

Resting in Repentance

²¹“Then Kefa came up and said to him, “Rabbi, how often can my brother sin against me and I have to forgive him? As many as seven times?” ²²“No, not seven times,” answered Yeshua, “but seventy times seven!” (Matthew 18:21-22).

The Shabbat that falls within the ten-day period between *Yom Teruah* and *Yom Kippur* is called *Shabbat T'Shuvah*, the Sabbath of Return/Repentance. Since the word Sabbath means rest, then today is supposed to be a day of “resting in repentance.” There is probably no greater suffering in the Body of Messiah than the pain of being wronged by a brother/sister in the L-rd. Since if we are to reign with Him, we must also suffer with Him, this Godly suffering is the normal state of affairs in the Body and in Kol Simcha.

²³ Because of this, the Kingdom of Heaven may be compared with a king who decided to settle accounts with his deputies. ²⁴ Right away they brought forward a man who owed him many millions, ²⁵ and since he couldn't pay, his master ordered that he, his wife, his children and all his possessions be sold to pay the debt. ²⁶ But the servant fell down before him. ‘Be patient with me,’ he begged, ‘and I will pay back everything.’ ²⁷ So out of pity for him, the master let him go and forgave the debt.

²⁸ “But as that servant was leaving, he came upon one of his fellow servants who owed him some tiny sum. He grabbed him and began to choke him, crying, ‘Pay back what you owe me!’ ²⁹ His fellow servant fell before him and begged, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.’ ³⁰ But he refused; instead, he had him thrown in jail until he should repay the debt. ³¹ When the other servants saw what had happened, they were extremely distressed; and they went and told their master everything that had taken place. ³² Then the master summoned his servant and said, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt just because you begged me to do it. ³³ Shouldn't you have had pity on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?’ ³⁴ And in anger his master turned him over to the jailers for punishment until he paid back everything he owed. ³⁵ This is how my heavenly Father will treat you, unless you each forgive your brother from your hearts.”

Y'shua laid down a very important principle about forgiveness/repentance in the above passage — this is what the ‘Kingdom of Heaven’ is like. It is not uncommon to have to deal with forgiveness. Today G-d wants us to consider the matter to see if we are preparing for *Yom Kippur*. I know that many of us have truly been hurt and that we are innocent—we did not merit the treatment we were given. Yet G-d wants us to fully forgive not just our enemies — He wants us to forgive our families (dads, especially) and He wants us to forgive ourselves.

A. What is Godly Forgiveness

- Forgiveness is releasing an offender emotionally — Pardon requires an authority who has jurisdiction over the matter to cancel out the consequences.
- Forgiveness is seeing an offender's needs and G-d's solution.
- Forgiveness is wanting G-d to benefit an offender's life.
- Forgiveness is freeing G-d to reward us unexpectedly.

B. What are some causes of persistent bitterness (Heb. 12:15)

See to it that no one misses out on G-d's grace, that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble and thus contaminates many. (Hebrew 12:15)

- We have the same problem in our life — we get the most frustrated at people who have the same problems we do. (“Therefore you have no excuse, whoever you are, passing judgment; for when you judge someone else, you are passing judgment against yourself; since you who are judging do the same things he does. We know that G-d's judgment lands impartially on those who do such things; do you think that you, a mere man passing judgment on others who do such things, yet doing them yourself, will escape the judgment of G-d?” Ro. 2:1-3)
- Partial guilt — as long as there is guilt you cannot get rid of bitterness (“Like a fluttering sparrow or a flying swallow, an undeserved curse will come home to roost.” Prov. 26:2)

- Attempts at revenge (“*Never seek revenge, my friends; instead, leave that to G-d's anger; for in the Tanakh it is written, "ADONAI says, 'Vengeance is my responsibility; I will repay.'*” Ro. 12:19)
- Temporal values — the person who comes to you complaining about someone else is not part of the solution, is part of the problem (see Luke 12:15)
- Taking up offenses—G-d gives grace to the two people involved, no grace for the spectators & 3rd parties (“*and keep their tongues from slander; who never do harm to others or seek to discredit neighbors.*” Ps 15:3)

C. What are the consequences of persistent bitterness

PHYSICAL — chemical imbalances

- lower resistance
- aching teeth
- hard facial features
- bone diseases — related to the health of the blood

PSYCHOLOGICAL — depression

- emotional drain
- look at Eliyahu and Jonah
- bitterness is a continual drain

SPIRITUAL IDENTIFICATION—you create an emotional focus and become just like the person you hate

D. What can I do?

- Repent of temporal values which is a basic cause — be more concerned with eternal values
- Recognize the attitude of ungratefulness
- View the offender as G-d’s agent — Yosef said to his brothers “*you meant it for evil but G-d meant it for good*” — consider Yosef, David, Yeshua and Job, for example.
- Thank G-d for His ultimate purpose through offenses (“*In everything give thanks, for this is what G-d wants from you who are united with the Messiah Yeshua.*” 1 Thes. 5:18)
 - ✓ G-d protects His own (“*Aren't sparrows sold for next to nothing, two for an assarion? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground without your Father's consent.*” Matt 10:29)
 - ✓ Offenses reveal wrong attitudes in us
 - ✓ use losses to teach contentment (“*Now true religion does bring great riches, but only to those who are content with what they have.*” 1 Tim 6:6)
- Comprehend the magnitude of our debt to G-d for our willful sins vs. the mere offenses toward us — “*forgive our trespasses as we (in the same way we) forgive those who trespass against us*”
- Realize that G-d will punish the offender (see the entire book of Psalms)
 - ✓ Voluntarily invest a treasure in our offender — we can forgive, but we do not often have joy and gratefulness like we should. Why? This step is critical!
 - ✓ This is the basis of genuine love, joy and peace (“*For where your wealth is, there your heart will be also.*” Matt. 6:21)
 - ✓ Allows the possibility of a second mile witness (“*And if a soldier forces you to carry his pack for one mile, carry it for two!*” Matt. 5:41)
 - ✓ Gives us motivation on the job (“*If one of you has a slave tending the sheep or plowing, when he comes back from the field, will you say to him, 'Come along now, sit down and eat'? No, you'll say, 'Get my supper ready, dress for work, and serve me until I have finished eating and drinking; after that, you may eat and drink.' Does he thank the slave because he did what he was told to do? No! It's the same with you - when you have done everything you were told to do, you should be saying, 'We're just ordinary slaves, we have only done our duty.'*” Luke 17:7-10)
 - ✓ Conquers bitterness (“*If someone wants to sue you for your shirt, let him have your coat as well!*” Matt. 5:40)