

Quest 180°

Christ Centered Recovery

Total Forgiveness

“I’m sorry.” I would come to really dislike those words. While active in his addiction, they were meaningless words. He would say “I’m sorry” and weeks or months later he was saying those same words again for the very same reasons.

Then he changed. In recovery his “I’m sorry” was sincere. He was genuine, remorseful and truly sorry. I said I had forgiven him, yet I took every opportunity to remind him of the past.

One night during a Bible study I was confronted with this application question: **“Whom do you continue to bring up old sin to?”** God was speaking directly to me. God had revealed two things to me that night.

First, because I had been holding onto so much resentment from the past, there was no room in my heart for the Holy Spirit to reside. I could not have a relationship with God because the Holy Spirit had packed up and moved out of my sinful heart. You see, our salvation is guaranteed, but our relationship with the Father is not. When we are unwilling to forgive, the sins of bitterness, anger and guilt take up residence in our hearts. The Holy Spirit cannot live among that sin. I needed to forgive my husband for the past so that I could continue to grow in the Holy Spirit.

The second thing God revealed to me was how I had been an instrument for Satan. By continually bringing up old sin, I was impeding my husband’s recovery and his spiritual growth.

I prayed for God’s mercy and grace to give me a true heart of forgiveness. I stopped the condemnation of the past and became a partner with my husband in our road to recovery.

When total forgiveness came over our relationship, we became disengaged from the past. My husband was able to move forward in recovery and our spiritual life blossomed. The Holy Spirit was able to recreate in us a new relationship.

Forgiveness is for our benefit. It brings freedom from bitterness, anger and guilt. It washes away harbored resentment of the past. Your situation may not change, but your heart eventually will. Peace will replace bitterness, anger and guilt. The chains of bondage to sin will be broken.

Stormie Omartian says it well. “God’s forgiveness is one of the greatest acts of love towards mankind. He wants forgiveness to be one of our greatest acts of love towards each other.”

God’s Word:

“The discretion of a man makes him slow to anger, and his glory is to overlook a transgression.” Proverbs 19:11

“Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another just as God in Christ forgave you.” Ephesians 4:32

“Do not judge and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven.” Luke 6:37