

Assignment Title: Forgiveness Case Study

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When thinking what specific situation in my personal life or ministry I should focus on for this case study, the first person that came to mind was my father. As I have expressed in my other reflection papers, specifically in detail in my grief journal, my relationship with him has been nothing short of troubling and conflicting. I was debating if I should try to speak on something/somebody else, but I decided to follow my instinct on this one. Although a part of me desires to not feel the need to talk about my father wounds and how much his actions in our relationship have affected me, I realize that if there is a residue of anger/resentment still, then it should *still* be talked about. I desire to deeper understand my anger and disappointment, and prayerfully, one day be able to not lean on them again. For as it is explained in *Exploring Forgiveness*¹, forgiveness reduces the level of anger and hurt in one's mind and heart. This shows that although one may feel that by forgiving, one may be letting the offender win, or that one ends with the short end of the stick, in the end it is more beneficial for us than them.

This article made me realize how throughout my childhood, my anger towards my father showed up as fear, denial, and at times even apathy, which Dr. Wanda Walborn lists as one of the signs of indirect anger in her article *Why am I so Angry?* (2018). I believe I was in denial of my anger because I did not feel that I was allowed to feel/express any time of anger or negative emotion towards my father, or any person of authority in my life. This type of anger was, as Dr. Walborn describes, *parogismos*², festering and stewing under the surface throughout my childhood, teenage years, until adulthood, two years ago to be exact, where I started to feel it come up and out like a ball of fire, not only towards my father, but anybody, anywhere. This for me proves true what Fitzgibbons (Robert and North, 2015) states, "Denial is the major method of dealing with anger in early childhood. As a result of denial, most people bring into their adult

¹ Fitzgibbons, "Anger and the Healing Power of Forgiveness: A Psychiatrist's View," 65.

² Walborn, "Why Am I So Angry? Dealing appropriately with wat triggers anger," 25.

lives significant amount of unconscious anger from their family of origin.” I carried anger from childhood into adulthood not only from my family of origin but against it as well. While growing up I did not feel emotionally secure and did not believe I was allowed to be angry. Thus, keeping all my feelings inside and becoming passive aggressive as well.³ Fitzgibbons (Robert and North, 2015)⁴ further portray that anger and resentful feelings ought to be recognized in order for one to heal, otherwise, these will resurface and bleed on other relationships later on. Either way, whether recognized in time or not, the feelings of anger will be exposed, however, when not done in time, it may do so violently, as whereas in time, there is a possibility for it to be dealt with gracefully. Fitzgibbons (Robert and North, 2015)⁵ analyze superficial forgiveness, where one claims to have resolved the feelings of anger, and beliefs that by deciding to forgive all the emotions related to the wound (anger, sadness, lack of trust, etc) will disappear as well. This has made realize that I have superficially forgiven my father, not because I have been intentionally pursuing healing but rather because I have been expecting the emotions related to my wounds to disappear as well; Thinking that by simply stating that I forgive him will resolve all anger/hurt and resentment, but it has not. Although I have been intentional within the past two years about seeking counseling, I also believe because of his unwillingness to change his behavior I have become apathic, and to be honest, I do not know if I am ready to fully forgive. Additionally, Although I have intentionally placed boundaries with my father, whenever conflict arises, the hurt/disappointment is still there; affecting my ability to trust, specifically the men in my life. Thus, one of the benefits I would love to reap from forgiveness is an enhanced capacity to trust.

Bibliography

³ Walborn, “Why Am I So Angry? Dealing appropriately with what triggers anger,” 25.

⁴ Fitzgibbons, “Anger and the Healing Power of Forgiveness: A Psychiatrist’s View,” 64.

⁵ Fitzgibbons, “Anger and the Healing Power of Forgiveness: A Psychiatrist’s View,” 67.

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