

Wisdom Not Worry
Wednesday, June 24, 2020

“...as we forgive our debtors.”

There seems to be a growing list of people to be angry at these days – caregivers who are careless in their duties, governments that fail to provide the kind of leadership we think they should, church members whose behaviors disappoint, media outlets of every stripe reporting more opinion than news, scientific experts who keep changing their findings, and so on and so on. If you are like me, you are finding it more difficult to hide your irritation. If you are honest, it’s starting to erode your joy. With no clear end in sight to our current situation, is there any way to guard against bitterness and guarantee our joy? Jesus offers a way in teaching us to pray, “Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.”

On several occasions the Spirit teaches us that our forgiveness of others should be determined by God’s forgiveness of us. Paul says, “Forgive one another as in Christ God forgave you” (Ephesians 4:32) or “Forgive as the Lord forgave you” (Colossians 3:13).

But in the prayer Jesus taught us, He turns this around and says the amount of joy we experience in being forgiven is determined by our willingness to forgive others. There is a direct correlation between our willingness to forgive others and our ability to experience the joy, peace, fellowship and freedom that comes from the forgiveness that is ours in Christ. We control how much of His joy we will have by how much forgiveness we are willing to dole out on those who irritate, anger, even infuriate us.

Are you feeling joyless? Maybe it’s because you are being stingy in your forgiveness of others. Abandon the bitterness, let go of the anger and the Lord will open the storehouses and let His joy fill you again.

Grateful,
Pastor Ben