



# Thoughts On Forgiveness

Devotions by Pastor Yves

## Thoughts On Forgiveness – Day 1

**“The heart knows its own bitterness, and no stranger shares its joy.” (Proverbs 4:10 ESV)**

### Forgiving “Something” and not “Someone”

#### Consider This:

I once worked in sales for a company that was well-known in the Detroit Michigan area. It was recognized in the area as one of the fastest-growing companies. It had quality products and quality people (or at least it was believed). My opportunity to work for this company came when a friend approached me with the proposition to help open up a branch in a local city. Long story short, many financial promises were made by the company (not my friend) that weren't exactly true.

My friend came to me one day and said that he had done some digging and discovered that the company had been “fudging” performance numbers of the home branch. He also learned that certain sales tactics were used to get some of those numbers; tactics that we at the sister branch would never use. Working for this company put me and my family in many difficult circumstances and eventually, I made the tough decision to move on. Over the next few years, however, I found it difficult to see advertisements and promotional materials of the company without getting a sick feeling in my heart... I had grown bitter. The Lord revealed to me that I needed to forgive a company!

King Solomon, the wisest man to ever lived penned these words: “The heart knows its own bitterness, and no stranger shares its joy.” I believe this to mean that bitterness runs deep in the heart of a person and it takes a certain level of emotional/spiritual intimacy to unlock it and free it. It is near impossible for a stranger to unlock it. Thank God that He is no stranger to the heart! He works on us when we may least expect it. And if we allow it, He can break through the toughest “soil”.

Sometimes it's not a person or persons that we need to forgive. Sometimes it's an entity like a job, a place where we grew up, or even a church that we used to attend. Maybe we poured a lot of time and energy into something, only for it to not produce what we thought it would. As a result, we grow resentful. No matter what the cause, a bitter spirit must always be dealt with. Bitterness chews at us from the inside out and eventually devours us to the point where it affects everything and everyone around us. In contrast, a heart that releases offenses and hurts can receive and respond to the newness of life that God offers daily.

#### Today's Takeaway

Is there something gnawing at you that you have put off for far too long? It may not be a person, but it could be something bigger, like a group of people or a company, or even an event in your life. Is it on the surface, or is it so deep that you don't even really know what's wrong? If so, pray something like this prayer:

“Father, my heart is bitter, and I don't exactly know why. I desire to have a heart that is fresh and open; toward you, towards people, and towards life. Today, I pray what your servant King David prayed in the Psalms,

**“Search me, O God, and know my heart!  
Try me and know my thoughts!  
And see if there be any grievous way in me,  
and lead me in the way everlasting!” (Psalms 139:23–24 ESV)**

## Thoughts On Forgiveness – Day 2

**“A peaceful heart leads to a healthy body; jealousy is like cancer to the bones.” (Proverbs 14:30 NLT)**

### Letting Go of “Toxic” Emotions

#### Consider This:

The scriptures tell us that our bodies are a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19–20). Wow, think about that! God dwells in the body of the believer just like He intermittently dwelled in the tabernacle and later on in the temple.

Now think about this: Science is helping us to understand the effect of negative emotions on the body. When you experience hurt, anger, stress, competition, or frustration, the heart sends signals to the brain and the brain responds by releasing a range of our own natural chemicals corresponding to those feelings; from a few up to 1,200!

This chemical dump lasts approximately 90 seconds to two minutes. In the short term, these stressful feelings are not harmful. If you resolve them quickly, it can improve resilience. However, the long-term effect of unresolved survival emotions puts the entire body into a state of incoherence, which puts you at risk of stress-related health challenges (headaches, high blood pressure, and ulcers, just to name a few).

In plain English... when we hold negative thoughts in our minds, we produce negative emotions in our hearts. This impacts our bodies negatively; the very temple of the Holy Spirit! No wonder God doesn't work mightily in a believer who holds on to bitterness and conflict.

Living in conflict is stressful and dangerous for many reasons. We've already talked about the physical reasons, but how about a spiritual one? I believe God desires for us to resolve conflict as quickly as possible because if we don't, we are in danger of a “spiritual hostile takeover.” Consider what the apostle Paul said:

**“And don't sin by letting anger control you. Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, for anger gives a foothold to the devil.” (Ephesians 4:26–27 NLT)**

The Devil wants to ruin your life. Holding onto anger for an extended period of time means holding on to toxicity and therefore opens the door to the Devil, giving him “VIP” access.

#### Today's Takeaway

Spend a few moments observing your heart today. If there is anger in your heart, confess it to the Lord. Talk to Him. He is not surprised by it. He knows it's there. Ask Him to forgive you and ask Him for the strength to let “It” go and to forgive others. He wants to fill you with His presence and joy, but this is impossible if we are holding onto anger.

Meditate on that for a moment... Anger and joy can't share the same space. Which do you choose to hold on to today?

## Thoughts On Forgiveness – Day 3

**“He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls.”  
(Proverbs 25:28 KJV)**

### Build Healthy Walls

#### Consider This:

Have you ever thought about where offenses come from? Most would say outside of us, but I think it's inside of us.

In ancient times, if a city wanted to be strong and well-secured, it started with the walls. Walls were its protection, walls were its safety! If a city didn't have walls, it was weak and easily attacked. But if it had strong walls, a city could focus on building and thriving!

I think building emotional and spiritual maturity is the key to building strong “walls.” I am not talking about building high walls and boundaries so that we never interact with people. Quite the opposite. I am talking about building our character up to where it would take a “Job-like” experience to get at us!

In Job chapter 1, we learn about a man who lost everything, and I mean everything! Read the book of Job if you're not familiar with the story. What is amazing is that after losing all his earthly possessions and most of his family, this is his response:

**“...I came naked from my mother's womb, and I will be naked when I leave. The Lord gave me what I had, and the Lord has taken it away. Praise the name of the Lord! – In all of this, Job did not sin by blaming God.” (Job 1:21-22 NLT)**

If you've been offended by something or someone lately, think of what bothered you the most about it. Can you agree that being offended is a reflection of your heart crying out in protest because it disagrees with the circumstances? Never mind the reason that it disagrees...it simply disagrees. And if that is true, then this reveals a weak spot in our “wall.”

#### Today's Takeaway

Consider Jesus, who lived on this earth for 33 and 1/2 years. He was surrounded by people who by nature were sinners and therefore an offense to God. And yet we don't see Him getting offended often. No, instead we see Him loving. He is the embodiment of love! Let's read what Peter says about love:

**“Most important of all, continue to show deep love for each other, for love covers over a multitude of sins.” (1 Peter 4:8 NLT)**

If you seem to be easily offended and hurt, then this most likely reveals a weak spot in your wall. Today, ask the Lord to help you to fortify your “walls” and deepen your love so that when offenses come, your “city” won't be easily invaded!