

A bald eagle is shown in flight, its wings spread wide, against a vibrant sunset sky. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm glow over a range of mountains and a body of water in the distance. The eagle's feathers are detailed, and its head is turned slightly to the right.

Finding Freedom

Unforgiveness and Debts



Parable of the Unforgiving Debtor - Matthew 18:21-35 (NIV)

²¹ Then Peter came to him and asked, “Lord, how often should I forgive someone who sins against me? Seven times?”

²² “No, not seven times,” Jesus replied, “but seventy times seven!”

²³ “Therefore, the Kingdom of Heaven can be compared to a king who decided to bring his accounts up to date with servants who had borrowed money from him. ²⁴ In the process, one of his debtors was brought in who owed him millions of dollars. ²⁵ He couldn’t pay, so his master ordered that he be sold—along with his wife, his children, and everything he owned—to pay the debt.

²⁶ “But the man fell down before his master and begged him, ‘Please, be patient with me, and I will pay it all.’ ²⁷ Then his master was filled with pity for him, and he released him and forgave his debt.

²⁸ “But when the man left the king, he went to a fellow servant who owed him a few thousand dollars. He grabbed him by the throat and demanded instant payment.

Parable of the Unforgiving Debtor - Matthew 18:21-35 (NIV)

²⁹ “His fellow servant fell down before him and begged for a little more time. ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay it,’ he pleaded. ³⁰ But his creditor wouldn’t wait. He had the man arrested and put in prison until the debt could be paid in full.

³¹ “When some of the other servants saw this, they were very upset. They went to the king and told him everything that had happened. ³² Then the king called in the man he had forgiven and said, ‘You evil servant! I forgave you that tremendous debt because you pleaded with me.

³³ Shouldn’t you have mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you?’ ³⁴ Then the angry king sent the man to prison to be tortured until he had paid his entire debt.

³⁵ “That’s what my heavenly Father will do to you if you refuse to forgive your brothers and sisters from your heart.”

Forgiveness defined- **webster**-intentional **voluntary choice to let go** of resentment, anger, and the urge (eye be twitching) for vengeance toward someone who has caused you harm.

Forgiveness defined by **Psychology**- *intentional* **voluntary process of letting go** of negative feelings of anger and bitterness. Requires a shifting from your own emotional state. It is an *active process*, a journey **not** a one-time event. It takes conscious effort and time.

Forgiveness defined by the **bible**- *intentional* **release** of a wrong, **canceling a debt** and *choosing not to* hold a sin against someone. We are **REQUIRED** to forgive.

Decisional forgiveness- This is a *behavioral intent or conscious statement* of the will. I CHOOSE to change how I feel about the person who wronged me. I DECIDE to let go and choose to treat them well. This choice CAN happen instantly; we can choose to forgive right now EVEN THOUGH it hurt deeply. BUT our brain and emotions- internal state- may not immediately change how we feel- we may still be devastated and angry BUT you have committed to forgive. This decision is completely under your control and relies on logic, values and biblical beliefs.

Emotional forgiveness- actual replacement of negative emotions with positive ones-replace bitterness and resentment with compassion and kindness. Replacing lies of the devil with the truth. The internal emotional charge (stings and ouches and want to throat punch them) disappears-it's no longer a trigger. This layer of forgiveness-is slow, gradual, painful, labor intensive, (therapy, small groups, freedom).

Forgiveness is:

- 1.opposite of vengeance-NOT settling the score or getting payback
2. passing the case to a higher court- we can't be victim and judge-you are Giving up the right to control outcome
3. shifting focus from who HURT you to who HEALS you
4. one time event as well as an ongoing process (decisional and emotional)
- 5.Choosing health for your body and soul
6. making the record- name it and feel it and deal with it, but don't wear it and display it

Why we don't forgive:

1. Forgiveness and feelings get murky- forgiveness and feelings are not the same. Remember we talked earlier about decisional and emotional forgiving
2. we have the wrong idea of forgiveness-We are not minimizing the thing that happened to you (often unspeakable, invasive, tragic things). It is NOT forgetting what happened. IT IS God wanting to heal our heart and make all things new.
3. We don't think it's fair- IT also wasn't fair when he took 39 lashes to his back, crown of thorns buried in his head and nailed to a cross.
4. We don't trust GOD- to be the perfect judge and we think that he would let them off the hook.
5. We don't acknowledge or deny the hurt and pain from the sin perpetrated against us. We accept it, swallow the poison or resolve to just overlook it. I challenge you to Look and Label. Put a name on it, put a price and cost on it. (We will talk more on that in a few minutes).

Why we don't forgive:

6. Confuse forgiveness and reconciliation- forgiveness takes only you. Reconciliation takes 2 willing parties. Examples- grandpa abused you- forgive him, don't let him babysit the kids. Husband beat you, forgive him but don't go back- you don't have to go back to an unsafe unhealthy place just to prove you forgave.
7. If we forgive, we lose our identity and what we have worn so long-We lose our crutch and our excuse to live as a victim, loose our excuse to hold a grudge or act like scrooge the rest of our life. Being a jerk to your wife, well it's because I was wronged. Absent from your kids, well its cause my dad was never home. Forgiveness requires us to turn in our bitter card
8. We just don't think we can do it. We do not have it in us to forgive them. Your right you **can't**. 2 Corinthians 12:9 says my grace is all you need; my power works best in weakness. So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me.

Our horizontal relationships impact our vertical relationship. Satan wants us to doubt our forgiveness of others in our horizontal relationships so that we will doubt God's forgiveness of US. Our unforgiveness messes up the flow. The flow of Gods power and relationship.

DEBT LEDGER FORM

WHO DID IT? WHO HURT YOU?	WHAT DID THEY TAKE FROM YOU?	WHAT FEELINGS ARE CONNECTED TO/ ASSOCIATED WITH THEIR ACTIONS?	WHAT KEEPS YOU FROM FORGIVING THEM AS JESUS FORGAVE YOU?	WHATS YOUR NEXT STEP TO CANCEL THIS DEBT?
---------------------------------------	--	--	--	---

1. Identify and list the name of the person- the ex, the abuser, the parents, the children, business partner, even someone who has passed away. Parents are hard here in the south especially for those of us over 50. We hold them in such high regard and respect it makes it hard to list them.

2. Write down what they owe you? **Do not** skip this. What was the sin, what did they do to you? It's hard to do this step because you have managed to stuff it, avoid it and cover it for so long? It's painful to take a long hard look.

3. What did they take from you? The feelings- Self-worth, peace, security, innocence, perceived value, hope, trust, sense of safety, fidelity, motherhood, money

Colossians 2:13-14 (NLT)

¹³ You were dead because of your sins and your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive in Christ, for he forgave all our sins. ¹⁴ He canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross.