

## Unforgiveness Is Deadly

8/5/11

Forgiveness in our time has become

9:15 a.m.

little more than a therapeutic way of detaching ourselves from those who have harmed us. Researchers have documented that unforgiven or unforgiving people have higher rates of stress-related disorders, cardiovascular disease, and clinical depression, as well as lower immune system function and higher divorce rates. Unforgiveness is deadly, in more ways than one. But what does forgiveness look like? Is it something we do automatically? Do we do it immediately? Is it a single act or a process? Do we wait until we feel ready to forgive? Do we require the other person to repent, or is forgiveness personal and internal, something we do for ourselves? If we forgive, does that mean we must immediately return to a abusive relationship? These and a host of other practical questions require good answers. As always, the best answers begin to come when we listen carefully to the master Forgive, our Lord Jesus Christ. We need to resist the temptation to keep those who have sinned against us in an emotional penalty box, making them serve endless hard time for their offenses. Many things may irritate, annoy, or upset us about

Someone else. Those things may require enduring; they do not involve forgiving. Jealousy, insecurity, or ambition easily distort our perspective of what forgiveness is or when it is required. Forgiveness cannot mean ignoring the reality of evil. Therefore forgiveness doesn't involve excusing an act. If it can be excused, it needs to be understood, not forgiven. Forgiveness is about the inexcusable. Nor does forgiveness involve ignoring or denying sin, turning a blind eye to the misdeeds of another, or pretending it didn't happen. Such a response indulges sin, rather than dealing with it surgically by the hard work of forgiveness. Mark McMinn said it best, "Time heals clean wounds. Soiled wounds fester and infect."

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Holla at 'cha boy!

