

Coach: [From Forgiveness Part 1] This is not easy. It can be very difficult to admit you have unforgiveness against a parent. In most cases, we DO love our parents. So we block out, deny, rationalize, or bury the offenses and hurts. But, as a result, we don't heal and our relationships don't reach their full potential.

Host: Welcome to Champions Arise. I'm your host _____.
That was our coach, Kent Darcie from our last program. Today we conclude our look at adults with divorced parents and their difficulty with forgiveness. Kent is the founder of Adult Children of Divorce Ministries. He ministers to adults from broken homes by providing resources that can help them achieve healthier relationships. His goal is to break the cycle of divorce that plagues those from broken homes. .
Today we'll discuss what forgiveness really means and clarify what forgiveness is not. It's a program that can help us all, so please stay with us.

Music Theme out

Host: Coach, Many of our listeners have parents who split up. I'm sure our previous program opened a lot of eyes to possible areas where unforgiveness is lurking. What encouragement can you give them in regards to forgiveness?

Coach: As an adult child of divorce who has been working through this process, I found the most encouraging scripture was in Matthew 18. Peter comes up to Jesus and asks him about forgiveness. Basically Peter asks, how many times can a person sin against me and I still have to forgive them, up to seven times?

Jesus responds with, no, up to seventy times seven.

I've heard a lot of teachings on this, but I agree with those who believe that we may have to forgive someone more than once. When Peter asks, up to seven times, the indication is that he is forgiving the same offense. And that is life giving to the adult with divorced parents.

Because we often deal with repetitive offenses:

- The one parent still says bad things about the other
- They still won't cooperate over the simplest things
- Holidays are still stressful. .
- Maybe they still try to put you in the middle of things.
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Offenses, unintentional and intentional, will continue to happen and require our forgiveness. .

Host: Are there times we shouldn't forgive? What if they don't change?

Coach: I believe the Bible teaches to forgive, repeatedly if necessary. But we can answer that question by understanding what forgiveness is and what it isn't.

Whenever you do any research on forgiveness certain misconceptions about forgiveness will come up.

*The first misconception is that to forgive, you must forget.

Another way you'll hear this is "if you still remember it, you haven't forgiven them." Let's look at the feasibility of this with an example.

You have a disagreement with someone at work and they are really upset with you. They leave work early that day and when you pull up to your house after work, the house is on fire. It's a total loss. The fire department investigates and finds out that it was your coworker who burned your house down.

Here's the question: He eventually repents, and asks for your forgiveness. Could you forgive him?

Host: I...*could*.

Coach: I'm confident that the host of Champions Arise would forgive.

Host: Of course.

Coach: But would you *ever* forget what he did? Even with lots of prayer?

Host: Not likely. No. There would be too many reminders.

Coach: That's right. As a Christian, you would forgive him, but forgetting what he did would be nearly impossible. You might see a burning house on the news, or a fire truck will go by you, and you'll remember what he did. You can forgive him, but forgetting is highly unlikely. So you don't have to forget to forgive.

The second thing to remember is; forgiving someone does not automatically mean trusting them.

For example, your father made a big scene the last few times he and your mom and step-dad were in the same room. After each occasion he came to you, sincerely asked for your forgiveness, and promised he would never act that way again.

Should you forgive him? Yes; 70 times 7. But here is the difference. You are going to receive an award at a special dinner. Your boss and his boss will attend the event. Your mom and step-dad will also be there because she works for the same company. You'd like to invite your dad, but should you?

Host: Tough question.

Coach: Yes. This is the type of dilemma adults with divorced parents face. Right now there are listeners who are wrestling over situations like this. But the bottom line in this example is; we can forgive this dad, but we probably don't want him at the function. And we'll look at how to handle these types of situations in the last program of this series.

For now, the thing to remember is forgiveness is given, but trust is earned.

The third thing to know about forgiveness is; it does not *require* reconciliation. The key word here is "require". Forgiveness is desirable. Paul wrote in Romans 12 verse 18, "If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men."¹ We want to live peaceably with all men, but Paul starts with "if it is possible."

Some people are not healthy to be around. They may be a bad influence on you and your family. You can forgive them, but reconciliation may not be wise, or safe in some cases.

The fourth misconception about forgiveness is; Forgiveness does not require going to the offender personally and confessing our forgiveness.

There are those who teach that this is mandatory for true forgiveness. I disagree for many of the same reasons that reconciliation is not mandated.

Some people aren't ready to receive it. There is a lot of denial of responsibility around divorces and some people won't acknowledge that there is an offense.

Host: Are you saying not to confess our forgiveness personally to someone?

Coach: No, I'm saying that it is not automatically required in all situations. The Bible says in Proverbs 11 verse 14, "in the multitude of counselors there is safety."² Before you take this step, I would pray and speak with Christian leadership or counselors that are familiar with the situation and heed their guidance.

And the last misconception about forgiveness is; forgiveness is not denying that we have been hurt, pretending that the hurt was no big deal, or justifying or explaining away why the person or people hurt us.

We talked about this in our last program. In order to forgive, you must forgive *something* or *some offense*, or it's not forgiveness. Shoving the hurt under the rug doesn't make it go away.

Host: So now we have an idea of what forgiveness isn't. How do we move toward forgiving those who have hurt us?

Coach: The first step is to fill your heart and mind with the word of God. Read as many scriptures as you can on forgiveness. This will enable you to understand how God views forgiveness and what His desire is for us.

The next step is to pray that the Lord will give us the desire to want to forgive.

Host: Clarify what you mean by give us a desire. Don't we want to forgive?

Coach: Not always. Sometimes the hurt is so deep or the pain has been there for so long, that we draw strength from it. We enjoy being a martyr.

We also may believe that we have control over someone when we don't forgive and we like having control. Or we may think they don't deserve forgiveness because of how deeply they hurt us. However, we must pray for the Lord to remove any bitterness, desires for vengeance, or scorekeeping in our hearts.

Number three is: pray to understand the real hurts and losses you've experienced. We've explored a number of potential offenses in this series. Hopefully, our listeners are considering the possibility that there may be a connection to their parent's divorce.

The fourth step to forgiving is to pray to understand the other person's position.

Empathizing with our Mom, Dad, or step-parents is important to this process. In my research, and in situations I've seen, people experience deep pain when they go through a divorce. When a marriage breaks up, hopes, dreams, and passions are dashed. A deeper understanding helps us to humanize them, however, we must be careful not avoid rationalizing away any offenses from them. Items on the list are still offenses. But, the compassion that comes from understanding the other person helps us to forgive the offense.

The Last step is to find someone who can help you in this process. A spouse, a Christian leader, counselor, or a good Christian friend should help you with the forgiveness process. An outside perspective can be a big help when working through forgiveness issues.

Host: That makes sense. But, I'm wondering, how do you know if you have forgiven someone? Can you know?

Coach: I believe it's possible. There are certain behaviors that are commonly listed as indicators that we have forgiven.

One: You've let go of your desire for vengeance or justice.

Two: You stop keeping score. In other words, you stop waiting for your day in court or rehearsing all the things that were done wrong.

The third way you know you have forgiven someone, is you don't bad mouth the person. "Jay Adams says that forgiveness is not a feeling, but a promise or commitment."³ We commit to not bashing them anymore.

I heard RT Kendall say that once something is forgiven, we should never bring it up again. That is a very high bar, but so is the bar that Jesus set for us. The good news is God sent His Holy Spirit to help us have the power to forgive.

The fourth way we know we have forgiven is we have the freedom to wish the offending person well.

For example, we can pray that our dad and step-mom will have a happy marriage.

Lastly, we know we have forgiven if we are willing to be open to whatever God wills for that relationship.

We've all heard people say, I'll never trust them again. Maybe we've said it ourselves.

One of the many problems divorce creates is divisiveness. There is unforgiveness between parent and child, between siblings, or between kids and step parents. But that, "never again" attitude blocks forgiveness. As Christians, we must stand on the truth that, even with the pain of divorce, there is a bigger picture; God's picture.

God may want to use our willingness to extend grace as a witness to others. Someone may see us and say, "Wow! I can't believe he forgave them. How did he do that?" And, because of our obedience, we have the opportunity to share Jesus with them.

Our submission to God's will for that relationship is key:

If that's reconciliation. God's will be done

If that's never seeing that person again. God's will be done

If that's something in between. God's will be done.

When we forgive, we are healed, and God is glorified.

Music Theme in

Host: Thank you for listening to Champions Arise where men are equipped and strengthened to meet their God-given potential.

We hope these two programs on forgiveness have been a blessing to you and helped you better understand the challenge adults with divorced parents and all of us can have with forgiving those who have hurt us.

To learn more, or contact us about this series, go online to www.championsarise.org. and click on the “Breaking the Cycle of Divorce” link.

I’m _____, for _____. Thank you for listening to Champions Arise.
May God mold you into the man He knows you can be.

¹ New King James Version (NKJV)

² New King James Version (NKJV)

³Anger is a Choice. Tim Lahaye, pg. 124

⁴(NIV) 1982