

FORGIVENESS CASE STUDY

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Going into this case study, I knew exactly what I was going to talk about. I was convinced that there would be no better case for me to discuss than that of my wife, my old pastor and the church hurt that was caused. Time and time again, I've examined myself through the 6 symptoms of unforgiveness toward my loved ones. I feared the consequences of affecting my relationship with God due to my unforgiveness; which was the catalyst of why I chose forgiveness in the first place, and after having open doors and becoming demonized in 2020, I am VERY adamant about not giving the devil a foothold into my life! So, by God's grace, I seek Him often to practice forgiveness daily in my life by being honest with God about my feelings, my reactions to people who have hurt me, and making sure that when I am offended, that I do my due diligence to let go of the offense. Having said all of that, there was something still missing. As much as I wrestled to forgive others, I didn't realize how much I needed to forgive myself.

There was a lot of insight gained from the materials assigned to us for this assignment. The information was rather life changing for me. Gaining a deeper understanding of my anger and why I reacted the way I did really helped me understand my motives and decision making a lot more. The biggest breakthrough for me is when I came across these words in Richard Fitzgibbons article "*Exploring Forgiveness*". Fitzgibbons writes,

Emotional forgiveness is the phase of the forgiveness process in which one comes to understand deeply the offender and his life struggles, develops a degree of empathy for the "wounded boy or girl" within the adult, and, as a result, truly feels like forgiving...Growth in understanding the weaknesses and life struggles of the offender is the major path which leads to emotional forgiveness."

After reading that I paused and began to really think about my "offenders" in this manner, but something wasn't clicking. It didn't quite resonate for me to ponder on them in this way. That's when a shift in my spirit happened. Instead of thinking of *them* as the wounded child, I believe God began to reveal to me *my* brokenness as a wounded boy. He began to show me my

ignorance that made me make the terrible decisions I made; which caused the open doors and the darkening of my heart. He showed me how I didn't have the knowledge and understanding on how to deal with the spiritual battle I was facing and how that blinded me into making poor decisions. I was then able to see WHY I did what I did and began to weep profusely. And in the midst of my tears, God revealed to me that I hadn't truly forgiven myself. With all my due diligence on choosing to forgive others, I hadn't fully turned that love toward myself. And in this moment, an image from the movie *"The Passion of the Christ"* came to my mind and I saw Jesus saying *"Forgive them Father for they know not what they do."* It was at that moment that God was telling me "I did not know what I was doing." I broke down even more and I chose to fully forgive myself and then I felt such a weight lifted off of me.

God gave me a deeper understanding that it's not just about forgiving the people who offend me, but it's also about forgiving myself for my wrongs as well. If God has forgiven me, who am I not to? Wanda Walborn's article *"Why Am I So Angry"* gave me practical knowledge as to why I held this unforgiveness toward myself. She explains that when our hurt is turned inward, we take it out on ourselves; which is a cause of unforgiveness toward ourselves.

This case study was very life changing and I am grateful to God and to ATS for going beyond academics in our time of learning. This is about our hearts being pure before God and loving our brethren. Thank you for this assignment!