

6 January 2019

Forgiveness Pt 3 Motivation for forgiveness – we are in a battle.

This is our third part on our study on “forgiveness”. In our previous study we established that motivation to forgive our brethren stems from – (1) obedience to God, (2) Christ’s forgiveness of our sins and (3) compassion for our brethren. In this study we establish further motivation to forgive includes (1) our desire not to give our enemy an advantage in the battle, (2) our desire that our brethren be not overcome with sorrow, and (3) when we remember our brother has ought against us seek reconciliation through forgiveness.

Scriptures upon which this teaching is founded.

1. We forgive others so the enemy does not get an advantage in the battle.

“To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ; Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices “ (2 Cor 2:10 & 11).

The enemy uses devices to attack us – to bring about schisms in the body (1 Cor.12: 25, 11: 18).

That is why we –

- a) mark them which cause divisions (Rom 16:17), and
- b) speak the same thing (truth) – (1Cor 1:10), and
- c) **forgive** our brethren to not leave a door open for Satan to get an advantage (2 Cor.2: 11).

2. We forgive our brethren so that they be not overcome with sorrow.

“So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow” (2 Cor.2: 7).

Unforgiveness can destroy a person, it eats them up, it consumes them with anger.

3. When we remember our brother has ought against us – seek reconciliation through forgiveness.

“Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift” (Matt.5:23 & 24).

An illustration to help apply the teaching to our life today.

Bucky, one of the winter soldiers in the Avengers movie – Captain American: Civil War – is blamed for a terrorist attack and Captain America refuses to believe he is responsible, whereas Iron man (on the same team as Captain America) decides to help the authorities catch Bucky – hence there is division between the two team members. Neither man asks or extend forgiveness, hence the movie ends with the division boiling over to the point where Captain America is prepared to kill Iron man to save Bucky. A vivid example of an enemy sowing seeds of division and the destructive consequences of two soldiers that do not extend forgiveness to the other.

Questions to think about.

- i) What is the fruit of unforgiveness?
- ii) How do we know if godly forgiveness has been extended and received between brethren?

Our answers from the scriptures.

- i) The fruit of unforgiveness is people “bite and devour one another”, and are “consumed one of another” (Gal.5: 14), and a divided body of Christ cannot fight against the enemy (Matt.12: 26).
 - ii) The fruit of godly forgiveness is Satan can no longer get an advantage between brethren.
- Let us remember, we are in a battle and our enemy hates us and seeks our destruction. Therefore, extend godly forgiveness to your brethren when they sin against you, and seek their forgiveness when you sin against them to ensure that Satan cannot use unforgiveness to bring division. Amen!