

Reasons to Forgive

“Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.” – Ephesians 4:31-32

Without even knowing what has gone on in your life, I know this about you: You have been hurt in life. You have had people say unkind things to you. You have had people do mean things to you. There have been incidents in your life where you’ve been treated unfairly.

Some want to rationalize that there is no need to forgive those who have wronged them because they don’t deserve forgiveness. But they have to ask themselves whether they deserve forgiveness themselves. As C. S. Lewis pointed out, “Everyone says forgiveness is a lovely idea, until they have something to forgive.”

Here is what the Bible has to say about forgiving those who have wronged us: “And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.” – Ephesians 4:30-32

God’s command to forgive should be enough. But let me offer another reason why we should learn to be forgiving: it might actually extend our lives. Recent studies have suggested that those who do not forgive are more likely to experience high blood pressure, bouts of depression, and problems with anger, stress, and anxiety. Dr. Charlotte van Oyen Witvliet, a researcher at Hope College, said “If you are willing to exert the effort it takes to be forgiving, there are benefits both emotionally and physically.”

People who have been studying the medical benefits of forgiveness have come to the same conclusion that the Bible came to long ago: it is a good thing to forgive others.

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