

Scripture reminds us that *“Things that cause people to stumble are bound to come”* (Luke 17:1, NIV).

When someone close to you—or even far from you—hurts you deeply, forgetting that pain can be very difficult.

If you are born again and quick to forgive and let go, then the Lord has truly transformed your heart. But if you find yourself struggling with unforgiveness, recognize that this is a serious issue that needs to be dealt with—especially at the beginning of the year.

Perhaps you’ve been hurt by a family member, a loved one, a friend, your spouse, your children, your pastor, a fellow believer, a teacher, or someone else. That bitterness is like poison—today, it’s time to let it go.

There is one powerful key that helps us overcome unforgiveness:

Reflect on the Forgiveness of Jesus

Think for a moment about how many wrongs you have committed against God. You may say, *“I have never wronged anyone!”* But what about God? Have you never sinned against Him? Have you

lived a completely flawless life? Scripture says, *“When they sin against you—for there is no one who does not sin...”* (2 Chronicles 6:36, NIV).

Consider your thoughts—how many times have they turned impure, and yet God still sees you? How many times has anger burned in your heart, and still God has watched patiently? Think about how many times He has forgiven you, and how many times you still need His forgiveness.

If God has freely forgiven us of so much, why can't we forgive those who wronged us last year, last month, or even yesterday?

Sometimes the person who hurt you may never ask for forgiveness. But you should still forgive them. Jesus Himself forgave those who never apologized.

“Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.’ And they divided up his clothes by casting lots” (Luke 23:34, NIV).

Some people will hurt you and still believe they've done nothing wrong. Others may continue hurting you again and again. Still, the principle remains the same: forgive.

When you reflect on your own sins before God, you will always find a reason to forgive others.

A Parable of Forgiveness

Consider the words of Jesus in Matthew 18:21-27 (NIV):

*"Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, 'Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?'*

*Jesus answered, 'I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.'*

*Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold was brought to him. Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.*

*At this the servant fell on his knees before him. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.'*

*The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go."*

This parable teaches us a crucial truth: if we fail to reflect on the forgiveness we have received from God, we may also fail to forgive others. But if we truly understand the weight of what we've been forgiven, it will soften our hearts to forgive those who wrong us.

None of Us Is Without Fault

Scripture says:

*"Indeed, there is no one on earth who is righteous, no one who does what is right and never sins" (Ecclesiastes 7:20, NIV).*

Even when others speak against you, remember: *"For you know in your heart that many times you yourself have cursed others"* (Ecclesiastes 7:22, NIV).

In other words, you have also wronged people in the past.

A Prayer for the New Year

At the beginning of this new year, ask the Lord to create in you a *heart of forgiveness*. Only He can give such a heart. If you sincerely pray, He will transform you. Find a quiet place, go before Him, and ask Him to help you forgive freely as He has forgiven you.

And remember—share this good news with others.

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