

Prayer Diagram XIII Forgiving others' sins

Story of Joseph in the Old Testament is a great story of forgiveness. Did he forgive? Yes, he more than forgave--[Gen. 50:17-20](#)

--Notice: He's following some of the steps of forgiving we've looked at: forgave them before God, defined the offense; grieved it; understood his offenders + one more step

--Joseph is an excellent example of our next step in dissolving anger: Looking for what good has come out what was bad.

--[Rom. 8:28](#) – This is not just for the next life but also this one: [Rom. 5:3-5; James 1:2-4](#).

1. One of the key differences between us taking offense and getting bitter or making progress and getting better is looking for the good that has resulted from what happened to us.

--No need to look for the bad: in fact, looking for the bad is a great definition of unforgiveness.

--Gary Smalley calls it “pearl counting” – think of your offense as sand and the good that God has brought from it as pearls that have formed as a result of the sand.

Quite often it isn't just the offense that is causing us problems but our reaction to the offense.

--Mark Twain : “I am an old man and have known a great many troubles, but most of them never happened.”

--Sometimes it's not the offense but our perception of the offense that does the most damage.

--We assign motive to whatever was done, which is always a false perception, not to mention a sin, and this adds to our troubles.

Important things remember:

1. Avoid extreme thoughts: “Absolute worst thing” no, it's not!; “this has never happened to anyone else”, also not true.

--If we cannot control our thoughts, we will not be able to control our lives: [1 Corinthians 10:5](#)

--It's not the worst thing because the worst thing is God throwing you into Hell--Anything short of Hell is a good day!

--Also, it is not something that has never happened before because: [Ecclesiastes 1:9-10](#)

2. Focus on Jesus – Change your thoughts from “all I'm losing” to “all that I'm going eventually gain”

--[1 Corinthians 4:17, Philippians 4:8](#)

--Ask yourself the question: How has this offense benefitted you?

--Closer to God? More appreciative of others? Of life? – These things are the pearls that come from the sandstorms of life.

2. Five things to do in finding the pearls:

1. List your life-long strengths – what you are grateful for in yourself.

--What do you do well? People skills? Hobbies? What do you bring to a relationship that others appreciate?

--Ask someone you trust to help you with this.

2. List your most Painful trials – like sandstorms = they blind, sting, irritate, and anger us.

--Number them in order of severity.

3. List your support people – Who has God brought into your life to help you?

--Sometimes in a really big sandstorm we say, “where is God?” -- God is well known for sending people as answers to Prayers (Moses to the Israelites, Peter to Cornelius).

4. List the pearls you have gained from each sandstorm

--Start with the top of list of Sandstorms – list the personal strengths you have gained.

--Are you more: patient, kind, tender, forgiving, perceptive, appreciative, empathetic, simpler, responsible, spiritually mature, etc. as a result of these storms?

--Are you less: jealous, arrogant, fearful, materialistic, judgmental, etc?

--**II Cor. 12:7-10**

--Bitterness will hurt you if you let it continue; the Scriptures don't say what they say for nothing:

Ephesians 4:26-27

--The devil has a vested interest in keeping you angry: “You've got a right” “be angry for a while and then forgive with no side effects” – He's lying to you!

--The devil can't disinherit you, but he can get a foothold, take you captive, devour you, and you don't need any of that to be sure.

--So enough is enough with regards to unresolved anger and bitterness, don't let it do any more than it has.