

## **The Top 7 Misconceptions about Forgiveness**

People can behave in ways that are hurtful, even damaging to others. When we have been on the receiving end, we go through a whole gamut of emotions, from rage to hurt. Sometimes there is a desire for revenge. All too often, we react to the offense and simply move on, holding the grudge tightly. Few things are more damaging to the human spirit than the crippling effects of un-forgiveness.

### **1. We are doing the person who wronged us a favor by forgiving.**

Sometimes people neither know nor care that they have caused pain. So often we want to hold on to anger or hurt, often believing, with some justification, that the person who has caused us harm does not deserve to be forgiven. The gift of forgiveness is for ourselves, not the person who caused us pain.

### **2. We are protecting ourselves by not forgiving.**

In fact we are re-gaining the power that we have handed over to the person that hurt us. Forgiving makes the statement that you will not be driven by that person's power over you and allow that to interfere with your life. It is the forgiving that gives us freedom.

### **3. It's too hard to forgive.**

When we forgive, we give ourselves back the energy it takes to harbor ill feelings toward someone. Forgiving allows us to free ourselves of the crippling dangers of cynicism and bitterness.

### **4. Forgiving means forgetting.**

No! It simply means that the sting is gone from the memory and we have a willingness to detach.

### **5. Forgiving is an instant process.**

Forgiving a serious affront may begin with simply knowing it is on your agenda, even though your heart is not in it, initially. To completely forgive requires venting feelings, regaining perspective, being faithful to accomplish the goal and allowing for healing. We know forgiveness is complete at the deepest level when we are reminded of the memory, but not driven by the old feelings.

### **6. People deserve the consequences of their bad choices.**

We must be responsible for our own actions. But we also have to stop holding ourselves prisoner and also forgive ourselves, accepting our innate ability to make mistakes, let them go and move forward.

### **7. Forgiving someone will obligate us to a repeat performance!**

Some people and some situations are to be avoided because it is wise and prudent. Forgiving them does not mean we have to be in fellowship with them.