

## Forgiveness Case Study

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A while ago I had started noticing many of the symptoms of unforgiveness in my life toward my best friend, Bekka. I had started avoiding her and wasn't looking forward to our usual time together as I typically did. I started to complain about her often to my husband and felt bitterness creep into my heart. Sometimes, in the deep parts of my heart, I even noticed jealousy for how the Lord was blessing Bekka and her life ministry and hoped that she would see less fruit. These feelings went on for months, but I could typically press them down and ignore them. I chose to believe that the situation we were in was the problem, not my heart, and that things would get better when our situation changed. We had both just had babies—Bekka's second and my first—and our friendship was dramatically changed. I could no longer cater to Bekka's needs as a mom without having kids of my own and we didn't have nearly as much time together. When we were together, we were desperately bouncing between meeting the needs of our babies and trying to press into some semblance of meaningful conversation with one another. I was frustrated with Bekka's flakiness when we had plans and she was frustrated with my lack of availability.

I even began to notice a strain in my relationship with the Lord. My heart was hardening and I was either unwilling or unaware of how to fix it. Bekka and I usually got together for coffee one morning a week where we would both have a quiet time and then share what God had been teaching us in the last week. This time began to feel forced and like I had to come up with something rather than actually experiencing true unity and authenticity with the Lord and with

my friend. My bitterness and hurt from one relationship was beginning to seep out and affect so much more.

I am thankful that Bekka texted me to initiate a conversation between us to bring things to the light. We decided we needed to sit down together without the kids and talk through all the things that had been building up between us. I was nervous beforehand and really didn't want to sit down and dig up the hurt and how I'd been feeling. All my life, I'd been a person who stuffed things down and I didn't really see a reason to change any time soon! It seemed to work for me. But, I could feel that the Spirit wanted to do something and so I courageously stepped into the hard conversation.

We brought up every moment of hurt in the last few months and explained what it was about that situation that felt so wounding. We each got to apologize over and over to the other person and reassure them that we never meant to hurt the other person with our actions and attitude. We cried together over how we had let the enemy creep into our friendship and attempt to destroy a good, life-giving thing and we prayed together for the Spirit to strengthen us to fight the enemy's attacks. We talked about how important our friendship was to us and how we were willing to fight for it and we spoke love over one another. It was a such a sweet night and one that I will always think about when I feel the dread of needing to confess or forgive someone. So much beauty and healing came from that one conversation! Even as I write this now, I feel like the Lord is exposing some things I need to bring up in our friendship and bring to the light. I feel the same dread and fear welling up when thinking about another hard conversation like this one, but I am reminded of how fruitful that conversation was and how much it bonded and unified us. Lord, do it again!