



SERMON STUDY GUIDE | PART 4: Forgiving Your Enemies | 4.29.18 | www.thestory.church | social: @thestoryhouston

We all know forgiveness is important, but we don't always know how it works or what difference it makes. Sure, it's for your own peace of mind. Yes, it's immature to hold a grudge. Yeah, it's about making peace. But the Bible's many commands to forgive everyone who hurts us - our friends, family, coworkers, and even our enemies - seem to set us up for failure and disappointment. By simply forgiving someone's foolishness or selfishness, aren't we just *enabling* bad behavior? When we *forgive and forget*, aren't we bound to fall for the same lies again and again?

Throughout *Weightless*, we're learning more about how, why, and when to forgive, and today we'll be wading into some pretty deep waters as we learn more about forgiving our enemies.

Not all forgiveness is created equal. How might forgiving an enemy be different than forgiving a friend, your spouse, or a fellow brother/sister in Christ?

Be as honest as possible here: who is the person (or who are the people) you struggle to forgive the most? Why?

When it comes to forgiving someone whose behavior you can't condone, especially when they show no remorse or signs of repentance, what specific purpose does forgiveness serve?

1. When you forgive an enemy, you _____ in faith and character.

Matthew 5:44

[Jesus said], "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 children 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. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others?

Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

How does holding a grudge hold us back? How have you felt resentment or bitterness keeping you from becoming a better version of yourself?

2. When you forgive an enemy, you _____ to your own mistakes.

Matthew 6:12

"...and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

What is the correlation between *seeking* forgiveness and *extending* forgiveness?

3. When you forgive an enemy, you _____ to evil.

Romans 12:17-21

Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

When have you seen forgiveness function as an act of aggression against evil? Describe a time you witnessed someone forgiving their enemies as a way of disarming them or taking their power away. What was the end result?

Think about the person (or group of people) you struggle to forgive the most. How does that resentment affect you day-to-day?

What, really, is holding you back from offering forgiveness?

Colossians 1:21-22

Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation...

What is Paul saying about us here? And what did God do when we were His enemies?