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Divine Healing
MINISTRIES

**The Healing Power
of
Forgiveness**

By Brother David Jardine

Canon Jim Glennon from Australia says if he has learnt anything from many years of involvement in the healing ministry it is how bad resentment is for our health. I agree entirely with that, but I would go further and say how damaging resentment is to our relationship with God when we are deliberately holding on to it.

If we are making an effort, to draw on the grace of God to let go of anger and resentment the Lord can honour that even when we have not fully managed it yet. But when we are deliberately holding on and refusing to let go that is what is so damaging, especially if the resentment is held for a long period of time.

Jesus makes it clear in a number of places that He wants us to forgive, no matter what other people may have done to us. We are not being asked to say that people have not hurt us, nor that what they have done does not matter. But Jesus is asking us to forgive them in spite of what they may have done. He demonstrated this in his own life when, on the cross, He was able to pray, *‘Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing’*.

In the classic prayer of all time Jesus taught us to pray, *‘Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us’*.

In Matthew 6:14-15 Jesus said, *‘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’*.

In Mark 11:25-26, Jesus makes it clear that refusing to forgive will be a major barrier to prayer being fully answered — *‘And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father who is in heaven forgive your sins’*.

In the epistles Paul returns to this theme on many occasions. In Ephesians 3:13 he writes:

‘Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you’.

These are just a few of many references which make it clear that God wants us to forgive. He knows how damaging it is to us when we hold on to anger, bitterness, resentment and even hatred.

I believe that most people do not really want to hold on to these negative emotions. They just do not know how to let go. But I have good news. There is a way to let go which really works, and I am going to teach it to you now.

Forgiveness begins with a decision. If we do not make that decision to forgive then it is going to be so much more difficult to let go of bitterness and resentment.

Once we have taken that step we have to be prepared to do a daily exercise in forgiveness. Growth in the spiritual life, in our relationship with God, often requires a real effort on our part, and that is certainly so in the whole area of forgiveness. We need to go to a place where we will not be disturbed. For most of us that may mean our own room at home. Then we can sit comfortably in a chair, or even lie down on a bed, and close our eyes. We take a few minutes to move closer to God, in whatever way is natural for us—through prayer, praise, silence, saying the Lord's Prayer slowly or even repeating a scriptural verse.

If we have time we may like to take 10 - 15 minutes to relax completely, focus on God, and then welcome the power of His Spirit to flow through every part of us. This type of prayer is well described in the leaflet 'Praying for Ourselves', and normally brings to us a real sense of peace and calmness.

With our eyes still closed, we bring to mind the name or picture of the person or group of people who have hurt us. This may arouse anger in us, but we have already made our decision that we are going to forgive, so we must stick to that. Then we say:

'Jimmy, I forgive you in the name of Jesus, and I praise God that you are forgiven in Jesus' name. Amen'.

If we wish we can repeat that statement of forgiveness, but having made it we must never go back on it. If the hurt has been deep or long-standing, or even ongoing, then almost certainly anger and resentment will try to come in on top of us again. Maybe our minds

will even entertain these thoughts, but once we become aware of what we are doing we don't need to get angry with ourselves, that would be counterproductive.

We simply affirm the statement of forgiveness we have already made, *'Jimmy, I have forgiven you in the name of Jesus, and I praise God that you are forgiven in Jesus' name. Amen!'* Again we can repeat this prayer, and emphasise the Amen. That is the rubber stamp, *'so be it'*. Then we can go further, *'Jimmy, I bless you in the name of Jesus. I bless you in the name of Jesus. I bless you in the name of Jesus. Amen'*. We keep on blessing Jimmy in the name of Jesus until anger and resentment lose their grip.

A friend of mine said that if you are still feeling angry at someone you are not showering enough blessings on them. I personally can vouch for how effective this type of prayer is if we are prepared to pray it consistently and affirm forgiveness again when negative thoughts try to get in.

If someone has hurt or upset me, praying in this way helps to set me free within myself and it keeps open the relationship with God because I am showing Him that I am serious about drawing on His grace to let go of resentment and anger. It also seems to have an effect upon the person who has been the object of our anger.

Even though they do not know that prayers of forgiveness are being prayed, somehow or other they are affected by the whole process so that they too are set free, and next time we meet them they may greet us much more pleasantly than they have done for a very long time.

I find it helpful when making the affirmation of forgiveness to picture the person, not angry nor scowling, but smiling and pleasant, as I say to them with my eyes closed, *'I forgive you in the name of Jesus. Amen'* or *'I have forgiven you in the name of Jesus, and I praise God that in the name of Jesus you are forgiven. Amen'*.

I must emphasise again that if this type of prayer is going to work then, once we have made a decision to forgive, we must not go back on it. It is preferable if we are prepared to make time, even sacrifice time, to do a daily exercise in forgiveness.

If we meet the person whom we are forgiving we must make a conscious effort to draw on the grace of God to be pleasant to them. We acknowledge that once having made an affirmation of forgiveness, our minds may allow anger and bitterness to come in again. When we become aware of this we must replace those wrong thoughts very gently by affirming forgiveness once more.

Wherever we are it is helpful to shower blessings on the person who has hurt us until resentment loses its grip.

We must be prepared to persevere and not give up easily. Canon Glennon says that when he first became involved in the healing ministry more than forty years ago, there were six people in his life with whom he had had a bad relationship. He spent 18 months working through those relationships in prayer until he came to the point where he could say that he had forgiven each one of them from his heart. 40 years later he still says a prayer for each one of those people every day, in case the demon of resentment should ever get in again.

Resentment, anger, bitterness and hatred are against the will of God. They can do great damage to our health and to our relationship with Him. But thank God, we can receive the grace to forgive, and be set free. And it all begins with a decision.

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