

DO YOU HARBOR RESENTMENT, OR DO YOU FORGIVE?

Note to the speaker:

Help the brothers to root out of their hearts any tendency to take offense and harbor resentment. Help them see how to avoid such feelings and how to dispel them if they do arise. Instill an intense desire to imitate Jehovah in showing love and mercy. Encourage all to put forth every effort to resolve difficulties and to forgive one another from the heart

ALL HAVE FAULTS, ARE SINNERS (6 min.)

No one is without sin, faultless (Ps 51:5; Ec 7:20; Ro 3:23; *it-2* 18)

Eventually all stumble, especially regarding the tongue (Jas 3:2; *w78* 5/15 7)

We are inclined to minimize our own shortcomings

Usually think that others are worse sinners than us (Lu 6:42)

Bible advises being humble, considering others superior to us (Php 2:3)

Must follow example Jehovah sets in being forgiving (Eph 4:32)

JEHOVAH DOES NOT HARBOR RESENTMENT (10 min.)

God has reason to be indignant with us because of our errors

In our sinful state, we constantly fall short of his requirements

Though expressing righteous indignation at times, Jehovah does not “keep resentful” (Ps 103:9)

God forgives those who leave wickedness (Isa 55:7; *sl* 111-12)

Our survival depends on Jehovah’s forgiveness

Examples of Jehovah’s forgiving individuals

King Manasseh offended Jehovah with gross sins, yet was forgiven after repentance (2Ch 33:10-13)

Prodigal son forgiven by father, even welcomed with opened arms

Illustrates Jehovah’s largeness of heart (Lu 15:11-32; *gt* 86)

Paul called himself ‘foremost sinner,’ yet was forgiven and was used extensively as minister of God (1Ti 1:15; *lp* 111-12)

DO NOT BE QUICK TO TAKE OFFENSE (6 min.)

Must not be quick to take offense at what others say about us

Realize that we also sometimes offend others (Ec 7:21, 22; *g89* 7/22 19)

Are we quick to take offense because of pride, taking ourselves too seriously? (Ec 7:9; *w77* 415-16)

When we are misrepresented, often there is no need to make a major point of the matter

Jesus, accused of being a glutton, did not make a big issue of it

Knew that his works would disprove the accusation (Mt 11:19; *it-1* 964)

David turned a deaf ear to argumentative ones (Ps 38:12-15)

Found it best to rely on Jehovah and wait

SOME HAVE A TENDENCY TO HARBOR RESENTMENT (8 min.)

Consider the following hypothetical situation

You have a small personal problem that you confide to a close friend. He promises to tell no one. Later you learn that others know about your problem

How would you feel toward your friend? Would you decide to cut him off? Would you say, “I will greet him but have nothing further to do with him. I will keep my distance”?

Do not be hasty in forming conclusions, getting angry (Pr 29:20, 22)

Think: Was the brother just thoughtless? Have you ever done such a thing yourself? Was it perhaps a misunderstanding? Was he perhaps seeking further advice that could be useful to you? Can the matter be minimized, overlooked, and forgiven? Was the keeping of it confidential all that important? Are you quite sure that he was actually the one that transmitted the information to the other person? (Pr 19:11; *g87* 5/8 22-3; *g74* 3/8 3, 4)

The Bible counsels us not to harbor resentment (Le 19:18; *w72* 707)

Harboring animosity can lead to direct hurt to neighbor, even to extreme measures

If we follow a natural instinct, we may come to dislike the person

Dislike nurtured by aloofness can turn to hatred

Hatred is a strong emotion, will damage you (*w87* 7/1 3-4)

You may develop a murderous disposition toward the person (Mt 5:21, 22; *w90* 10/1 13)

It could even lead to taking revenge

How do you handle yourself in such situations? Do you harbor resentment, or do you forgive?

Remaining angry because of the sin of another breaks down human relationships, “stirs up contention” (Pr 29:22; *w*90 9/15 22; *g*80 5/8 24)

Causes marital difficulties and breakdown of the family arrangement

Hinders closeness between brothers in congregation

DO NOT HARBOR RESENTMENT, BUT BE QUICK ABOUT FORGIVING (10 min.)

Willingness to forgive is test of genuine love for others

Easier to make gift of material value than to exercise generosity by forgiving (*w*79 9/1 3, 4)

Do we feel that our love is genuine and that we are generous in forgiveness? (Mt 18:21, 22; *w*88 3/1 8, 9)

Exercise a forgiving spirit in the family

Observation made: “A happy marriage is the union of two good forgivers” (*w*79 9/1 4)

Forgive mistakes in a large way

Freely forgive one another in the congregation

Necessary for happiness and encouragement of all, especially in case of a wrongdoer seeking forgiveness

Wrongdoing brings reproach on congregation, affects the spirit of the congregation

All in congregation should express genuine forgiveness for truly repentant ones (2Co 2:5-11; *w*77 693)

Forgive the trouble, reproach, and sorrow that their wrongdoing brought upon the congregation (*w*72 437)

Jehovah does not despise truly repentant ones, sets example we must follow (Ps 51:17; *w*93 3/15 16)

Learn to be quick about forgiving

Do not ascribe evil motive to the actions of others

Try to settle matters immediately (Eph 4:26; *w*90 9/15 21)

Do not return “injury for injury” (1Pe 3:8, 9; *g*80 1/8 4)

Forgiveness promotes peace; vengeance promotes strife

Not only forgive but also forget (*w*92 7/15 29)

CONTINUE IN THE FORGIVING WAY (5 min.)

Love enables us to forgive our brothers and continue in Jehovah’s forgiving way (Mt 6:14, 15; 1Co 13:5; *w*90 5/15 19; *w*72 708)

Forgive, and avoid damaging effects vengeance has on self and others (*ce* 206-7)

Avoid associating with those who harbor resentment (Pr 22:24, 25; *g*87 5/8 23)

Imitate Jehovah, the perfect example of one who forgives (Ps 103:3; Eze 18:22)

(Adhere closely to the outlined material, and observe the indicated timing of each section. Not all cited texts need be read. Source material in parentheses need not be mentioned)