Forgiveness is NOT an Option

Experiences

1. What I've learned about forgiveness:

a) For the Christian, forgiveness is not optional.

"But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins." **Mt 6:15**

If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven." **John 20:23**

b) Forgiveness is a choice, not a feeling. Feelings will follow later.

c) Forgiveness is a process. It is like slowly peeling an onion.

d) Parable of debtors – sinful woman being judged

Luke 7:40-43 2 [debtors, one a little amount, one a large amount, who will love more?]

2. How do we forgive?

1) Ask God to help you forgive the person.

2) Confess forgiveness: "In the Name of Jesus, I chose to forgive ( ) for ( )."

3) Pray for that person and ask God to set them free from their bondage. Bless the person, release judgments against them. Ask God for their salvation (if needed), deliverance and healing. People who hurt others are hurting themselves.

"But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, [28] bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you." **Luke 6:27-28**

4) If the hurt continues to surface, go through this process again.

Mt 18:21-22 [how many times should I forgive?] 70 x 7

5) Once you have forgiven someone, it is important not to nurse, rehearse or dwell on the incident. This is easier said than done.

We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge **of** God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. **2Co 10:5**

3. What forgiveness doesn't mean:

1) It is important to set boundaries to protect your well-being. God does not want us living under mental, emotional, verbal, physical or sexual abuse. In some cases, contact with the person needs to be completely cut off. With others, it may mean being very clear with them what you will not tolerate.

2) It doesn't mean you won't have to continue to work through issues with this person in the future.

3) Since men can compartmentalize and forget more easily, don't be surprised if it will take longer for your wife to forgive you. For her, it is an emotional issue and it will tend to recur.

4) Knowing why the person did what they did to hurt you will probably not happen. Sometimes people are hurting and they want others who appear to be happy to hurt also. They want to pull you down to their level of unhappiness.

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HAJ