

The Mystery of Forgiveness (Colossians 3:13, NKJV)

I. Forgiveness is critical

- A. Prevents us from being imprisoned in our past
- B. Protects us from revenge/resentment
- C. Crucial for couples

II. Forgiveness is conditional (Matthew 6:14-15, NKJV)

- A. The Bible tells us "to" and not "how"
- B. Three different situations and results
 - 1. Exoneration
 - 2. Forbearance
 - 3. Release

III. Forgiveness is complicated (Ephesians 4:31-32, NKJV)

- A. Imposters of forgiveness
 - 1. Forgiveness is not forgetting
 - 2. Forgiveness is sometimes confused with excusing
 - 3. Forgiveness is sometimes confused with denial or passive acceptance
 - 4. Forgiveness is not self-blame
 - 5. Forgiveness is not always associated with remorse and repentance on the part of the offending party
 - 6. Forgiveness and reconciliation are not the same
 - 7. Forgiveness is not giving the offender permission to hurt you again
- B. To forgive is the highest, most beautiful form of love (**John 3:16, NKJV**)

IV. The signs of true forgiveness

- A. When you can think of them without thinking of the hurt, they caused you
- B. What if they need your help
- C. Can you think positive thoughts about this person
- D. Do you think of wanting revenge
- E. When you have stopped looking for them to fail