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Hard . . . But Not Impossible

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As God has forgiven you, so must you forgive others.

“But I Can't”

“But I can’t,” you might say. “You don’t understand what they did to me.”

You’re right. I don’t. Ultimately, only your heavenly Father understands because he watched as the Romans tortured and killed his Son.

Forgiveness Isn't Reconciliation

Sadly, your willingness to forgive doesn’t guarantee the relationship will heal. There is a difference between forgiveness and reconciliation. And the cold fact is you may forgive someone and never be reconciled with them.

Of course, we don’t forgive just because it facilitates personal healing. We forgive because God told us to forgive. Jesus said, “But I tell you: Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you and pray for those who persecute you” (Matthew 5:44).

He Didn't Mean That

On another occasion he said, “And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins” (Mark 11:25). Jesus didn’t mean God will not forgive us unless we forgive others. Instead he meant that we cannot experience his forgiveness while refusing to forgive others.

Ultimately, our willingness to forgive reveals our understanding of how God has forgiven us. As people who have repeatedly wronged God and found forgiveness—doesn’t it make sense for us to follow his lead and forgive those who have wronged us?

The Antidote to Bitterness

After you've forgiven the one who hurt you, each time you remember the pain, pray a blessing for them. Blessing is the antidote to bitterness and wrath. Indeed, it’s impossible to harbor bitterness toward someone you’re blessing. With that in mind, take a moment now and pray a blessing for the person who hurt you. Pray for their well being and spiritual growth. Yes, it will be hard, but not impossible.

Remember…you’re never more like Jesus than when you forgive.