

Forgive us, as we too have forgiven those who have wronged us

*You, therefore, pray like this: 'Our Father in heaven! May your Name be kept holy. May your Kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us the food we need today. Forgive us what we have done wrong, as we too have forgiven those who have wronged us. And do not lead us into hard testing, but keep us safe from the Evil One. *For kingship, power and glory are yours forever. Amen.'* (Matthew 6:9-13)

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).

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. This kind of suffering can be G-d's reminder that we have violated His ways ("It is for my good that I have been humbled; it was so that I would learn your laws." Ps 119:71). Also suffering can be motivation for spiritual growth ("You will have to suffer only a little while; after that, G-d, who is full of grace, the one who called you to his eternal glory in union with the Messiah, will himself restore, establish and strengthen you and make you firm." 1 Peter 5:10). Suffering is preparation for future leadership. ("If we persevere, we will also rule with him. If we disown him, he will also disown us." 2 Tim. 2:12). Suffering forces us to stop sinning ("Therefore, since the Messiah suffered physically, you too are to arm yourselves with the same attitude. For whoever has suffered physically is finished with sin." 1 Peter 4:1). Suffering is also G-d's way to draw others to Himself ("For the Messiah himself died for sins, once and for all, a righteous person on behalf of unrighteous people, so that he might bring you to G-d. He was put to death in the flesh but brought to life by the Spirit" 1 Peter 3:18). This is our calling when another person offends us.

How Do We Turn A Situation That Causes Bitterness into Forgiveness

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 in the above passage. He said that is what the 'Kingdom of Heaven' is like. An important question the Spirit is asking this morning is: "Are you prepared to fully forgive?" Understanding what forgiveness is a key component of this process. This morning Adonai wants you and I to fully grasp the impact of not forgiving others. Our future depends on it, our health depends on it, our happiness depends on it, our prayer life depends on it, our maturing depends on it, simply put, our entire body, soul and spirit will show the consequences of not fully forgiving our offenders. How do we fully forgive? 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 you and I to fully forgive not just our enemies — He wants us to forgive our families (our

moms and dads, especially) and He wants us to forgive ourselves. Maybe the following will clear up some of the hurdles.

A. Understanding 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 and third parties (*"and keep their tongues from slander; who never do harm to others or seek to discredit neighbors."* Psalm 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 loses 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)

Notes:

1. Balance between guilt and Blame
2. Spiritual causes of sickness
3. Forgiveness - HS whispers "forgive" but we do not and we get bitter Heb. 12:15
4. Yielding Rights
5. The "mess" dream I had