

Forgiving All The Way
By Anne MacCormack

Have you ever done something or said something to someone, especially someone you love, that you regret? I have-- probably more times than I care to remember, but there is one time that has haunted me from the moment that my tongue committed the offense.

My mother was the most caring and nurturing person I have ever known—to me, she was the perfect mother—always there for me no matter what, and I loved her dearly. She came to live with my husband and me after my dad died, and I loved being able to serve her as she grew older and our roles became somewhat reversed. She loved good food, and I enjoyed making some of her favorite meals like a grilled cheese, bacon, and tomato sandwich for lunch (it had to have tomato) or a pot roast dinner. Things went well for the first two years; and then when health issues began to take its toll on her, her normal pleasant disposition changed into a more demanding one and an attitude of ungratefulness for everything that was done for her and I said to her, “Mom, you never say ‘thank you’ any more for anything-- that’s not like you.” Her reply was that she didn’t feel it was necessary and that my husband and I overdid our thanks to each other for small favors. I began to feel resentment, and sometimes I would prepare her lunch and then sneak out on her for a few hours just to get away for a while by myself. I hated myself for doing that, and I asked God to help me to be more understanding and tolerant, but somehow I wasn’t being receptive to his response—more likely, that I didn’t want to be.

One day, Mom and I had some unpleasant moments over something—I don’t even recall what it was about, but she said something that angered me to the point that I shot back what was on the tip of my tongue, “You know, Mom, many of our friends have always said that you and I were very much alike in our ways, and I used to be proud of that; but now I know that they were wrong, and I am so glad that **I am not like you.**” I said this in a tone that was nasty; and the second after I said it, I was sorry, but it was too late. Once words come out of our mouths, it’s impossible to take them back. I had wounded her and I could see the hurt in her eyes--it was mean, and it accomplished my purpose which was to hurt her like she was hurting me.

God’s nature is one of endless forgiveness; but being sorry for something we did or said to someone, especially someone that we love, is different from true repentance, which is what God requires of us--a complete turn-around from the behavior that caused the sin. After cooling down, I confessed my sin to God, asked for forgiveness, and promised to guard my tongue and change my own unforgiving attitude towards my mother’s temperament. I also apologized to my mother, and I believe she forgave me then and there, just like her old self.

My mother went home to be with the Lord nearly nine years ago, and there have been many times when remembering that particular episode, deep feelings of regret would linger in my heart for hurting the one person in all the world that I should never offended. I knew that God had forgiven me, but I was still troubled because I could not forgive myself.

After studying many passages of Scripture about forgiveness in order to come to terms with this problem, I realized that by refusing to forgive myself when God had already forgiven me, I was actually undermining His power and my firm belief that Jesus paid the penalty of all our sins when he died for us on the cross. Dwelling on this past sin was hindering me from the contentment, the freedom, and the joy that comes from accepting His precious gift of grace.

“As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.”
Psalm 103:12

“For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.” *Hebrews*
8:12

**Once we are forgiven, God does not keep any record of our wrongdoing.
Therefore, we must do the same!**