

PASTOR'S BLOG March 31, 2020 THE ART OF FORGIVENESS

Each Sunday Most of attend church and pray what is known as the Lord's Prayer or the Our Father. A key phrase is "forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who have trespassed against us." A trespass is an offense, an emotional hurt or wounding. The relationship between Jesus forgiving us and we forgiving others is this: when we have not received the forgiveness offered us in Jesus. We cannot forgive those who have trespassed against us and we will not be at peace with God or our offenders. Five Myths Around Forgiveness – from Louis Smeades' book The Art Of Forgiveness.

1. Forgiving Someone Is Making An Excuse For Their Offense. You excuse a person's behavior when there is no blame involved. When someone bumps into you in a crowd or at the grocery store and says excuse me and you say, no problem and go on your way. There is nothing to forgive because there was no intent to commit an offense. The act was totally unintended and accidental. You forgive a person when there is clear blame involved. If someone lies to you it is a clear and planned offense. So you can clearly place blame on the individual that lied to you: "You lied to me and I know it, but I forgive you."
2. Forgiving Is The Same As Tolerance For/ Tolerating Wrong Behavior. For instance in the case of a mother or father whose child is hit and killed by a drunk driver. Presses charges against the drunk driver, seek justice through the court system not just for your child but to protect other people's children who might be killed by the recklessness of this driver if he /she goes unpunished. You forgive them of their so that you will not be trapped by continually replaying the event over and over again in your head and never getting beyond the pain of that terrible loss.
3. People Expect Instant Results. Forgiveness is a process that brings results over time. Forgiveness is a repetitive process. Forgiveness takes work. Forgiveness takes time but will bring you healing if you stay the course.
4. People Don't Like The Tension They Feel Between Themselves And The Offender So They Rush The Process. We are often to eager to resolve the tension between ourselves and our offender. You go to the offender and graciously tell you offender; I just want you to know I forgive you. Your offender responds. For what? You respond. For not following through on your promise. Your offender retorts. Well how about the time last summer you broke your promise to me or last Fall when you never showed for lunch or a couple years ago when you ... The rush to forgive has actually made the situation worse. Take some time and wait until they are ready and you are ready then begin the process.
5. We Have Got To Go Back To The Same Relationship We Had Before. We often think that when we forgive we go back to the same relationship we had before with the offender. That may not be possible... the damage may be too deep to heal for a long time. Maybe the only thing you can do by forgiving your offender is by letting go of the offense you can help stop the hurting and the pain you have been going through. You also make the offender a person again instead of the monster that hurt you.

Jesus, Give us a heart to forgive our offenders and the humility to ask for forgiveness from those we have offended. Heal our memories of hurts that we have carried with us for too many years. Help us to let go of grudges we have towards others and give us the grace to forgive ourselves for the sins we have committed by omission and commission. Let us move forward in the freedom and grace you won for us through your death on the cross. Amen.