

# The Power of Forgiveness

by Robin Dugall

*For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins. — Matthew 6:14-15*

Ever think about how absurd the idea of forgiveness is? When another's actions hurt you, what is the first thing that crosses your mind? Forgiveness? Or extracting your pound of flesh? Most of us want the people who have caused us pain to experience a bit of their own discomfort or suffering. For most of us, we understand the power of forgiveness, but we get caught up in our own anger or resentment.

There is a story about a man in Spain who had a teenage son. Like a lot of relationships with adolescents, this one was strained. It eventually deteriorated to the point where the son ran away from home. His father, though, moved with deep and passionate love, began a desperate search to find his son. After months, he finally decided to put an ad in the "personals" section of the local newspaper. The ad read, "Dear Paco, meet me in front of the newspaper office, Tuesday at noon, all is forgiven. I love you. Your Dad." On Tuesday, the man showed up at the newspaper office only to discover that 800 "Pacos" had showed up.

We are all in some way seeking forgiveness and healing. We might accept and love Jesus for the forgiveness he has extended us. Despite this fact, most still have a hard time accepting the reality that God has called us to be forgiving people. But Jesus actually said that He would not forgive us if we withhold forgiveness from others. Withholding forgiveness is not the way of the Christ-follower. Jesus calls us to give up our perceived "rights" and to stop demanding retribution. Jesus calls us to speak the truth in love to ourselves, to the people who have wronged us and then give the gift of forgiveness. Yes, the recipient doesn't deserve forgiveness...but neither do we. We all have either been hurt or done the hurting...we're all in the same boat as human beings. Jesus gave us the gift; He calls us to give what He has so willingly and lovingly extended to us...the power to forgive..

## GOING DEEPER:

1. Remember how God has forgiven you. Think back on the refreshment that you experience when you think about the grace of Jesus. Pray a prayer of thankfulness for God's forgiveness.
2. Who do you need to forgive in your life today? What is keeping you from forgiving him or her? Do you really want to experience the power of forgiveness? Why not forgive now?

FURTHER READING: Luke 15; Philemon