

# Forgive Your Spouse ≠ Ignore Your Feelings

## PART TWO

By **America's Family Coaches** – Thriving Marriages Email - January 27, 2023

Wonderful things happen when you choose to forgive your spouse for offending you. They parallel the great benefits we realize when God forgives us. Here are just a few of them:

**Forgiving love sets your spouse free.** Remember the weight of sin and guilt you felt before you received God's forgiveness? Well, your spouse probably feels something of that pain and discomfort from hurting you. Remember how liberated you felt when God took your burden of sin away? When you say, "I forgive you," you provide your spouse with a similar sense of freedom.

**Forgiving love ends the skirmish.** Once you experienced God's forgiveness for sin, the war between you was over and God welcomed you into his family justified—as if there had been no sin in the first place. In the same way, when you forgive your spouse, the air is clear between you again. You can pick up your relationship where it left off before the offense as if the hurtful behavior never happened. You are free to accept and connect with each other again.

**Forgiving love gets you back on track.** Once your sins were forgiven, all the wonders of God's plan and purpose were suddenly available to you. Nothing stood between you and all God had for you. Similarly, when you forgive your spouse and your relationship is restored, you can resume pursuing your marriage dream. The offending issue is behind you. Let it go and move on full speed in the ministry of growing deeper in your relationship.

"But I can't forget how badly it hurt," you may argue. "How can I move on with life after the pain my spouse inflicted?"

That's right, you may not be able to completely forget an offense. Only God can say, "I will forgive their wickedness and will never again remember their sins" (*Jeremiah 31:34*). You don't have the power to forget sin as God does. But God doesn't intend for you to forget. Remembering the pain your spouse caused you may help prevent you from hurting him or her in the same way. In the meantime, you decide to let your spouse off the hook. After a while, the memory will fade, and the pain will be healed.

Forgiveness is how we bring our relationship into the light. It's how we set free the offended and the offender, reconcile with each other after a conflict, stand before our spouse without blemish, cut loose the guilt and grudges, and are cleansed from every wrong. And God says we must forgive—because he has forgiven us.