

Day 30

I Can't Forgive Myself!

Romans 7:15–8:4

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit. Psalm 103:2-4

Diego fell into depression while a student at the seminary. He was coming to understand just how sinful his past had been. Shame and self-disgust caused him to believe that he could not forgive himself.

Soon Diego was failing in his studies. His schoolwork suffered, and some days he couldn't get out of bed to go to class. He reasoned that he wasn't even fit to be a pastor, let alone one who could be forgiven.

Diego struggled with the same inner strife as St. Paul, who wrote: "Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?" (Romans 7:24). But Paul puts aside self-loathing when he declares, "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (v. 25).

Diego was right in that he did not deserve God's mercy. He was not worthy of forgiveness. But his perspective changed when he was reminded that Christ died for him precisely because he was sinful and unable to redeem himself. Personalizing Paul's words from Romans 8, Diego confessed, "There is therefore no condemnation for Diego who is in Christ Jesus."

Diego realized that to withhold forgiveness from himself was to play God. Anytime we withhold God's forgiveness from anyone who repents, even ourselves, we sin because we act like God. In the assurance of God's forgiveness, Diego's depression waned, his grades improved, and today he serves as a faithful pastor who knows the joy of undeserved grace.

Loving Lord, while I was a sinner you died for me. My forgiveness is a free gift because I can do nothing to merit my own righteousness. Protect me from thoughts of withholding your gift of forgiveness from myself or anyone else. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

*Adapted from Forgiven to Forgive - 6 Weeks of Daily Devotions
(c) 2010 by Ambassadors of Reconciliation*



Ambassadors
of
Reconciliation™

Write or type your answers. Writing your answers helps you to meditate more deeply on the question, organize your thoughts, and provide a visible way for you to review and reflect on how this devotion applies to your specific situation.

1. Read Isaiah 43:1. What comfort do you find in knowing that God not only created you, but He also redeemed you and called you by name?
2. What does it mean for you that God knows everything about you, and yet He continues to use you, bless you, and equip you for serving Him and His people?
3. Remember what "grace" means in this acrostic:
God's
Riches
At
Christ's
Expense
 - a. What riches did God shower upon you because of the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus?
 - b. What assurance do you receive from Romans 8:1?
4. Read the closing prayer from the devotion again.