

WRONG IDEAS ABOUT FORGIVENESS

1. **Forgiveness means justifying bad behavior.** There is no justification, minimization, or rationalization for anyone's bad behavior. The harm they caused was wrong. Some people may use these as excuses not to forgive. The failure to forgive is a failure to love God and neighbor, and the person with an unforgiving spirit suffers the spiritual, emotional, mental, and physical consequences for their sin.¹
2. **Forgiveness means forgetting.** You can never forget the pain that others have caused you. We must remember that God does not forget our sins, but He chooses not to remember them anymore.² We must do likewise by not rehearsing the events of the past and plotting revenge, and we accomplish this in the power of the Holy Spirit.³
3. **To forgive is to allow others to take advantage of me.** We don't allow people to take advantage of us under any circumstances. But we cannot hold the other person's sins against them any longer, and we are no longer to talk about it to others.⁴
4. **Forgiveness means trust.** No, it doesn't! Forgiveness and trust are two very different words with two very different meanings – they are not one and the same. While God requires us to forgive, we don't spend time together with those we don't trust.
5. **The other person must apologize to me.** There are almost always two sides to every conflict. You must own your part and apologize for your conduct, and you do this without any strings attached, and do not expect the other person to apologize for their actions.⁵ This sets you free from any and all emotional distress – forgiveness is for you, not the other person. (If someone abused you in any way, you have no responsibility in making an apology, but you must still forgive).
6. **Time heals all wounds.** Time does not heal wounds, because we still have not confronted our problems, we have instead ignored them. We must be honest with God, ourselves, and others – opening the wounds of the past is painful, but it is where the healing process begins.⁶
7. **Forgiveness is a one and done process.** Wrong! Forgiveness is a lifelong journey. There two problems with this: one, is that Satan and his demonic forces will continuously remind of the past, and we must command them to leave in Jesus name. Second, sometimes God will only give us what we can handle at the time we do our forgiveness inventory; therefore, He may later remind us of some other things that we may still need to deal with. You need only continue the inventory on these things that God brings forth.

¹ See Matthew 5:43-48; 6:14-15.

² See Psalm 103:12.

³ See 2 Corinthians 10:5.

⁴ See James 3:1-12.

⁵ See Matthew 18:15-20.

⁶ See Psalm 147:3.