. You can forgive someone and testified against them in court. The Bible says that we need to obey the government. Even when you have forgiven a person that has committed a crime; they need to reap the consequences of their crime. Forgiving is not neglecting justice; you can forgive and pursue justice.
9. **Trusting**--- For example if your dad molested you when you were a child and you wonder, "Should I let him babysit my kids?" The answer is, "No way"! Or my boyfriend hit me and he says I'm sorry, should we pick of where we left off? The answer is, "No way!" Or "My pastor had an affair, should I continue to attend his church? The answer is "No way!" Trust is built slowly and lost quickly! Only those who are naive and gullible would trust people unconditionally. It takes time to build trust. You need to test relationships before you trust. Some of you give your whole heart away but never take it back. Give it slowly, and if someone has sinned against you grievously, trust has to be rebuilt over time. Some people can be trusted in time after they've bore good fruit in keeping with their repentance or after they've gotten help. Other people should never be trusted again because the risk is simply too high.
10. **Reconciliation**--- Many think it's Biblical that we must automatically reconcile with those who've sinned against you or wronged you. Many who've sinned, expect things to go "back to normal" with you, as they take what they've done too lightly. It takes one person to repent, it takes one person to forgive and it takes two to reconcile. Paul says in [Hebrews 12](#) to make every effort to be at peace with all men, but this doesn't mean reconciliation. Peace may mean that further contact be severed. It takes two to reconcile. There are people who have been friends for a long time and one has been hurt by the other but the other person has never repented really... it takes more than just to say "I'm sorry"; you really need to see fruit to reconcile. Once trust is broken it's hard to build it back.

"For 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 [their reckless and willful sins, leaving them, letting them go, and giving up resentment], neither will your Father forgive you your trespasses." Matthew 6: 14-15

We must forgive everyone to receive forgiveness from Father God in order to enter into heaven, which also releases us from bondage of resentment, bitterness, anger, and hate but forgiveness is not approving sin, nor enabling sin, nor denying sin, nor waiting for repentance before we forgive, nor forgetting, nor painless, nor selective, nor free of justice, nor trust, nor reconciliation.