

## How Do I Forgive?

### Letting Go Of Resentments - Lesson 1

“Resentment is the ‘number one’ offender. It destroys more alcoholics than anything else. From it stem all forms of spiritual disease, for we have been not only mentally and physically ill, we have been spiritually sick. When the spiritual malady is overcome, we will straighten out mentally and physically.” (*Alcoholics Anonymous*, “How It Works”)

#### **The need:**

Matthew 5:43-45 – “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.”

James 3:9-12 – With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be. Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? My brothers, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.

[God is in the forgiving business. God's children are going to be following in their Father's business.]

Matthew 6:12-15 – Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For 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. [Holding onto resentment closes us off from receiving forgiveness.]

#### **The good news:**

I John 1:6-7 – If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. [Jesus died on the cross to pay for our sin of unforgiveness, along with all other sins.]

Psalms 51:7-11 – Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice. Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity. Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. [God can replace our resentful spirit with a forgiving spirit]

#### **So what do I do?**

Luke 22:33-34 – When they came to the place called the Skull, there they crucified him, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” [Don't look to yourself for the ability to forgive; give the job to God.]

Galatians 6:1,3 – Brothers if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted... If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself.” [What do I have in common with the person who has done me wrong? Does he need help more than avenging anger?]

**What else?**

## Love Your Enemies

Letting Go Of Resentments - Lesson 2

**2 Corinthians 5:15-17—And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!**

Part of recovery means changing the way we relate to other people in our lives. Like Step 12 says, "Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics..." Instead of seeing them as drinking buddies or people who owed us money or people who make us so mad we HAVE to drink, now we're seeing them as fellow sufferers who might be freed the same as we've been freed. Before we just wanted to take; now we find ourselves wanting to give back.

Before, we thought it was okay to be good to people who were good to us and be bad to people who treated us bad. But as we awaken spiritually we starting to look past what people deserve and look to what they actually NEED from us. Jesus said, in Luke 6:27-31, **"But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also. If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic. Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have them do to you."**

Now notice: Jesus said, "Love your enemies." He DIDN'T say, "Pretend they're not your enemies." He meant for us to love our enemies for who they are: our enemies. Love for your enemies is going to be different from love for your friends. So how do we love the unlovable?

How is love going to show up differently in different situations for different people?

- How is love for a scammer going to be different from love for a truly needy person?
- How is love for a person who is seeking recovery going to be different from someone who is actively using?
- How is love for someone who is delusional going to be different from love for someone who's drunk?

How else do you see God calling on you to be discerning in love?