



# Forgiveness

How and why it works

*Chosen for a Better Way.*

Colossians 3:12-13



# 1. Forgiveness – What is it?

- An **act of the will**: (Col 3:8, 9, 10, 12)
  - A. to **let go or let off; to release**
  - B. to **pardon; dispense with, or cancel as one might a debt.**
  - C. A choice to **not get even.**



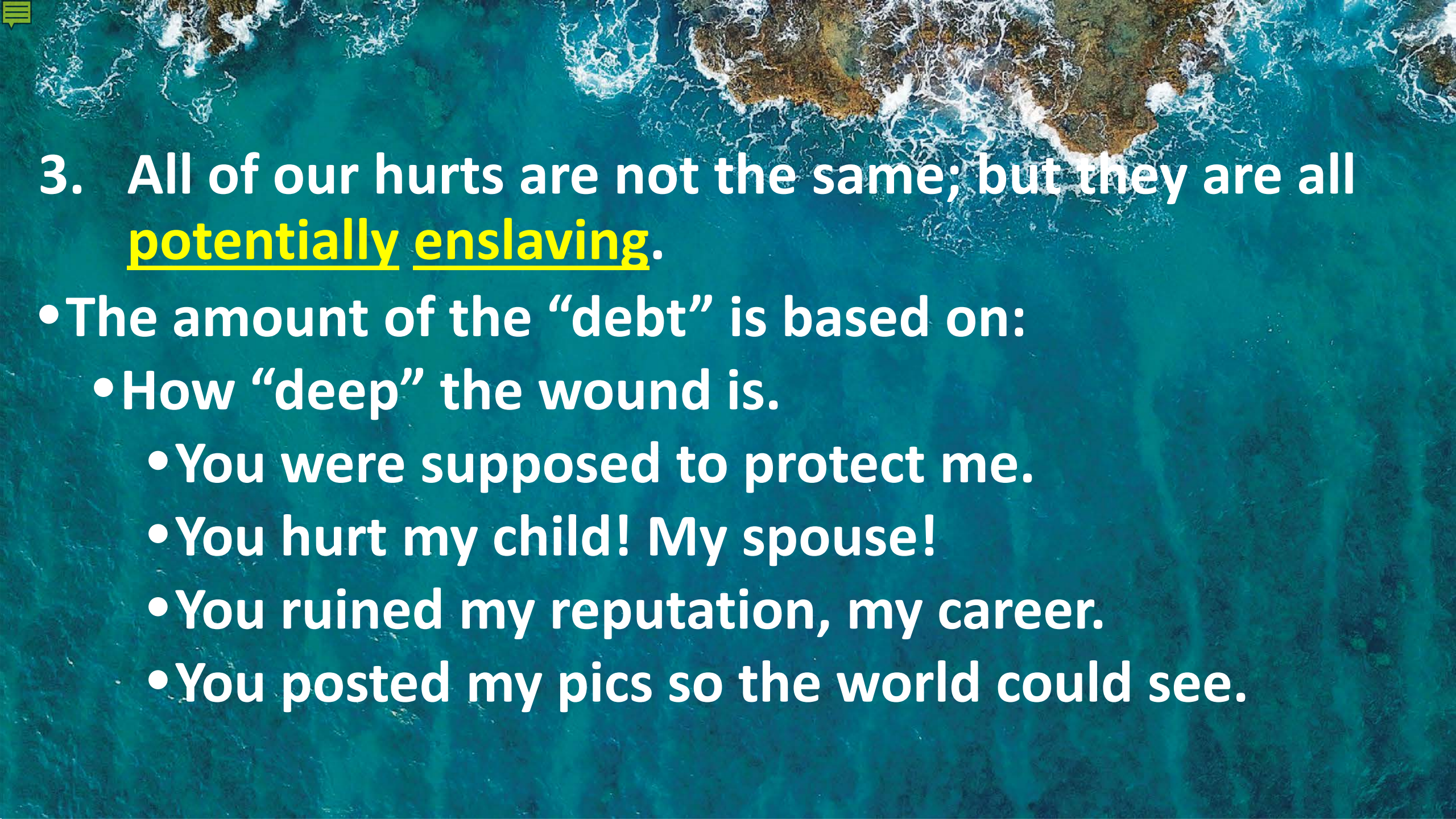
## Forgiveness - What is it not?

- A. Condoning, excusing or minimizing hurts.**
- B. Acting like the hurt inflicted was OK.**
- C. Putting myself in danger of it happening again.**
- D. Reconciliation/restoration.**



2. My hurt is likened to money owed to me (debt) by an offender, i.e., the “debtor.”

- Matt. 6:12 And forgive us our debts [**our sins against God**], as we also have forgiven our debtors [**those who have hurt us**]. (NAU)
- Gen. 39:9 There is no one greater in this house than I, and he has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do this great evil and sin against God?" (NAU)



3. All of our hurts are not the same; but they are all potentially enslaving.

- The amount of the “debt” is based on:
  - How “deep” the wound is.
    - You were supposed to protect me.
    - You hurt my child! My spouse!
    - You ruined my reputation, my career.
    - You posted my pics so the world could see.



• We become enslaved when we become “debt collectors.”

1. Hold on to my anger.

2. Tell others what they did to me.

3. Give my debtor the cold shoulder.

• Ignore them. Don't acknowledge them.

4. Hurt them – financially (or relationally with the children).

5. Replay the memories.



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*“The outcome of our lives is not determined by what happens to us but by how we respond to what happens to us.”*

- Nancy Demos. “Choosing Forgiveness.”



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*“Resentment/anger/bitterness often make us feel that we keep those who hurt us in an emotional prison. Over time we come to realize that it has not been the offender that remains in jail but us. Our hatred affects us emotionally more than it affects the one who hurt us.”*

• Robert Enright, “Forgiveness is a Choice.”





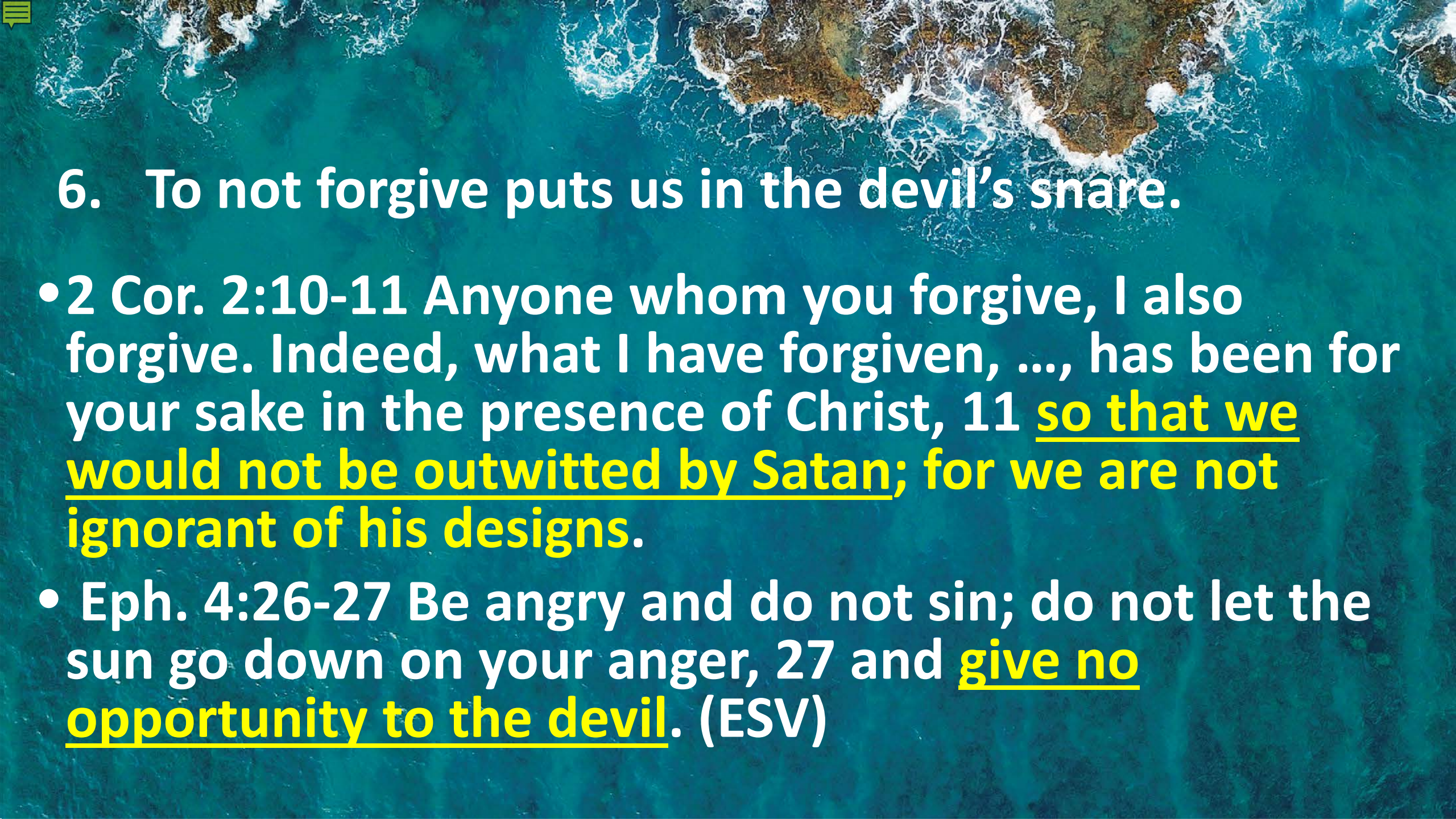
4. Believers are **uniquely** commanded to forgive.

- Col. 3:12-13 Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, ..., <sup>13</sup> bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. (ESV)
- Eph. 4:32 Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.



5. To not forgive impacts our fellowship with God.

- Eph. 4:30-32 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all **bitterness** and **wrath** and **anger ... be put away from you,** ... . Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, **forgiving one another,** as God in Christ forgave you.  
(ESV)



6. To not forgive puts us in the devil's snare.

- 2 Cor. 2:10-11 Anyone whom you forgive, I also forgive. Indeed, what I have forgiven, ..., has been for your sake in the presence of Christ, 11 so that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs.
- Eph. 4:26-27 Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, 27 and give no opportunity to the devil. (ESV)



## Next Steps.

### 1. Memorize this passage this week:

- **Ps. 139:23-24** Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! <sup>24</sup> And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting! (ESV)

### 2. Ask God to reveal those you have not forgiven.

### 3. Pray for them by name.



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- Resources for additional reading:
  - *Choosing Forgiveness* . DeMoss, Nancy Leigh. Moody Publishers.