

*April
focus*

D6 EXTRA!

family, discipleship, encouragement



FORGIVE AS YOU WERE FORGIVEN

Forgiveness means freedom.

Holding a grudge is celebrated in action movies. Revenge is a powerful motivator for characters on the big screen. But living like Jesus looks very different. "Father, forgive them," He prayed even as He hung on the cross (Luke 23:34). Repeatedly, believers are instructed to forgive others in the same way we have been forgiven (Matthew 6:12-15; Mark 11:26; Luke 6:37; Luke 17:3-4; Ephesians 4:32). But for some reason we keep singing those "somebody did somebody wrong" songs and hold onto our grudges.

What can be done?

- Identify the root problem of pride. Your rights were violated. But remember, you are dead (Colossians 3:3).
- Let God be God. Vengeance is His, not yours (Romans 12:19).
- Pray instead. Ask God to help you to have a heart like Jesus' heart and pray for blessings on the one who hurt you.
- Heap coals of fire (Romans 12:20). Deliberately do good, not harm, to the one who has offended you.
- Recognize that healing may take time. This may not be a one-and-done issue. Be patient with the process and continue to forgive.

If you or one of your family members struggles with an unforgiving spirit, try carrying around three or four of your heaviest books, a couple bags of flour, or a barbell. Take it everywhere you go for the next hour. Remind yourself your grudges weigh you down in the same way. They are restrictive and bothersome. They cause you more pain and problems than they cause anyone else.

If that old grudge dares to stick its head out of the hole again, don't pick it back up. Don't go near it. It is too heavy for you. It costs you too much freedom and joy. Give it to Jesus and let Him take care of it.

based on Deuteronomy 6