

FORGIVING **(Matthew 6:12-15)**

Looking at these verses it is easy for the casual observer to think that not forgiving is sin that can and will be used against believers. However, God never contradicts Himself. Because of the finished work on Calvary and the promises of salvation through faith and the grace of God, we can be assured that our eternity is secure but our fellowship with God and our prayers can be hindered by not forgiving.

UNFORGIVENESS

Psalm 51:6-8 Often times we just try to forget about the hurt that was done against us with malice and intent to harm us, we say “forget it, it's in the past” then we try and believe that it's done with. God knows that all it takes is a little something that reminds us of that hurt and the rage and revenge thoughts are right back in our mind. With God trying to forget is not forgiving.

Mark 7:6-7 As children we were forced to say “I'm sorry” and “I forgive you” when a problem came up. As we became adults we continued to 'play act' into believing just by saying the words that the wrong has been made right. God is not interested in 'play acting'. God is looking on our heart.

I John 2:9 As believers when we have issues with a member of our church we ignore them, we sit away from them and enter and leave church bypassing them. We then wonder why God doesn't answer our prayers (**Is. 59:1-2**) and we never seem to be moved by the Spirit of God in the services.

Ephesians 4:26-27 We often fail to understand when we do not have the right forgiving spirit we are conceding to the devil and adding sin on top of sin thereby distancing ourselves more from God.

Romans 12:19 Another major impediment to forgiveness is the issue of revenge. Who has not at one time felt the thoughts of a scorching retribution for the hurt that has been done to yourself.

FORGIVENESS

Matthew 5:43-48 Our ability to forgive as God would have us forgive starts with an understanding of God's perspective on separating the believer from the attitudes and actions of the world.

John 15:5 If we want to have a right attitude of forgiveness we must realize we cannot do it alone.

II Peter 1:4-9 The BIGGEST hindrance for believers in having a forgiving heart is that we have a short memory when it comes to our being forgiven. God has shown us what real forgiveness is but we FORGET about His unconditional forgiveness when it comes time for us to forgive others.

Matthew 18:23-35 When our “old man” creeps back into our life we unfortunately act just like this “wicked servant” that needed forgiveness but sought out as much retribution as possible for himself.

Matthew 18:21-22 As we meditate on exactly what Jesus tells Peter about forgiveness we can begin to understand that Jesus is teaching much more than forgiveness, He is teaching about maturity, love, kindness, patience and understanding.

Matthew 5:21-22 Over and over again throughout the N.T. we have God's word referring to an attitude of forgiveness from the depths of ones heart as being the most important issue of our life.

Colossians 3:12-13 we are again reminded that we belong to God and are to live in peace with everyone according to the personality of the Holy Spirit of God forgiving and loving people in Christ.

Ephesians 4:31-32 Paul recognized what would be detrimental to the church and what would help the church have unity and stay rightly motivated to do the work of Christ within the body of Christ.

Philippians 4:13 Paul knew more than anyone that he could not do what God wanted him to do by himself. We are no better than Paul and must realize that true forgiveness starts with God and He will use us in miraculous ways if we fully surrender to Christ. He will even give us the ability to forgive.