

FEELING HURT? WHAT NOW?

Dearly Loved Friends,

If you had just been robbed, and all of your money stolen, how would you react? We recently read a truly thought-provoking story about an Englishman in London who was robbed. What makes this robbery strikingly different is the entry that he wrote in his journal later that evening:

*Let me be thankful -
First, because I was never robbed before,
Second, because although they took my wallet they did not take my life,
Third, because although they took my all, it was not much,
And Fourth, because it was I who was robbed, not I who robbed.*

What an amazing attitude! Could we have written this? Interestingly, this was written by Matthew Henry (1662-1714), whose labor of love for God is recognized by many Bible scholars and students because of his outstanding six-volume *Commentary on the Whole Bible*.

What is so astounding is that although he was totally robbed, there is not one word of blame or bitterness in evidence in his journal entry. He clearly demonstrated a loving attitude of forgiveness.

In today's society and in the world around us, there seems to be a prevalent attitude that exists in which people blame others and tend to feel: "It's not *my* fault!" We need to be very careful to not fall into the trap from Satan of feeling sorry for ourselves, and often even trying to avoid responsibility for our own wrong actions by blaming other people. Too often we dwell on the wrongs that have been done against us, and we want justice! Sometimes we even determine that it is impossible for us to forgive that person. But, God instructs and challenges His people to forgive those who hurt and wound us, giving us real pain!

Forgiveness has healed many broken relationships, and has also healed many wounded spirits. Forgiveness is like a soothing and healing balm in that it requires us to get in touch with our anger and bitterness, and stop denying our built-up resentments. It is impossible to be bitter, and be led by God at the same time.

Many times it is not possible for us to forgive others on our own, so we must humbly and prayerfully go to God in order to receive the strength we so

desperately need. It is only when we thank God for His forgiving us that our anger and bitterness toward others begins to leave us so we feel a sense of relief, and are able to go forward living a truly godly life.

In Matthew 6:14-15, Jesus taught us to forgive others so that we will be forgiven:

For if you forgive people their trespasses - that is, their reckless and willful sins, leaving them, letting them go and giving up resentment - your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others . . . neither will your Father forgive you your trespasses. (The Amplified Bible)

On reading Jeremiah 31:34, it's wonderful to realize that when God forgives us, He no longer remembers our sins. The following 14 words should truly be encouraging to us:

*For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.
(KJV)*

This does not mean that our sins magically never happened. What it does mean is that God lovingly has determined to not use our past sins - which He has forgiven - as a reason to punish us. It's absolutely true that when God forgives us for a sin we've committed, He really forgives! But sadly, for many of us our wounds are so deep that our being forgiving to others does not come easily. However, with the help that is available to us by God's Holy Spirit, we need to - we can - and we must - forgive the person who has hurt us.

When we say we've forgiven a person, let's be sure that we really and truly have forgiven that person, and that we do not hold any grudge, resentment, or bad feelings at all toward that person. It's all too easy to somehow mistakenly feel that the person whom we think has wronged us "owes" us something - such as an apology or compensation. Let's realize that when we have truly forgiven a person, we then, in effect, have "stamped" his or her obligation to us - his or her debt to us - PAID IN FULL! Reparations or retributions are not required at all.

In Colossians 3:12-15, the Apostle Paul writes:

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one

another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. (NIV)

A HEALING PRAYER*

Heavenly Father, we praise you for your healing mercy. Thank you for loving and accepting us with all our hurts, hang-ups and sins as we repent, but thank you even more for caring enough to change us. Thank you for saving us from ourselves and our unwittingly self-destructive tendencies. We reach out and open up to receive your tender mercies, praising you for showing us that we are forgiven so that we may be able to forgive - both ourselves and others! In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

May God give all of us the gifts of His love, a forgiving spirit, harmony and peace.

Aquila and Priscilla

*Based on *Healing Where You Hurt On The Inside* (1981) by Jon Eargle