

BIBLE WAY MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH
PASTOR W.G (WILL) JACKSON, II
BIBLE STUDY- May 10, 2023

FAMILY EMPHASIS MONTH:

The Key to Maintaining Family Unity!-John MacArthur

We are going to continue in our discussion about the fulfilled family and talk about the most important virtue in any relationship, the most important ingredient in holding a marriage together or keeping a family united, something that is absolutely crucial to the success of a marriage and a family

What is it most importantly that causes relationships to be sustained over the long haul? In a word, it is Forgiveness.

Well first of all, no matter who you are married to, they are going to fail you, they are going to offend you, they are going to misunderstand you, they are going to misinterpret what you mean by what you do. You are going to offend them, you are going to sin against them, you are going to disappoint them. This is true in any kind of

relationship because we are sinful creatures, we are fallen creatures.

And what essentially keeps that from destroying relationships is **forgiveness.**

In fact, in **Proverbs chapter 19 and verse 11 it says that it is a man's glory to overlook a transgression.**

Never is a man more lofty or more noble than when he forgives. And, frankly, we live in a society that would not accept this, would not acknowledge it. And consequently relationships are flying apart all over the place. We live in a sad, pathetic society on the road to really total self-destruction. And one of the main contributors of that self-destruction is a disdain for forgiveness.

People are filled with bitterness, filled with anger, filled with hate, filled with vengeance toward others. They believe that retaliation somehow is a virtue, that getting back is somehow right and healthy. Such attitudes are approved in our culture, approved on every front. They are approved by counselors and psychologists who tell us we need to vent; we need to tell people what they need to hear. We need to make sure we do not keep our anger in, but we explode when necessary, we do not carry it around. Such attitudes are exalted in the heroes of our culture who have an "in your face" kind of mentality. But the price of vengeance is extremely high.

The price of unforgiveness is really severe. Let me tell you some of the things that unforgiveness does. Unforgiveness imprisons people in the past. You say, "What do you mean by that? Well as long as you are unwilling to forgive offenders and their offenses, you are shackled to them both. As long as you are unwilling to forgive the offender and the offense, you keep it alive...the pain is there, you are picking at an open sore, keeping it from healing. When you will not forgive you are sentencing yourself to go through life feeling as bad now as you did in the past when the offense was committed with no end in sight. You choose to love hate and cultivate it through your life. Unforgiveness imprisons you in the pain of your past.

Unforgiveness inevitably produces deep bitterness. The book of Hebrews calls it a root of bitterness, bitterness deep down, an infectious cancer in the heart. Such bitterness is malignant, it is devastating. It brings those malignant thoughts, those harassing memories that distort how you see life, anger rages out of control, emotions become unbridled and unchecked, and you entertain desperate ideas for revenge.

When you study the Bible there is a lot in it about forgiveness.

To forgive is to turn the key, open the cell door and let the prisoner walk free. That is one metaphor.

To forgive is to write in large letters across a debt, "NOTHING OWED."

The Bible says that to forgive is to pound the gavel in a courtroom and declare, "Not Guilty!"

To forgive is to shoot an arrow so high and so far it can never be found again.

To forgive is to take out the garbage and dispose of it once and for all, leaving the house fresh and clean.

To forgive is to loose the anchor and set the ship free to sail.

To forgive is to grant a full pardon to a condemned and sentenced criminal.

To forgive is to loosen a strangle hold on a wrestling opponent.

To forgive is to sandblast a wall of graffiti, leaving it looking brand new.

To forgive is to smash a clay pot into a thousand pieces so it could never be put back together again.

Forgiveness is a marvelous, virtuous, liberating, loving attitude and act. It makes sense to forgive. It is healthy. It is wholesome. It is liberating. It is sensible. It relieves tension. It brings peace.

It solicits love. And again I say, it is man at his noblest. It is his glory to overlook a transgression. No relationship can survive the absence of forgiveness. If you do not forgive continually, you will accumulate bitterness that will destroy any and every relationship.

Forgiveness is the most godlike act a person can do. No act is more like God than forgiveness. Never are you more like Him than when you forgive someone who has offended you. Forgiveness is a verbally declared, personally granted promise. It is a statement of undeserved, unearned love that affirms to an offender that there is no anger, no hatred, no desire for vengeance, no retaliation because guilt has been removed, blame has been removed. There is no self-pity and there is no bitterness. And that is precisely the attitude of God toward sinners.

And so, we say never are we more like God than when we forgive. [Psalm 32](#), "How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. How blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity." [Psalm 85](#) says essentially the same. [Psalm 130](#)...all throughout Scripture we read of God's forgiveness.

He remembers our sins no more. He buries them in the depths of the sea. He removes them as far as the east is from the west.

But if you want the epitome of testimony to the forgiveness of God, you need only to read the story of the prodigal son in [Luke 15](#). That son was not unlike many sons...greedy, anxious to get his hands on wealth he had not earned, humanly foolish in the way he spent it, he disdained his father, really hated his father. Went out living with those who exploited him and left him in the misery of his own sin. When the money ran out, slowly he came to his senses while feeding the pigs. And his experience in a pig sty was kind of a mirror of his life. He awakened one day and said, "My father's servants live better than I." And he said, "I will go to my father." He did not expect forgiveness really. He just wanted to say what a bum he had been and ask if he could be a slave. He did not want to ask to be a son, he figured he had forfeited that. All he wanted was a roof over his head and a little better food than the pigs were getting. So he started on the road back. And you remember the story. Jesus uses that story to teach us how to forgive. You do not wait even for the sinner to arrive. When you see him far off, you run to meet him and when he starts to say he's sorry, you silence him with an embrace and a kiss and you

embrace him and love him and put him into the best garment and put the best ring on his finger and get the best meat out of the freezer and cook up the best meal you've got. Start the music, get the friends there and the family and proudly invite him to be indeed to be your returned son. That is how God forgives, lavishly, grandiosely. The Lord also warns us that acting this way will be greatly misunderstood and it will be greatly unappreciated, even by one's own family. You remember the son who did not run away, the one who stayed home, pouted. He called his father a fool for forgiving his stupid wasteful brother who ought to be sent back to the pig sty of his own foolish making and not forgiven.

But the forgiven father...the forgiving father can only say that he loves and will always love the son. Even though the son has committed gross offenses against him, he will forgive him fully and completely for the sheer joy of reconciliation, for the sheer exhilaration of restoration.

Jesus so godlike, being executed on the cross says, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." Stephen so godlike, being crushed beneath the bloody stones that pummeled his body said, "Father, lay not this sin to their charge."

God has been overtly, blatantly, unjustly offended, blasphemed and dishonored and yet

longingly, eagerly forgives just for the sheer joy and glory of reconciliation.

That is, by the way, Paul's salient point in [Ephesians chapter 4 verse 32](#), "Be kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving each other just as God in Christ also has forgiven you," [chapter 5 verse 1](#), "therefore be imitators of God." You imitate God when you forgive. This is a call to godlikeness, be a forgiving person.

It is hard to destroy a relationship if you continually forgive every offense.

[Colossians 3:13](#) Paul says, "Bearing with one another and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone, just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you." It is godlike to forgive.

Back in [Matthew chapter 5](#), you remember the familiar words of our Lord Jesus, "I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, when you do that...[verse 45](#)...you may be sons of your Father." He forgives. When you forgive, you are like Him.

Beloved, in your marriage you are headed for major disaster if you continually accumulate hostility because of offenses, if you continue to allow those bitternesses to develop. But whenever there is an offense and immediate forgiveness, it is disappearing, it is gone. That is the key to any

relationship. Children, the same toward your parents. Parents, the same toward your children. Brother and sister, brother and brother, sister and sister, it's the same situation...forgiveness, forgiveness, because that is like God. Practice the godlike virtue.

We have been forgiven by God an unpayable, inconceivable debt. Shall we not forgive the small debts that others owe us? In your marriage you need to be in a hurry to forgive as fast as you can forgive, even when the offense is going on, all your thoughts should be geared toward forgiveness.

What insensitive ingratitude this servant in [Matthew 18](#) demonstrates who was forgiven this unpayable debt and then ran right out and got somebody and would not forgive him. Are you a higher court than God? Are you more worthy than God? Do you have a right to hold your hostility and your anger that God does not have? Do you have a more demanding law? Are you worthy of greater treatment than God? It is unthinkable.

I have seen people with emptiness in their lives, with terrible dryness, insipid dullness, people with a lack of joy, a lack of power, a lack of meaningful marriage relationship and I really believe that very often it is due to the fact that there is no forgiveness in their hearts toward a person in

their family. And when they will not forgive, God continues to chasten, and life is miserable, and blessing is not there.

The absence of forgiveness renders you unfit for worship and ministry.

Criticisms, injustices, offenses, persecutions, mistreatments are for the purpose of your spiritual maturity.

Remember that in your trials God is at work making you strong and holy.

When all is said and done, what keeps a relationship together is forgiveness because we are going to fail, and we are going to offend, and we are going to wound, and we are going to hurt. But where there is instant and comprehensive and constant forgiveness, the relationship stays together. And God is honored, and blessing is poured out.

Forgiveness brings heaven to earth.

Forgiveness puts heaven's peace into the sinful heart.

Forgiveness is the image of God.

Forgiveness is the advancement of Christ's Kingdom.

Forgiveness is what makes a relationship last.

Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.

Colossians 3:13

Forgive One Another

One of the ways we can show others the love of God is through forgiveness. When we forgive others as God forgave us, then they will see the love of Him in our lives. Our offenses are great against the Lord, greater than anyone else's offenses against us. So we should make allowance for our offender's faults. This can be extremely difficult when they do not apologize. Maybe they do not even realize that they have offended you. Yet, by offering forgiveness, you can also move on with your life. You will not hold onto their offenses anymore.

Who do you need to forgive today? Relationships are much more important than anything that can separate them. Pray and ask God to help you forgive today.