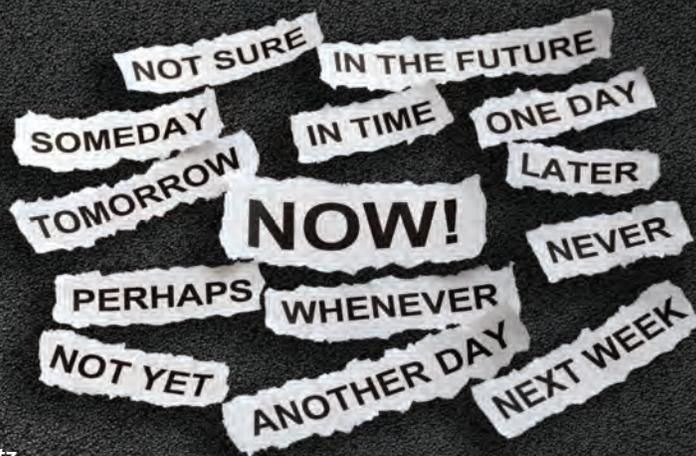


IS MY HEART **REALLY** UNFORGIVING?

by Sheila Lutz



Opening Prayer

O most gracious God, You sent Your only Son to die for me, to take all my sins — my thoughtless words, my darkest thoughts, the “pet” sin that will not let me go, my senseless deeds, my prideful attitude, my critical nature, my past, present, and future transgressions — and throw them as far as the east is from the west so that I may be Your child and live with You in heaven. Open my eyes today, O Lord. Teach me anew each day to see what it means to live forgiven and forgiving here on earth so that You may take joy in Your child and so that my joy in life with You may be filled to overflowing. In Jesus name I pray. Amen.

At an LWML fall rally years ago, the pastor leading the opening devotions said, “We, as Lutherans, know how to confess our sins, but we don’t know how to live forgiven.” I don’t remember anything from that rally except that statement God implanted into me. How *do* I live forgiven?

What Do I Think?

Which of these hamper me from forgiving?

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------------------|
| Irritating people | The need to be in charge |
| Disappointment | Anger |
| Hurt feelings | Illness |
| Death | The way I feel today |
| Guilt | Not being in the Word |
| Lack of effort | Forgetting to praise God |
| Failure | My boss |
| Negative people | Criticism |
| Fear | Not trusting God |
| Family | Unwillingness to apologize |
| Other(s)? | _____ |

Define Forgiveness: _____

Does this describe how I treat others? How I think of myself? _____

What Does God Say?

Read Christ’s words: **Matthew 6:12**.

What Does This Mean for Me?

When is it hard for me to forgive? _____

What/who is hardest for me to forgive? _____

How do I forgive as others have forgiven me? _____

Why is the ability to forgive a key to living forgiven? _____

What Does God Desire For Me?

Micah 6:8 _____

Jeremiah 29:11–13 _____

John 1:14 _____

John 8:32 _____

John 14:6 _____

2 Corinthians 5:17 _____

John 10:10 _____

Where Do I Start?

What Do I Think?

Confession is: _____

What happens first when I’m ready to forgive someone? _____

When I’m ready to ask for forgiveness? _____

When I’m ready to forgive myself? _____

What Does God Say?

Psalm 32:1–5a _____

Proverbs 28:13 _____

1 John 1:9 _____

James 5:16 _____

1 Timothy 6:12 _____

What Does This Mean for Me?

When do I confess my sins to God? How often? _____

When do I confess my sins to others? _____

When do I hide my sins? Why? _____

When do I confess my faith? _____

Confession Is Good for the Soul, But . . .

What Do I Think?

Even after we confess our sins and know we are forgiven, sometimes there's a problem.

Guilt comes when: _____

What Does God Say?

Romans 8:1 _____

Psalm 32:5–7 _____

Hebrews 10:19–24 _____

2 Corinthians 5:21 _____

Psalm 103:12 _____

What Does This Mean for Me?

We should always apologize when a wrong is done to another. Sin cannot be ignored, but how do I deal with any guilt that lingers?

What has made me feel guilty in the past? How does/did Satan use guilt against me? _____

How long do I remember what harm another has done to me? _____

How do I react when someone confesses sin to me? _____

Do I trust God to take care of the guilty — even when it's me? _____

What should I do when guilt overwhelms me again? _____

Is My Heart Really Unforgiving?

What Do I Think?

In your own words define:

Advice _____

Criticism _____

Condemnation _____

Gossip _____

How can each of these lead to an unforgiving heart? _____

To whom do I talk first when something is wrong (wrong with myself and/or with others)? _____

What Does God Say?

Proverbs 16:28 _____

Proverbs 26:20 _____

Luke 6:31 _____

Luke 6:37–38 _____

James 3: 2–12 _____

1 Thessalonians 1:6 _____

3 John 1:11 _____

1 Peter 2:9 _____

1 Peter 5:7 _____

What Does This Mean for Me?

Why is it hard for me to confess sin(s) to another? _____

How do I react when in the middle of a gossip conversation? _____

How do I stop myself from speaking wrongly? _____

Do I speak in a demeaning way about myself? _____

Closing

Pray together **Ephesians 3:20–21**(paraphrase): *Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.*

Sing a hymn of praise together before you leave: “Holy Spirit, Light Divine” (LSB #496; LW #166; or TLH #234) or “What a Friend We Have in Jesus” (LSB #770; LW #516; or TLH #457).

Sheila, an active LWMLer, currently serves on the *Quarterly* staff and as Vice-President of Christian Life for LWML Central Illinois District. She and her husband, Don, attend St. John, Green Valley, Illinois, her husband's church from birth to today. She is a member of her church choir and contemporary praise group as well as the music and contemporary worship committees.