

Unforgiveness Characteristics

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Walking Christian on Forgiveness / Unforgiveness; Forgiveness; Offend; Heart



II. CHARACTERISTICS OF UNFORGIVENESS

Hebrews 12:15 ESV

¹⁵ See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no “root of bitterness” springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled;

A. Why Should We Get Rid of Unforgiveness?

Proverbs 28:13 ESV

¹³ Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy.

- _____—focusing on the past wrongs that the offender committed
- _____—being intolerant of any present failures of the offender

Unforgiveness Characteristics

“Do not judge.... Do not condemn....Forgive, and you will be forgiven.” Luke 6:37

- _____—rehearsing the reasons why the offender does not deserve mercy
- _____—looking down without mercy on the offender

“Judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment!” James 2:13

- _____—begrudging the successes of the offender
- _____—coveting the accomplishments of the offender

“Resentment kills a fool, and envy slays the simple.” Job 5:2

- _____—rejoicing when the offender experiences failure, difficulty, or hurt
- _____—desiring to get even with the offender

“Do not gloat when your enemy falls; when he stumbles, do not let your heart rejoice.” Proverbs 24:17

- _____—elevating self above the offender, who is considered less deserving
- _____—acting with arrogance toward the offender

“Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.” Proverbs 16:18

- _____—verbally abusive toward the offender
- _____—harboring hostility toward the offender

“Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness.” Romans 3:14

- _____—and quick to quarrel over personal choices, words, and deeds
- _____—arguing about any advice or constructive criticism regarding the offender

“Do everything without complaining or arguing.” Philippians 2:14

- _____—exhibiting little patience while being easily provoked
- _____—feeling easily irritated by the offender

“A man’s wisdom gives him patience; it is to his glory to overlook an offense.” Proverbs 19:11

- _____—feeling weighed down with unresolved anger
- _____—feeling no joy and no approval concerning the offender

“Each heart knows its own bitterness, and no one else can share its joy.” Proverbs 14:10

Unforgiveness Characteristics

Matthew 6:15 ESV

¹⁵ but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Question: “How can I forgive someone who has not apologized or shown any kind of repentance?”

Answer:

Luke 23:34 ESV

³⁴ And Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” And they cast lots to divide his garments.

Question: “If I forgive those who offend me, I’ll be a classic enabler. Why should offenders change if there is no consequence for their offensive behavior?”

Answer:

- Enablement puts you in a position of being offended again and again.
- Enabling never helps offenders change, but further ingrains their bad habits. However, one “consequence” to your offenders is that they will not have other opportunities to “use you” or offend you again.
- Enablers are classic people-pleasers who do not say *no* when they should say *no*. If you say *yes* to irresponsible people when you should say *no*, you are actually saying *no* to Christ. The apostle Paul said,

Galatians 1:10 ESV

¹⁰ For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.

B. What Does the Forgiving Heart Look Like?

Galatians 5:22–23 ESV

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

- _____—not keeping a record of the bad things the offender has done
- A _____, allowing the possibility that the offender can change

“Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.” **1 Peter 4:8**

- _____—taking to heart the goodness of God and His sovereignty over all events in life, even the painful ones
- A _____ that God will use trials to bring triumph

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"I will continue to rejoice, for I know that through ... the help given by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance." **Philippians 1:18–19**

- _____—seeking to resolve any difficulty, hurt, or division and wanting the offender to be right with God and to be blessed by Him

- A _____ that lowers the guard of the offender and paves the way for reconciliation

"Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness." **James 3:18**

- _____—accepting that the offender is not "fixed in cement" and could possibly change

- A _____ to wait for the right day to deal with difficulties and the right time to talk about them

"Love is patient." **1 Corinthians 13:4**

- _____—looking for and acting in practical ways to express kind deeds and to meet needs

- A _____ on behalf of the offender that is unexpected, unforeseen, and unannounced

"A kind man benefits himself, but a cruel man brings trouble on himself." **Proverbs 11:17**

- _____—holding to moral principles and purity even in the midst of controversy

- A _____, reflecting the highest moral character—the character of Christ

"Give an answer.... Do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander." **1 Peter 3:15–16**

- _____—praying that those who have caused such pain might have changed lives

- A _____ to pray for those who have been hurtful

"Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer." **Romans 12:12**

- _____—taking into account the woundedness of the offender and responding to harshness with a calm gentleness

- A _____, which understands that often "hurt people hurt people"

"A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger." **Proverbs 15:1**

- _____—deciding ahead of time how to respond when conflict arises

- A _____ that is Christlike so that, no matter what is said or done, there is a positive attitude toward the offender

"Prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled." **1 Peter 1:13**

Unforgiveness Characteristics

Question: “How do I know whether I have genuinely forgiven someone?”

Answer:

- “Do I still expect my offender ‘to pay’ for the wrong done to me?”
- “Do I still have bitter feelings toward my offender?”
- “Do I still have vengeful thoughts toward my offender?”

1 Samuel 12:23 ESV

²³ Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by ceasing to pray for you, and I will instruct you in the good and the right way.

C. The High Cost of Unforgiveness versus the High Reward of Forgiveness

Matthew 11:28 ESV

²⁸ Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

1 Peter 5:7 ESV

⁷ casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.

- **Unforgiveness** _____ the door to salvation and God’s forgiveness.
- **Forgiveness** _____ the door to salvation and God’s forgiveness.

“If you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.” **Matthew 6:14–15**

- **Unforgiveness** _____ a root of bitterness to grow.
- **Forgiveness** _____ a root of bitterness from growing.

“See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.” **Hebrews 12:15**

- **Unforgiveness** _____ a door to Satan in our lives.
- **Forgiveness** _____ a door to Satan in our lives.

“I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.” **2 Corinthians 2:10–11**

Unforgiveness Characteristics

- **Unforgiveness** causes us to walk in _____.

- **Forgiveness** brings us into the _____.

“Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in the darkness.... Whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness; he does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded him.” 1 John 2:9–11

- **Unforgiveness** is of _____.

- **Forgiveness** is of _____.

“If you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts.... Such ‘wisdom’ does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil.” James 3:14–15

- **Unforgiveness** reflects a _____ heart.

- **Forgiveness** reflects a _____ heart.

“The godless in heart harbor resentment.” Job 36:13

- **Unforgiveness** makes us _____ to sin.

- **Forgiveness** _____ us.

“I see that you are full of bitterness and captive to sin.” Acts 8:23

- **Unforgiveness** _____ the Spirit of God.

- **Forgiveness** is _____ by the Spirit of God.

“Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.” Ephesians 4:30–31