

July 31, 2011

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Monday

Mark 11:25 "Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father who is in heaven will also forgive you your transgressions."

His name is "Unforgiving" and he is a jailer of great repute. His locks are strong. His chains are binding. Many find they are never released from his dark and dank cells. This master jailer is a servant of Satan who manages to hold the innocent captive while doing absolutely no harm to the guilty. Are you held captive by the jailer? Strangely, he holds no power to detain you except the power you yourself grant him. God does not desire that you should be held a prisoner even one more day. Find your own release by forgiving others. After all God forgave you.

Tuesday

Rom. 5:6 For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.

Forgiving is not the same as forgetting and indeed to forgive does not require it. To 'forgive and forget' is a well-intended fallacy. Instead forgiveness determines that in spite of the wrong done to you, you will release the transgressor from your personal right of vindictiveness. It is not about feelings; it is about accounting. One has transgressed against you. The debt of that transgression is held 'on account' by you. You determine to release the obligation, to give up your right of retribution. This is forgiveness. You release the right of personal retaliation, of hate, of anger. Right now, in prayer, turn your anger, your spite, your hurt over to God.

Wednesday

Matt. 6:15 "But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions."

Jesus links directly the effectiveness of your prayers to your willingness to forgive. It was not a side issue; it is a main concern. The link is found in the Lord's Prayer and in the Sermon on the Mount. It is found in the Gospels: Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Do you find your praying stagnant or ineffective? Perhaps you need to check your spirit, your attitude. Are you holding debts long past due? Are you walking in bitterness and anger? Are you holding others accountable for things only God has a right to judge? The issue and the people for whom you pray are too important; you do not want your prayers to find God's ears inattentive. Determine to forgive.

Thursday

John 10:10 "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."

For today's application, the 'thief' is your unforgiving attitude. The context of the verse leaves the exact identity of the thief unspecified, but is most often thought to point to the Devil and his many schemes. Do you want abundant life? Then kick the Devil in the teeth and walk away from your grudges, your madness, your unforgiving spirit. You will never find abundance, freedom, and joy while spending time with this thief! There is nothing more damaging to abundant life - - nothing that has been said to you, done to you, or held over you -- as the thief of an unforgiving spirit or a bitter disposition.

Friday

1John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

What is the basis, the strength of forgiveness? What is the means by which you can forgive others? It is the knowledge, as sure as God's love, that God has forgiven *and continues* to forgive you. Jesus secured that forgiveness on the cross through His death. If God were to refuse it, He would have to deny the work of His very Son. He would have to void the plan *He* set into motion. God loves and forgives you. He calls on you to forgive others. You can because He did.