



Dealing with recurring offences

Most of us will at some point face a situation that requires us to forgive someone for the same offence, more than once. Recurring offences can become the hardest to forgive. These offences against us usually result from either continual bad behaviour of the offender, or undealt character flaws in a spouse, between family members, at work or in friendships.

In general, most Believers really want to forgive and live in peace with others, and before the Lord. There is no desire to live a life filled with grudges, bitterness or to be consumed with resentment, thoughts of retaliation and anger. When we forgive someone, we make ourselves vulnerable to be hurt all over again and therefore the lurking enemy of resentment can easily become our defence mechanism to protect our heart. This resentment can even be against yourself for repeating silly mistakes or blindly trusting someone.

Some of us will get to a point when, after you have forgiven offences over and over again for many years, you just reach your very end. It might feel like your willingness to do what is right before the Lord is simply just spent. There is no quick fix, no easy remedy, no self-help article that makes a difference once you have reached this point. If this is true of you, then consider some of these thoughts.

Consider....the pain of not forgiving. When you reach this point, you realise that, greater than the offence that you have to forgive, is the staggering danger that if you don't forgive, there is the terrible reality of the separation it may bring between you and the Lover of your soul. Inwardly, you know the only way to avoid that separation is for the matter not to be left unresolved, unattended, and most of all - unforgiven. Count the cost of losing intimacy with the Lord. That thought alone may just help you to forgive again.

Consider....giving it time. We are unable to really forgive without God's help. Ask for the Holy Spirit's help – for you to will to forgive yet again. Pray this over and over until the breakthrough comes. Pray: *Lord, make me willing to be willing to forgive.* Ask Him to replenish your willingness to forgive. Willing to do His will and what is right. Sometimes the breakthrough comes after an hour, other times after a day or even after a week. Do not stop asking for willingness to forgive. It will definitely come.

Consider....His honour. If Jesus had not said on the cross, "*Father, forgive them for they do not know what they do*", His death would have been in vain. We are only forgiven as we forgive. Remember, it is always about Jesus – what will please Him most. Once we shift our focus like this, everything else fades in importance.

Consider....a heart of flesh. Keep your heart in a posture of allowing the Holy Spirit to soften you again to feel the love of Jesus. Ask Him to show you how abounding the grace of the Lord Jesus is to all who believe – also to you in this difficult matter.

Consider....stepping into His shoes. To forgive again means you open up yourself to love again, to be vulnerable again, because forgiveness is unconditional. Meditate on what Jesus did for you. Think of the pain He feels every time you wrong Him. He opens Himself up to you again and again, knowing that you will most certainly disappoint Him again. How does he keep on forgiving you? How does He bare the pain of sin repeatedly piercing His pure and holy heart? Recall your pain in the matter that needs forgiveness. O He is so holy, how much deeper must the pain be in His heart?

Consider....face-down at His feet. Whenever you struggle with a matter, consider seeing yourself – like Mary - at the feet of Jesus. In the secret place of prayer, you too fall down at His feet. Lay hold of those nail-pierced ankles again and you may find yourself starting to weep as you become aware of areas where your heart, too, may have been hardened. *Give me a heart after your own heart Lord Jesus, give me a forgiving heart, again and again.* Pray this over and over until you smell that sweet fragrance – the fragrance of death to self arising and pleasing Him. Just Him and you, sharing a moment where you minister at His feet, washing them in thanksgiving with your tears, and He, cleansing your battered soul with His blood shed on the cross. Then, slowly the peace that surpasses understanding returns. Willingness to let go – AGAIN – will begin to return to your heart. Then, look up into His beautiful face. Everything will be well, as long as you can return to this place at His feet again and again. In this place of surrender, you will harvest the willingness to forgive yet again.

Consider... now forgiving. After spending time in deep surrender, the Holy Spirit enables us to forgive – again. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you forgive recurring offences – even unrighteousness done to you. Speak forgiveness out loud in the place of prayer before you leave: *Lord I forgive my spouse, friend, colleague for what they have done to me.* [Mention the specific wrong.] *I pray that You will bless them with all Your goodness and mercy, and that their cup will overflow.*

Consider....giving thanks. Give thanks to the Lord for helping you to forgive. Give thanks to the Lord for the restoration of your relationship with Him. Give thanks for the cross, for the Blood of Jesus, and for the power of forgiveness that sets you free.

Dealing with recurring offences and having to forgive more times than you have kept count of, is one of the hardest disciplines of the Christian life. For those who diligently press through, even though it is difficult in the face of humiliation and persecution, there awaits a crown – the crown of life. (James 1:12; Revelation 2:10). And that is priceless!