

When Forgiveness is Complicated

There are situations in life when forgiveness seems especially difficult, maybe even impossible. For example, how do I forgive myself? What if someone died before I could offer them forgiveness? Is it possible to forgive someone who is not sorry? Do I have to forgive someone who keeps hurting me? Let's see how Scripture helps us address the hard questions that arise when life's circumstances make forgiveness complicated, and discover what happens in our hearts when we bring our struggles with forgiveness to God.

AWARENESS Before listening reflect on what you already know or understand about topics we'll cover in the episode.

- Has offering forgiveness ever felt complicated to you? What circumstances made it feel complicated?
- Do you ever struggle to forgive yourself? Why do you think that is?



LISTEN TO THE EPISODE: [When Forgiveness is Complicated](#)

READ , [2 Corinthians 5:17-19](#), [Micah 7:18-19](#), [Luke 17:3-4](#), [1 Peter 2:21-23](#), [Psalm 62:5-8](#), [Philippians 4:6-7](#)

REFLECTION After listening, consider the following questions:

- Reread [2 Corinthians 5:17-19](#). What stuck out to you most after listening to hosts Darrell Delaney and Scott Hoezee discuss why we don't need to cling to guilt and can forgive ourselves?
- When it comes to forgiving someone who is not sorry, or maybe *is* sorry, but doesn't change and keeps hurting you, Scott pointed out that we need the help of the Holy Spirit because we can't do it on our own. Darrell followed up by directing us to Jesus, "He does not retaliate; he does not threaten; he entrusts himself to the one who judges rightly. That is our pattern, especially when we are faced with stubborn wrongdoing" ([1 Peter 2:21-23](#)). In what ways does this give you hope or comfort?
- In segment 3, Darrell and Scott showed us how the Psalms are an invitation to "bring our whole emotional life into the presence of God." Darrell even said, "He doesn't expect us to clean up our emotions and get our act together before we come to him." God doesn't ask us to eliminate our emotions, but tells us what to do with them: bring them to God. What does that mean to you to know God cares enough to hear your emotions and your struggles with forgiveness and exchange them for his peace?

RELATED PASSAGES for further study

[Romans 12:17-21](#), [Ephesians 4:29-32](#), [Luke 23:33-34](#)

CONCLUSION

The complicating factors surrounding forgiveness do not change the command to forgive. By God's grace, we're still supposed to be people of grace and forgiveness. Thankfully, God is with us and doesn't expect us to do this alone. We can keep bringing our struggles with forgiveness back to him. Reflect on Scott's closing thought in the episode:

“Our failures to forgive perfectly are not stronger than the grace of God, and that is good news... God's grace is still sufficient, even when life throws us some serious curve balls; even when life gets really messy and really complicated, God is in the mess... Forgiveness? It might be one of the hardest things that most of us ever have to do, but in Christ it is also one of the most freeing things we can do.”

Close your time of reflection in prayer; consider praying the words Kari Kristina Reeves offers in her book, *Canyon Road: A Book of Prayer*: “Help me do the work of forgiveness, Lord, when I am weary from its weight” (p148).

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