

Episode 011

Intercessor and the Power of Forgiveness.

Those of us who desire to grow in effective intercession, we need to have a clean heart. We must seek to forgive people who have hurt or offended us. We need to experience God's forgiveness also for our own sin and wrongdoing.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

The Power of Forgiveness

Intercessors are not exempted from hurt or offence. The love of Christ is the only way to set us free from those who have deeply wounded us. The love of Christ shown towards us is a prime demonstration of the power of God's forgiveness.

There is perhaps no greater gift you can offer God than a heart that knows the power of God's forgiveness and we decide to set others free because of Christ in us. Forgiveness shows that the love, grace, and mercy of Jesus are continually operating in our lives. God gives us strength to forgive. We who have received the freedom of God's forgiveness have the power to set one another free through Christ.



How do we extend and receive forgiveness.

- **Recognize sin as what it is.**

Call sin as God calls it. Be specific and thorough about sin. Remember that forgiveness is not excusing and approving of inappropriate behaviour or saying that an offence isn't important. Be honest with yourself and recognise your emotional response.

Psalm 139:23-24 Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

- **Share with God honestly and let Him heal you.**

Let God know what happened to you and how you feel. Look at the situation from His perspective. Spend time with Him, and let Him restore where sin has destroyed eg peace, joy etc. Forgiveness releases God's divine healing power.

Remind yourself of Psalm 30:2, "O Lord My God, I called to you for help and you healed me"

- **Set the offender free, understanding that it is a process.**

Declare forgiveness. Say, "I forgive [name the individual or group] for [name the offence]. The hurt can come up at different times, and we must choose to forgive again. It doesn't mean we automatically forget the offence.

Ephesians 4:32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.



- **Release the offender to God.**

Repent of your desire to punish or take revenge. Let God deal with the offence. Leave the offence in God's hand. Let Him be the vindicator.

Romans 12:19 Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord.

- **Bless the offender.**

Apply God's forgiveness. Trust and reconcile when possible, but realise that forgiveness does not always mean we have to relate closely with the person in the future. In some cases, this may not be possible. Rely on God's protection and justice.

Romans 12:14: Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.

The choice to forgive

Forgiving those who have hurt us is a personal choice, but sometimes the hardest choice is to forgive ourselves – or to accept God's forgiveness of us when we have mucked up etc.

Unforgiveness keeps us from God and hinders our prayer life. Living in God's forgiveness is key for each of us who want to grow in prayer and intercession.

Life example of Joseph

Genesis 45:5, 7 And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you. But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

Gen 50:20 You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. 21 So then, don't be afraid. I will provide for you and your children." And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them.



Factors that hinder us from choosing to forgive:

- Lack of understanding of God's judgement and righteousness. We think we must take the matter into our own hands. We must trust Him to be the judge.
- Pride in our lives. We want to be right.
- An unwillingness to face the pain of the offence.

Isaiah 53:5 But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.

- Bitterness in our hearts. Holding onto revenge and wanting to punish.
- Not regarding sin seriously enough. We cannot rationalise nor try to explain away a sinful response on our part.

Our Father God seeks to develop and shows His character in and through us perhaps by allowing us to experience certain difficult situations. His grace enables us to respond in a Christlike way that gives Him honour. Seeking forgiveness from God and others is the way to walk in wholeness and freedom. We need to ask God to show us the secret places in our hearts where we may be holding resentment against someone. We may need to be aware of how much we need forgiveness for ourselves.



Some practical steps you can take toward forgiveness (when we sinned or mucked up):

- Accept full responsibility where you have sinned. Don't blame-shift; own your part.
- Be aware of pride or self-pity in your life. Pride thinks there is no need to forgive, and self-pity thinks that others don't deserve forgiveness.
- Admit you're wrong.
- Ask for forgiveness.
- Seek reconciliation when it is possible.

If we want to grow in intercession, we must walk in holiness and purity. Learning to repent quickly when we fall/mucked up is key to a successful prayer life. I once heard that you could tell how mature a Christian was by the distance of time it took between sinning and asking God for forgiveness. Walking in daily holiness and confessing of all known sin should be part of our daily spiritual habits. It is one of our greatest weapons in intercession.





Discussion

1. Let's quieten our hearts before God. Ask the Lord to search our hearts and see if there is anything we need to repent of. Anyone whom we need to forgive for past hurts or offence.
2. Share a testimony of how God brought you out of a time when we may have mucked up. What did we discover about the power of God's forgiveness and love towards us as we allow Him to restore us.





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