

January 4, 2026

The Prison of Unforgiveness

Please, do not go into 2026 holding on to your **past hurts**, failures, offenses, rejection, and especially any **unforgiveness** which is a devastating sin that will put us in bondage/prison. Unforgiveness cause us to be bound with negative emotions that cloud our judgment. One of the greatest obstacles to forgiveness is **looking back**, holding on to the pain, creating a hardened heart, one filled with bitterness and rejection.

Php 3:13 *Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, **forgetting those things which are behind** and **reaching forward** to those things which are ahead, 14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. 15 Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you.* Looking back or reaching forward?

Luk 9:62 *But Jesus said to him, "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and **looking back**, is fit for the kingdom of God."*

Lot's wife was warned by the angels not to **look back** at Sodom and Gomorrah. Jesus said in **Luke 17:32**, "Remember Lot's wife," as He warned believers not to "turn back" in the day the Son of Man is revealed.

Gen 19:26 *But his wife **looked back** behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.*

Heb 12:15 *looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any **root of bitterness** springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled;* Where are we looking? At the pain or hope in Jesus?

Unforgiveness causes our heart to grow hard and bitter as we reject people and love.

Bitterness Strong's # 4088, pikria (pik-ree'-ah); acidity (**especially poison**). Also from # 4089 pikros; through the idea of piercing; sharp, bitter, acrid (caustic).

Poisoned: blurred vision, dizziness, clouded mind, confusion, sick feeling, no energy, and physical pain.

If we say we have forgiven someone and we still have a hardened heart, bitterness, rejection, or resentment towards that person, have we really forgiven them? If when we think about them, or they walk into a room and we feel anxious, does that person still has you in the **prison of unforgiveness**? There is a difference between forgiving someone and just tolerating them.

Many people have not forgiven **themselves** for past sins, especially ones buried deep in the heart. If we have not received God's forgiveness, it is very difficult to forgive others. People who have not forgiven themselves usually do not like themselves and have a difficult time with other people and can become secluded.

Jesus commanded us to forgive one another and gave a stern warning for those who will not forgive.

The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant **Matt 18:23-35** Unforgiveness = prison and torment

Mat 18:21 *Then Peter came to Him and said, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" 22 Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven."* Those who do not forgive will be handed over to the **tormentors**.

Unforgiveness hinders our prayers; our communication with God. Jesus teaches His disciples how to pray the "Our Father" which wraps the prayer in forgiveness and ends with a warning:

Mat 6:14 *"For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."*

Mar 11:25 "And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, **forgive him**, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. 26 But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses."

Eph 4:30-32 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Let all **bitterness**, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. 32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, **forgiving one another**, even as God in Christ forgave you. Not cold, mean, distant and abrasive, arguing about petty issues, focusing on the negative.

Real Christianity: This is what forgiveness looks like: **Col 3:12-15** *Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.* 14 But above all these things **put on love**, which is the bond of perfection. 15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. **Eph 4:26-26** "BE ANGRY, AND DO NOT SIN": do not let the sun go down on your wrath, 27 **nor give place to the devil.**

Forgiveness, like agape love, is a choice, not a feeling. That is why we don't wait until the pain is gone, until we feel safe, until the other person changes, until the anxiety is gone. The things that heal all of these are forgiveness and agape love.

Verbal-emotional abuse; What constitutes verbal-emotional abuse? A loud shouting voice? Name calling? Saying mean things? Making accusations like "always" and "every time" or "never." Pointing out the bad things about someone being critical? Making threats to leave or do physical harm? Teasing? Mimicking? Taunting? Belittling? What about silence; no communication at all? Are we all not guilty? Put down your stone.

Faith without works is dead **James 2:14-17**

Faith without love is nothing **1 Cor 13:1-3**

Faith that works through love, is everything! Gal 5:5-6

The best word that describes agape love is **commitment**.

Love Strong's # 26, *agape* (ag-ah-pay); an unconditional love that gives of itself without asking anything in return. This is a love of choice and will, not by feelings, chance and emotions. It is a commitment. It is the greatest of all love. ***Forgiveness and agape love are both a "choice" and not a "feeling."

It takes faith to walk in agape-commitment-love. Faith + love (commitment) = obedience to His commandments. Obedience to His commandments = great joy, Christ-like character, peace and hope.

Rom 5:3-5 "...we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; 4 and perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5 Now hope does not disappoint, because the **love** (commitment) **of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit** who was given to us.

Ministry of Reconciliation 2 Cor 5:18

First we are forgiven. **Second**, His agape love is poured into our hearts. **Third**, we walk in faith and the power of the Holy Spirit to forgive others and love them right where they are at, believing love will never fail and this allows the Holy Spirit to flow through us, bringing conviction, repentance and a heart reconciled to God.

Please, don't go into 2026 looking back. Walk in forgiveness, love and faith and stay out of prison!