

MAN without God can only judge by results, by achievements. Did you win or did you lose? Did you show a profit or a deficit? God alone can judge us on the basis of what we are, not just on what we have done.

God not only forgives our failures; He sees successes where no one else does, not even ourselves. Only God can give us credit for angry words we did not speak, temptations we resisted, patience and gentleness little noticed and long forgotten by those around us. Such good deeds are never wasted and not forgotten, because God gives us a measure of eternity.

RABBI HAROLD S. KUSHNER

●When you forgive, you in no way change the past ... but you sure do change the future.

●Be not angry that you cannot make others as you wish them to be ... since you cannot make yourself as you wish to be.

—Thomas a Kempis

THAT OLD LAW ABOUT "an eye for an eye" leaves everybody blind.

—Martin Luther King, Jr., *Stride Toward Freedom* (Harper & Row)

If you content yourself with confessing your sins without struggling against sin in yourself and in the world in which you live, you will never overcome evil. If you content yourself with struggling against the evil in yourself and in the world in which you live without confessing your sins, you will never win your struggle.

Forgive and Forget?

The psychological case for forgiveness is overwhelmingly persuasive. Not to forgive is to be imprisoned by the past, by old grievances that do not permit life to proceed with new business. Not to forgive is to yield oneself to another's control. If one does not forgive, then one is controlled by the other's initiatives and is locked into a sequence of act and response, of outrage and revenge, tit for tat, escalating always. The present is endlessly overwhelmed and devoured by the past. Forgiveness frees the forgiver. It extracts the forgiver from someone else's nightmare. "Unless there is a breach with the evil past," says Donald Shriver [president of New York City's Union Theological Seminary], "all we get is this stuttering repetition of evil."

... Forgiveness is not an

impulse that is in much favor. It is a mysterious and sublime idea in many ways. The prevalent style in the world runs more to the high-plains drifter, to the hard, cold eye of the avenger, to a numb remorselessness. Forgiveness does not look much like a tool for survival in a bad world. But that is what it is. /Lance Morrow
in **TIME**

*Bitterness
destroys, but
forgiveness
is God's
path to
freedom*

Forgiveness

From the Middle Ages comes this legend about a nun who claimed that she had had a vision of Christ. The bishop asked, "Sister, did you talk to him?" And she said, "Yes, I did." He continued, "If you have another vision, ask Christ this question: 'What was the bishop's great sin before he became a bishop?'" He knew that only God and his own confessor would know.

About three months later, the nun made an appointment to see the bishop. When she came in, he said, "Did you see our Lord again?" "Yes," she replied. "Did you ask him the question about my sin?" "Yes, I did." "And what did he say?" She smiled and answered, "The Lord said, 'I don't remember anymore.'"

WHO, ME?

I need to be forgiven, Lord,
So many times a day.
So often do I slip and fall;
Be merciful, I pray.

Help me not be critical
When others' faults I see.
For so often, Lord,
The same faults are in me.

Getting Even

1. Report him to the IRS

2. If you're still receiving his mail, write "Deceased" and send it back to the post office.

3. Give his name to a VD clinic.

4. Call a late-night fundamentalist talk show and sign him up for a dating service.

5. List his apartment for half the rent in the Sunday paper with his work number as a referral.

6. Befriend his ex-wife and convince her she let him off easy.

7. Start a whispering campaign about his lack of sexual prowess.

8. When he's away, sneak into his apartment, call the time in Australia, and leave the phone off the hook for the weekend.

9. Steal his phone beeper and call in hourly for his messages, then erase them.

10. Pay for a month's worth of 5:45 wake-up calls.