Getting Serious About Forgiveness

Most of our thoughts about forgiveness focus on God's forgiveness of our own sins. However, in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus has an additional concept that should command our attention.

In Matthew 6:12 Jesus teaches us to ask God for forgiveness, but He adds a caveat, "…as we also have forgiven our debtors." That reality should cause us to become genuinely serious about forgiving others.

Jesus ups the ante in both clarity and consequence, "For if you forgive men for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions," (Matthew 6:14, 15 NASB).

OUCH! Isn't there some way I can withhold forgiveness and still be blessed by God? No. Any other questions? Isn't there any way I can hold on to my powerful grudge and still be blessed by God? No. Any other questions? What must I do to be forgiven? Repent of fake forgiveness and grasping grudges.

But won't I lose my power and happiness and safety if I give up my grudge and forego revenge? Hmmm. Ask Joseph. He said to the brothers who sold him into slavery, "And now do not be grieved or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. And you shall live in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children's children and your flocks and your herds and all that you have, (Genesis 45:5, 19 NASB).

Memorize Genesis 50:20, 21 "And as for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive. So therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones. So he comforted them and spoke kindly to them."

Be like Joseph. Be like Jesus!

Ray Wallace