

## Forgiveness

Driving into the city, my listening to the radio faded in and out. The radio wasn't fading, I was. There was a person discussing forgiveness. As I half paid attention, I thought about the people who've hurt us in our life, some of them unintentionally, some intentionally. Some of these hurts were to our pocketbooks, some to our pride. My mind followed the erupting tangents of vindication, and though I hate to admit it, in some respects, revenge. I wanted things 'righted', I wanted justice. I wanted somehow to have the people who did these things to us to get what they deserved.

I felt the gnawing.

Then the person on the radio came back into my stream of thinking. I listened to them say...

"This person has wronged you. It upsets you. You think about it a lot. Sometimes people can carry these things for years. You think about how they feel about what they did to you. You want them to feel remorse. What is probably really going on is that they aren't thinking about you at all. They haven't thought about you since whatever they did to injure you. They may not have even thought about it then. It simply isn't part of their lives. You've spent all this time 'suffering' over what they did to you, thinking about what they must be 'experiencing' regarding the pain they caused you, when they haven't thought about what they did to you at all. If for no other reason than to ease your own one sided 'suffering', you should forgive them."

Of course I know you need to forgive, must forgive. Our Master insists on it. Not once, not seven times, not seventy times but as many times as it takes. But it is really hard when you come right down to it. You say you have, you say you did, but then that little nagging memory triggers a flood of emotion and you find yourself running off on those tangents again, wishing for vindication, wishing for justice.

Maybe that's why He said, "No, seven times seventy times."

Forgive not just for the sake of the one you are forgiving, but for your own sake, for and to yourself, for your own peace, for your own soul. Every time one of those little memories pop up, you need to forgive even the memory.

One of our children was hurt bad recently. Of course this brings out everything from the parent, the best as well as the worst. The child was judged harshly, unfairly, and humiliated. They made a simple and honest mistake and were forced to pay an excessive price that I am sure will be their prime memory of their high school experience. After going to battle for them, trying to find justice for them, and trying to find the lesson in it all - there were so many things involved, a lack of compassion, betrayal - it hit me that the prime lesson our child needed to learn from what was done to them...

Is forgiveness. They must forgive. For their own sake. The most important thing my child could do was to learn to forgive these people, and to keep forgiving them, for as long as it takes.

This is an most important key to a huge part of our lives. To keep forgiving. Even if it is the same incident, and a reoccurring memory, that needs to be forgiven over and over and over.

It is a hard thing to do, but I know the peace and healing that eventually comes will be worth it, whether it takes seven times, or seventy times, or four hundred and ninety times.

Whatever it takes. For however long it takes.

Forgive. Continually. Even when you slip back to what you felt before you forgave. Stop and forgive again, say it to yourself.

He will know. And that is all that counts.

*Clement*

