

**“Forgiving Living”**  
**December 15, 2013**

**PROP-** One of the most significant choices we make—powerfully affecting us & everyone around us—is this: “When offended, will we choose to forgive or to not forgive?” Every day is filled with opportunities to:

- **Either pull back from life**—withdrawing our love & forfeiting our destiny
- **Or press into life**—purposing to love, forgive, and persevere. “Love suffers long” (1 Cor. 13:4). It is not diluted by disappointments.

**1. THE IMPACT OF UNFORGIVENESS**

**ABSALOM-** One of King David’s sons, his name means “my father is peace.” Yet, he forfeited his peace—allowing one incident of betrayal & injustice to change the course of his life. He chose to **hold on to resentment**, become **embittered** and allow his offense to **defile others**.

- His brother, **Amnon**, raped his sister **Tamar**
- **Absalom** told his father, **David**, to do something—but David did nothing
- **So, Absalom** hired his servant to **kill Amnon**. After the murder, **Absalom** rejected his father—and **went to live in another king’s kingdom**.
- Stunned by murder in his own family, **David** had **Absalom** brought back home. David confronted his son—then **fully forgave him of his crime**.
- **Though forgiven, Absalom refused to forgive his father. He rose up in “judgment” (to curse & place in the worst light). Chose to undermine & divide his father’s kingdom.**

**2 SAMUEL 15:1-6**

- **Absalom** continued in this attitude against his father for **four years!**
- **Hebrews 12:15-** A “**root of bitterness**” causes us to be “**TROUBLED**” (*internally harassed—Lit. - like a mob incited to an uproar—constantly stirring it up*) moving us to “**DEFILE MANY OTHERS**” (*to pollute, contaminate, stain with dye*)
- Refusing to believe God is **JUST**, he allowed **INJUSTICE** to rule his life.
- Sharing our offense with others—in order to rally them for our “**cause**”—**defiles them (illegal dumping)**.

**MATTHEW 18:21-35**

- A servant is caught stealing money—his crime and his fine total over \$1 billion (an impossible debt to repay).
- He is thrown in prison—**until he can repay it (earning 10 cents per week making license plates for chariots—he will never repay the debt)**

- A benevolent king totally releases him from his debt.
- Upon his release, he finds a man who owes him \$10. He demands repayment, seizing him and choking him. NOTE: Unforgiveness tries to extract from others what only God can give!
- The king, enraged at this man's unforgiving ways—has him returned to prison and turned over to “tormentors” [*to relentlessly cause pain and distress; Lit. - to get to the CORE*]
- There is something worse than the initial wound—remaining in the torment of unforgiveness.

## 2. THE INFLUENCE OF FORGIVENESS

### JOSEPH (Genesis 37-50)

- Injustice. Betrayed at every turn by people he trusted, starting with his own brothers.
- Joseph responded to offenses polar opposite of Absalom:
  - No one in Egypt knew of Joseph's offenses
  - Joseph, as high commander, had both the power and the upper hand over his brothers—yet he refused to use it to retaliate!
  - Instead, he moved toward forgiving & reconciling with them.
  - He sought to reunite with them (not divide) even before they repented! (Romans 5:8- “While we were still sinners Christ died” for us!)

## 3. THE CONTRAST

### FORGIVENESS:

- I move TOWARD you with a desire to BLESS you (*vs. pulling back to punish you*)
- I come to GIVE you grace & honor, desiring your best
- I create a place in my heart for RECONCILIATION to happen

### UNFORGIVENESS:

- Rooted in a LACK OF COMPASSION
- Refuses to BELIEVE GOD is “just and the justifier of those who have faith in Jesus” (Romans 3:26). In my lack of faith in God—I become judge, jury and executioner (Absalom). In my trust in God, I know even things *intended for evil* can be worked together for His good (Joseph).
- Refuses to RECEIVE FROM GOD (i.e., Matthew 18- servant failed to realize and receive what He had been given). “*He who is forgiven much—LOVES much!*” (Luke 7:47)

4. THE CLEANSING (*You can be free from the torment of unforgiveness*)

1. PROCESS YOUR PAIN WITH HIM

- i.e., David in Psalm 22
- The pain of dealing with the offense—ultimately leads to healing. (Some refuse this process—afraid of the pain—w/o realizing they are *already in pain!*)
- Work WITH God—to come to a healthy place (*i.e., “I don’t want to feel this way!”*)

2. BELIEVE THAT NO ONE CAN TAKE SOMETHING FROM YOU (THAT GOD CANNOT RESTORE)!!

- No one can CONTROL you
- No one can STEAL YOUR FUTURE
- He is the ULTIMATE REDEEMER—able to do “immeasurably more than all you ask or imagine” (Ephesians 3:20). He specializes in the impossible! There is no hand dealt to you that God cannot win with!

3. RECEIVE HIM...AND ALL HE HAS FOR YOU!!

- Know that He’s given you “a future and a hope” (Jeremiah 29:11)
- Drink in and celebrate His complete forgiveness of you!! (*NOTE: Failure to see that Jesus paid for our sins—drives us to make others pay for theirs*)
- Know that no one can separate you from His love—or rob you of your inheritance and destiny!
- FORGIVENESS THAT LASTS flows from a heart that trusts Him to take care of us in the future (Romans 8:28)