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| “[There is no love without forgiveness, and there is no forgiveness without love.](http://thinkexist.com/quotation/there-is-no-love-without-forgiveness-and-there-is/371093.html)” |
| http://thinkexist.com/i/sq/as2.gif [Bryant H. McGill quotes](http://thinkexist.com/quotes/bryant_h._mcgill/) |

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| “[To forgive is the highest, most beautiful form of love. In return, you will receive untold peace and happiness.](http://thinkexist.com/quotation/to-forgive-is-the-highest-most-beautiful-form-of/390790.html)” |
| http://thinkexist.com/i/sq/as3.gif [Robert Muller quotes](http://thinkexist.com/quotes/robert_muller/) |

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|   http://thinkexist.com/i/sq/4star.gif   I Like this quote I dislike this quote“[Sincere forgiveness isn't colored with expectations that the other person apologize or change. Don't worry whether or not they finally understand you. Love them and release them. Life feeds back truth to people in its own way and time.](http://thinkexist.com/quotation/sincere_forgiveness_isn-t_colored_with/220310.html)” |
| * [Sara Paddison quotes](http://thinkexist.com/quotes/sara_paddison/)
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| “[Love is an act of endless forgiveness, a tender look which becomes a habit.](http://thinkexist.com/quotation/love_is_an_act_of_endless_forgiveness-a_tender/217945.html)” |
| http://thinkexist.com/i/sq/as3.gif [Peter Ustinov quotes](http://thinkexist.com/quotes/peter_ustinov/) |

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| “[He who is devoid of the power to forgive, is devoid of the power to love.](http://thinkexist.com/quotation/he_who_is_devoid_of_the_power_to_forgive-is/146459.html)” |
| http://thinkexist.com/i/sq/as0.gif [Martin Luther King, Jr.](http://thinkexist.com/quotes/martin_luther_king%2C_jr./) |

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| “[Forgiveness does not change the past, but it does enlarge the future.](http://thinkexist.com/quotation/forgiveness_does_not_change_the_past-but_it_does/9267.html)” |
| http://thinkexist.com/i/sq/as2.gif [Paul Boese](http://thinkexist.com/quotes/paul_boese/) |

**The Call of Forgiveness**

**Psalm 32;** **Matthew 18:21-35**

As human beings, we are prone to make mistakes, either intentionally or unintentionally. We all have hurt people, and we have all been hurt; we are all in the same boat. Out of mistakes we make, or others cause us, comes our pain, hurt, and resentment. This resentment escalates into animosity, and builds into bitterness, until it destroys relationships and causes us isolation,

Without forgiveness, our growth and maturity with Christ, and our integrity with others, cannot be built. We may suffer betrayal from friends, family, coworkers, and even church members. However, we are called to forgive, anyway! Why? Because, **we** need it, and because we are imperfect, fallen, and full of sin. Even the Christian who is saved by Grace is still in process of growth and sanctification. We are yet imperfect, no matter what the level of maturity. If you are thinking, *I refuse to forgive others,*just as that young woman did, consider this reason to forgive. *We forgive because God has forgiven us.*If we do not, the resentment will build and build—like battery acid that slowly eats away a car—until, unless we fix it, it will destroy us. God calls Christians to operate in the parameters of forgiveness, love, and mercy. And, when we have not been forgiving, we will have a heart filled with suffering and torment. How can we receive Christ's forgiveness, and claim Christ as our Savior, when we are unable to forgive one another? When we have a forgiving attitude, then we will have a heart at rest and in peace!

Ephesians 4:29-32 tells us,

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

John 13:34-35 tells us,

A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.

*How do I handle forgiveness?* How do you respond when others forgive you?

**Matthew 6: 5-15; 18:21-35**

True forgiveness is one of the hardest things to accomplish in the human experience, even for the mature Christian. Yet, this is our mandate, and call. Forgiveness is hard because it demands a surrender of our right to *get even*. Forgiveness even causes suffering for the person who was wronged, the victim.

Forgiveness is hard, also, because we can easily avoid it; we can walk the other way, and execute revenge. And, it would be considered justified in the eyes of our friends, our relatives, and, especially of society. We could even receive some kind of medal for coming up with a good scheme of revenge.

 Out of the completeness of forgiveness will come the forgetting. Then, out of the forgetting, will come the healing. The healing we get from forgiveness will close the wounds we receive; it will allow us to go on with life

Luke tells us,

But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also. If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic. Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have them do to you. (Luke 6:27-31, NIV)

When we forgive, it may incur a cost to us. We should realize, and even welcome, that cost. These go against our inclination and Will, but, remember, the *vengeance belongs to* *the Lord*. We are to never forget the cost our Lord paid on our behalf. No cost we could ever incur could compare with the cost He paid for us. When we forgive, we will be refocusing our plans for our pain into God’s plan, and God’s ways. So, our pain is relieved, and our life can go on—in a better direction!

Forgiveness is continual

Luke tells us, “If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him. If he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times comes back to you and says, `I repent,' forgive him.” (Luke 17:3b-4, NIV)

When we forgive, we are not saying, “Hey, that was OK.” The offense does not need to be accepted; however, we are to embrace the person who committed the offense. It is like sin; we are to hate sin but we are still called to love the person not the sin.

The Biblical Steps in Forgiving

1. Know what Christ did for you.
2. We must be willing to take the risk.
3. We need to cancel the betrayal.
4. We need to offer personal forgiveness.
5. We need to recognize the picture of forgiveness.

**If you are the Offender**

If you are the person who hurt someone, and that person is unwilling to forgive you, it is up to you to make it right. You may not receive that person’s forgiveness, but that is between them and God, and not you. You need to go through the steps of forgiveness, but with the emphasis on earnestly repenting and offering restitution. You need to confess, openly and publicly, before the person you offended. Then, you need to go to the person in private. Do not rationalize what you did, or minimize it in anyway. Then, go to Christ, humbly and with a repentant attitude—which means, you make a commitment to change your heart, mind, and actions!

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When we refuse to forgive or refuse to repent, then we are holding ourselves back from God and His best for us. We rationalize the reality of the infection of sin, and its destructive nature to our being, and to those around us. We create a wall to shut ourselves off from God, and one another.

Refusing to forgive makes us the ones who destroy relationships and forfeit the opportunity to glorify our Lord. We imprison ourselves in isolation, cutting ourselves off from real life and from seeing God’s redemptive power in action. Unforgiveness is a price that is way too high for any true Christian to pay. Forgiveness gives us the freedom to move on and to build bridges for right relationships and growth. Unforgiveness blows up those bridges that we must cross if we would obtain personal healing and maturity.

How we should forgive

**• Go through the stages of grief.** Let the offense shock you, then let it completely hurt you. Don’t avoid the pain. Sit with it and feel it no matter how unbearable it is. Please know it will end in time. It will get 2 percent easier every day. Just feel it like a toothache and soon enough it will transition into something bearable.

**• Then let the offense make you angry.** Don’t lash our or you’ll be guilty yourself. Talk about it with trusted friends but confess you’re angry and your emotions aren’t under control. And don’t feel bad for being angry. The last thing you need is anger and shame. Just punch a pillow and make it through. The anger, like the pain, will lessen over time.

**• After being angry, accept what has been done.**Accept it as a fact and don’t over-analyze it. It happened. This will still be shocking at first, but in time, you will accept it as a fact you can’t change.

**• From there, you’re at a place to forgive.** It will be hard work, but it’s worth it. Sit and pray for the person you’ve been hating. Sit and imagine them with a good life, them coming to realize that what they did was wrong, maybe not to you, but to somebody—perhaps to God. Then be willing to love them in your heart. Want the best for them. Hope for the best for them. Stop praying for God to destroy them and pray for God to bless them. Pray for God to open up their hearts so they can receive the love that will stop them from hurting others. This is the only way I know how to forgive.

**Why should we forgive? Well, there are many reasons, but I’m only going to focus on a few.**

**• The first is because, believe it or not, forgiveness is a pleasurable experience.** No kidding, it feels much better than anger or hate. God has designed forgiveness as a powerful blessing for those who have been hurt. The experience of truly forgiving somebody can make you more happy than if you’d never been hurt in the first place.

**• The second reason for you to forgive** is that it removes you from being entangled in the rather dark thing that hurt you in the first place. If it was a bad business deal, then you get to be free of it and maintain your integrity. If it was a family member talking behind your back, you get to remove yourself completely from all the complications of gossip. Forgiveness sets you free from being bogged down in knee-deep mud. Forgiveness gives you a taste of what it feels like to be God, and it’s a terrific feeling. God forgave us because it gave Him pleasure to do so. He was happy to do so. Love forgives, and so does God, and so can you.

**• The third reason to forgive** is that you open yourself up to amazing possibilities for a happy life. When you don’t forgive, you draw the curtains in your soul and your life gets dark. When you forgive you let the light in again, and you go on about your life in peace. And don’t you want some peace? Isn’t it time for some peace?

But the greatest thing about forgiveness is it will allow you to love again. It will allow you to love and be loved. And believe me, it’s worth it. Forgiveness is tough, for sure, but love is infinitely more valuable than the pain of forgiveness costs. No matter what you have to go through to forgive, you’re getting a steal of a deal to be able to love and be loved again. Pay the price and I promise you’ll be happy you did.