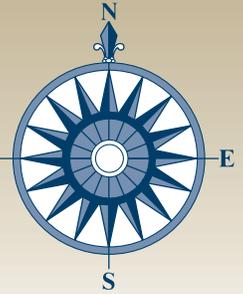


FORGIVENESS



Offenses are atoned for by mercy and truth.

PRINCIPLE OF THE WEEK

To atone means to pay for the offenses or wrongs we have done. The payment makes restitution and restores us to our former state. The end result is forgiveness. The principle of forgiveness is probably one of the most rewarding principles we can experience in our lives because it has a major effect on our health and well being. It will also affect our business dealings and our relationships with others in general.

People become trapped by allowing their actions to be ruled by experiences that marked their lives in the past. They have not been able to get past it and deal with it. They are stuck. Others who are immersed in problems continually act defensively and weaken their relationships and themselves. If our minds are not focused in the future we'll never arrive there. When we don't forgive we are trapped in the past and cannot build our future.

Universal laws allow us to know what is right and what is wrong. If we've done wrong in the past we are burdened by guilt. This is why forgiveness is so important: to give us the opportunity to make it right, to be restored and to be free from guilt.

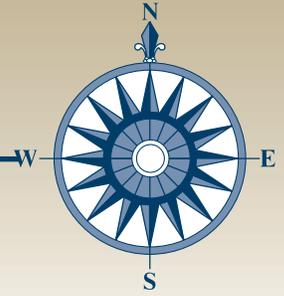
There is an emotional sequence we go through when we are internally affected by our past. At first we deny it. We don't want to admit that we have been hurt because we can't face the issue and we feel fragile. Then we feel upset, accusing the one who wounded or offended us. Next we barter, holding back our forgiveness until we hear the right apology. This may lead to depression as we judge ourselves because of our reaction to the offense. Ultimately we accept what

happened, forgiving the one who offended us and free ourselves of the burden. In this way we say yes to life, processing the emotional hurts that have had us trapped. We acknowledge our imperfection, forgiving others and forgiving ourselves, allowing us to experience true freedom in our lives.

BENEFITS

1. When we forgive we walk towards the future with all our energy and strength. Forgiveness liberates us from the past and the present and leads us to the future.
2. We enjoy better spiritual and emotional health. Not forgiving makes us obsessive about the past and the future and makes us sick. We make wrong decisions when motivated by revenge.
3. We'll have a productive and happy life. We will be able to relate to others. Having healthy relationships helps us to have more beneficial lives.
4. People who practice forgiveness have freed themselves from emotional burdens and guilt because they are able to forgive themselves and receive forgiveness from God and others.
5. Practicing forgiveness frees us from hate and bitterness. This is the true measure of perfect and complete forgiveness.

Action Plan for FORGIVENESS



STEPS TO FOLLOW

1. Bring to your mind negative memories that tie you to the past. In order to free yourself from these emotional burdens you have to recognize and identify these memories.
2. Don't rationalize the motives you have had to keep from forgiving yourself or others.
3. Make the decision to let go and forgive – this is an act of your will.
4. True forgiveness is a process that takes us towards restoration. Be intentional and take those steps to freedom and health.

If you establish strict rules and lay down the law you will create rebellion and anger in your children, workers or a society. They will feel that they can never be good enough, so why try? Living your life without any mercy makes your life hard and without hope. If we never experience forgiveness we develop a bad attitude about people and life in general. This puts us in a negative, defensive mode toward life. On the other hand, an attitude of looseness leaves you with no goals or boundaries to live by which creates an irresponsible attitude and a feeling that you can get away with anything.

Speaking the truth in love and offering mercy is what forgiveness is all about. If we receive and understand this principle we will receive atonement (payment). Atonement is simply forgiveness for our failures, so we can get up and start again. We then can prosper and live our life without guilt.

We are wrong if we think that our actions and decisions are not influenced by unresolved issues from our past. We hurt ourselves and others if we don't forgive or don't ask for forgiveness. Feelings buried alive never die. They fester and affect us even when we aren't aware of it. Forgiveness is a gift of high value and is most common amongst the humble.

***Remember...
thoughts produce actions,
actions produce habits,
habits form our character,
and character determines our destiny!***

REFLECT AND RESPOND

How easy is it for you to forgive others who offend or harm you?

Can you forgive yourself for the bad mistakes you have made in your own life?

What does it mean to be atoned for?

Evaluate yourself from 1 to 10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Why did you give yourself this rating?										
Benefits of raising your rating?										
What specific action will you do this week? (eg. what, with whom, when)										