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Act of Forgiveness Enhances Our Lives

BY RITA BENNETT, WORSHIP COLUMNIST

“As we forgive those who sin against us ...” (R.B.)



What is hard to do but yet you have to do it all your life, and perhaps even to your final microseconds on earth? You guessed it: “Forgive.”

When we ask God to forgive us He does. The other side of the coin is this truth, “You and I then need to forgive others.”

Herein lies our gamble with life: either we have the good life where we live in reconciliation and inner serenity, or the “good life gone bad” with constant complaining and getting even with those who’ve done us wrong.

In the late afternoon recently, I was sitting in the car while my friend Joan Longstaff did needed grocery shopping. I usually read a book when I have free time, but I didn’t bring one with me.

That day my schedule had been particularly busy. I hadn’t even put the Armor of God on my soul, though I’m quite certain I had prayed The Lord’s Prayer. The parking lot was not busy so I had solitude.

I prayed for about 15 minutes, then all of a sudden I was prompted to pray for a few people who had done what the ninth Commandment warns against,

“Do not bear false witness against another.”

This caused me to realize I was still hurting and needed to release some emotions. I fumbled around in my purse for some Kleenex to help the process. I was soon ready to speak forgiveness to them “in prayer.”

I felt light and happy when my friend Joan returned. I had not realized that I still needed to forgive more in this past memory.

Prayer hit the spotlight on the media last week. The main reason is that Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House, announced that she was praying for President Bush.

The interviewer, Chris Wallace on Fox News, asked her, “Do you pray for Bush to change his policies?” Her answer: “Yes. All the time.”

Most of us have tried the tactic of praying for God to overrule an individual’s will. Yet the scriptures indicate that one thing God chooses not to do is change a person’s will.

We must come to Him by our free will. In fact the reason He came to save us is because the first humans chose to disobey His first commandment, which plunged the world into darkness (Genesis 3:11-24).

One of the treasures we’ve discussed in our Beacon study of The Lord’s Prayer is that a perfectly crafted closing prayer for anyone, including our President, or even an enemy, is: “Thy will be done.”

Mrs. Pelosi is right about the importance of praying for our president (Hebrews 13:17). Her witness about prayer also reminded me to ask myself, “When is the last time you sincerely took time to pray for George Bush and his family?” I think there is an urgent need for prayer for our leaders.

I will close with an acrostic based on the word “forgive.” Check out these seven steps, plus the scriptures given. These came to me fresh, with you in mind:

- Forgive yourself (Mark 12:33b)
- Others, also forgive (Matt. 6:12)
- Reconciliation, a ministry of unity (II Corinthians 5:18)
- Grace to you, “God’s unmerited favor” (Ephesians 2:8,9)
- I’m not on the throne (Exodus 20:3)
- Victory that overcomes the world (I John 5:4)
- Everlasting life, the Gift (I John 5:13)

Meditate on these seven constructs. When ready, sit back, relax, and pray “The Lord’s Prayer” with new and fresh meaning.

(You can see the Pelosi interview online at ianschwartz.com.)

Local author Rita Bennett is CEO of the Edmonds-based Christian Renewal Association. She can be reached at (425) 775-2965 or at www.EmotionallyFree.org, or by writing her at P.O. Box 576, Edmonds, WA 98020. Reprint ©2007 by Rita Bennett.