

V Venom: Guidelines for Biblical Forgiveness, 11-38; Wm. McGuffey's "The Best Kind of Revenge"

If they come to you and ask your forgiveness, you are bound by the Royal Family Honor Code to forgive them "*just as God in Christ has forgiven you.*" But what if they don't ask for forgiveness, in fact they continue to wrong you, and beyond that, they are an unbeliever?

Never forget your mission. First and foremost, you are to permit nothing to hinder your growth and your advance towards the ultimate objective. You have been given advice in our passage in Ephesians not to let the sun go down on a controversy. Therefore, with courtesy, respect, and humility, approach your adversary and make clear to him your grievance and seek a reconciliation.

If you are able to verify his unbelief, you own him the gospel. If he responds then you are free to treat him as a fellow believer. If he refuses to believe in Christ then he remains in unbelief, yet you can still seek to reach an understanding. If he refuses to cease and desist, you must not lower yourself to his level and fall under the triumvirate of anger. You must defer to the Supreme Court of Heaven for adjudication and thus leave it in the hands of the Lord. This in no way is a grant of approval, an acceptance of abuse, or a submission to being bullied.

The major issue you must learn from this is that you are not permitted to become involved in counter sinning. Therefore, when you forgive you are in effect deferring the case to Heaven while remaining filled with the Holy Spirit.

If the abuse is physical then you may, while filled with the Holy Spirit, defend yourself from injury, you may defend your property, and you may protect your loved ones. You may then forgive the perpetrator for all of his wrongs as you turn him over to the authorities for their adjudication for, according to Romans 13, they are ministers of God for the execution of justice.

Every organization has policies. If the problem you have with your adversary persists because of his refusal to cease and desist resulting in discord among the other employees, a loss of quality in production, or violation of some law, then you are honor bound to carry it to your superiors. If you are the superior then you must discipline him, demote him, or fire him.

But all of this can be done without resorting to emotional or arrogant sinning. It can be accomplished filled with the Holy Spirit.

You have long-since pardoned this person for what they have done to you and deferred adjudication to the Supreme Court of Heaven. This in no way relieves you of your duties and responsibilities to others, to organizations, and to the law.

Forgiveness is a pardon which is willing to forget past wrongs. But it is not a mandate for *naïveté*. Forgiving others is God's system for getting you out of His way while allowing you to maintain spirituality so that He can execute justice towards all while you keep your eyes on the mission. He has forgiven all your sins. With that in mind, can you forgive your fellowman the one he commits against you?

If you discern that your fellow believer has no integrity, then personal responsibility toward your weaker brother requires that you stop allowing him to be codependent upon you. This means that you stop lending him money. It's better to give him the money than to set him up for failure and yourself for impulsive and chronic sins.

If it has to do with controversies, then seek to settle the issue before sundown. Demand that your adversary reveal to you his problem and seek a reconciliation. If he refuses then you have done your duty. You turn him over to the Supreme Court of Heaven. If you must, separate from him spiritually and even physically if necessary.

In conclusion, I would like to bring to you one of my favorite stories from one of William McGuffey's Eclectic Readers which illustrates many of the points we've seen in our study. We've noted it before but in view of our current study, it's worthy of a rerun:

McGuffey, William H. "The Best Kind of Revenge." In Fifth Eclectic Reader. Rev. ed. Chicago: American Book Company, 1920; pp. 266-68.