

The Forgiveness Checklist

It is so easy to say that you have forgiven the people that have hurt you at some point in your life. It is easy to convince yourself that you have forgiven these people, but when action is called into play, the truth is revealed by fire.

Every man and woman alive has been hurt or betrayed by someone. That's because there are good and there are evil people in this world. We're taught this as children. At some point, we all put our guards down, only to get beat up by the truth. Therefore, in truth, we weren't betrayed by the person; we were betrayed by ourselves. We willed ourselves into believing that the person before us was who they said they were or who they portrayed themselves to be. Didn't God tell you to try the spirit by the Spirit to see if it is of God? But, you had your own test. Maybe you looked them in the eyes and tried to see if they would divert their eyes away. Maybe you looked for body language, stuttering, consistency in the story, etc. You have turned yourself into a human lie detector, and the hurtful part is, the truth has found you faulty. You cannot replace the Word of God with the knowledge of man. The devil is cunning. Very cunning. Do you think a thief will walk up to you wearing a ski mask? Do you think a rapist would walk up to you naked? Of course not. So, why did you believe what was said to you?

Nevertheless, the deed has been done and you're probably amongst the many that proclaim that you have forgiven your assailant. And you probably have! Since we can't be forgiven for our sins if we don't forgive others, it is a wise and vital choice to be sure. Review and answer the questions below. You don't have to answer them publicly. Your truthful answers will tell you just where you are.

1. Your enemy stole some money from you a couple of years ago. One day, while walking, you find their wallet and the amount in the is the EXACT amount that they stole from you. How would you handle this situation?
 - a. Give them back the wallet with all the money in it. Vengeance isn't mine.
 - b. Take the money, but I'd return the wallet.
 - c. Take the money and toss the wallet of course! God is paying me back! Thank you JESUS!
 - d. Leave the wallet with the money on the ground. That's not your problem.

Sometimes, God will place us in situations to show us what is still within us. If love is there, you'd return the wallet with the money in it and let the owner of the wallet decide if they want to redeem themselves or not. If they choose not to, no worries. God will reward you.

2. If you saw your enemy getting attacked by a group of people, would you:
 - a. Call the police.
 - b. Join in and throw some kicks and punches at your enemy.
 - c. Try to break up the fight.

d. Walk away and call your best friend to tell them how he/she finally got what they deserved.

Having compassion on another human being is evidence that God lives in you. If you could stand there and watch another human being get beat up or possibly killed, you haven't forgiven them. Our enemies are not always God's enemies. Sometimes, they are souls that are battling with sin, just like you did.

3. A group of people that you know come and sit with you. They begin to talk about the latest news about your enemy and how he/she is going through a rough patch. Which of the following are you most likely to do?

- a. Join in the gossip.
- b. Listen to the gossip, but say nothing.
- c. Laugh and rejoice. God is finally revisiting their sin! Hallelujah!
- d. Ask your friends not to talk about them and suggest that they pray for them.

Gossiping about a person who hurt you is no different than punching them. Your words have power. When you can sit up and even listen to the gossip, it is because you want to hear about your enemy's fall, and this is evidence that unforgiveness is lurking in the shadows. And it is not uncommon for people who go to church often to believe that God should repay their enemies. Many of them sit and wait for the day that the news will come in that their enemy has fallen. This is your first clue into your own heart. When hurt resides in the heart, it desires to have neighbors who are in pain as well. Pray for the person.

4. Driving down the road, you see your enemy's car off on the side of the road with the hood up. They are standing there and smoke is rising from the engine. Which of the following are you most likely to do?

- a. Pass them by and honk your horn.
- b. Pass them by, but don't honk your horn.
- c. Stop and ask them if they need a ride somewhere.
- d. Stop and ask them if they need a ride, but when they try to get into the car, you pull off.

I know you're probably saying that it depends on what they did to you. But, if that person hasn't placed you in harm's way, why wouldn't you stop the car? Sometimes it is the good deeds that others do that wounds up being the straw that broke the sin off their back.

5. You're leaving the supermarket and you hear a woman in front of you crying. She's on her cellphone talking to someone about how she doesn't have anything to eat and nowhere to go. But, this lady did you very wrong! A long time ago, she scratched up your car, stalked you and even spit in your face. What would you do?

- a. Try to find out how you can help and offer her an encouraging word. After all, she is a soul.

- b. Pass her on by, making sure that she sees you.
- c. Stop to remind her of what she did and let her know that her troubles are a result of how wrong she did you.
- d. Help her out, but be sure to remind her of what she did to you, so she wouldn't do it to anyone else. After all, her fall may be the result of the evil she inflicted on you.

If she repented, God forgave her. Who are you to still place cuffs on her? Remember, love never fails. "If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink: For thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the Lord shall reward thee." (Proverbs 25:21-22)

6. Your ex-boyfriend was horrible. He cheated on you with your best friend, ruined your credit and to add fuel to the fire, when you broke it off with him, he set your beloved Hyundai on fire. He told you that you'd never amount to anything, but three years later, here you are with a successful career and a better boyfriend. Your ex-boyfriend sends you a friend request on Facebook. How are you most likely to handle the situation?
- a. Add him and then send him a message to tell him how good you're doing.
 - b. Deny his friend request and keep on living.
 - c. Add him and then post up countless pictures of you and your new beau.
 - d. Add him and ignore him.

How you react towards the man or woman who once had your heart will always show you where you stand. No, you shouldn't add him, but if you feel the need to show off, it is because unforgiveness is trying to cash in its check. When you really move on and forgive, you only desire that the person that wronged you will come to Christ.

7. You're working at a clothing store and there is a 10% off sale going on today. The sale was supposed to end at noon, but the manager told you that you could continue to give the customers 10% off all day if you so chose to. Your enemy comes to the counter, but doesn't know about the sale and it's after noon. You've been giving the 10% off to everyone, but not only does she come to the counter, but she doesn't speak and tosses the clothes on the counter in a rude way. What would you most likely do?
- a. Rules are rules. Her nasty attitude guaranteed that she wouldn't get a discount.
 - b. Go on break. The manager can ring her up.
 - c. Ring her up and give her 10% off like you've done everyone else.
 - d. Ring her up and give her 10% off, but tell her that the sale ended at noon, and you're only giving her the discount because you're Christian.

Remember, do unto others as you'd have them do unto you. Love is not only patient, but love is kind.

Unforgiveness always shows its fruits. This is what you are to look for, even if you think you have forgiven your enemies. Love them when they are happy and love them when they are down. In the end, God created them for a reason. Holding someone accountable for what they did to you or someone you knew is the same as saying to God that you want to be held accountable for what you have done to others. Yes, even if what they did was far worse than what you have done to others...sin is sin.