

Forgiving the Past

by Jimmy Clemens

It is easy to say and harder to do. Two words that can release and ease the burden of another. Yet we are taught to hold on. Hold onto past hurts, anger, and hate. Those are words that linger. Linger like an albatross on the neck of someone. Someone who believes he or she is right, and another is wrong. Is that the way we choose to be?

We've all had our share of wrongs – let us be honest. Even I, standing here today, have thrown my share of retaliatory phrases at another. Things like, "I hope our paths never cross again." In fact, I have even prayed that such does not happen in real time. And then it happens. Minding your own business, walking along the path of life, and you see that person.

The person who told you, "You need to step up." First reaction? Walk over to him or her and leave both barrels unloaded. Sure, you will feel better in the short term. What about the long term? And then it hits you, like a ton of bricks. "This person doesn't know you," you say inside your head. They are just unsettled when you come into their presence. Be the bigger person and walk away.

Excuse me? I beg your pardon? I am to be the bigger person. Ok, so just walk away and pretend I did not see them. Have I got this right? Not in the least. Let me explain what I mean. By walking away, you are doing something that both of you need. Just a minute. What is it we both need? Forgiveness – nothing more, nothing less. Now comes the "A-ha" moment.

Forgiving the past does not mean reliving what happened. It means moving forward to the next step in life. It opens the door for blessing and healing in your life. And unbelievably, it opens the door for something special. What is so special about forgiving? It brings a much-needed inner peace. To borrow a line from a hymn, you have "peace like a river" in your soul. And freedom that does not make sense.

How is this possible? It becomes so when you give it to God and let God deal with the consequences. What is your choice? Do you forgive the past? Or hold onto that junk for the rest of your life? Take my advice, give that person to God, and let God deal with the consequences.