

1 John 4:20-21

If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also.

Unfortunately, today's example for this devotional is true.

I know of a woman who has anger in her heart towards another believer. This other believer is her husband's sister. Something happened a several years ago and this woman refuses to forgive her sister in law. By doing so she had caused strife within the family, between herself and her husband, among their children and even amongst the whole family.

The rest of the family is not saved and they say, "*Why should we believe in Jesus if she wont forgive someone in the family*". So their witness is shot and worthless. Her husband is not even allowed to talk to his own sister and their children are not allowed to either, even during the holidays.

So what was so bad that would cause someone to do something like this? I don't really know, but I see the affects of unforgiveness towards someone. I see how it destroys a witness, and hurts a family. I see her husband who is very loving and patient towards her wanting to know when this will all stop.

Maybe some of you are going through the same thing even right now. Maybe you are the one who refuses to forgive someone. Look at what John said again:

† ***For he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?***

We say we love God, but we have never seen Him. Sure God would never do us wrong, but we are commanded to love one another.

† **John 15:17 *These things I command you, that you love one another.***

It's not a suggestion but a command.

It's not if you feel like; it's, do it.

It's not if they are only nice to you, but all the time.

I know sometimes it's hard, but we shouldn't be so cold and hardhearted that we refuse to even try. If you have trouble trying, then ask the Lord to help you to keep His commandment. Ask the Lord to help you to see this other person through His eyes.

Maybe you are the one that someone refuses to forgive. Have you asked him or her to forgive you? If not then I would encourage you to.

It's not your job to make them forgive you, but it is your job to ask for forgiveness. If you have and they still refuse to forgive you, then pray for them. Not that God would smash in their teeth, but that the Lord would manifest His love towards them and that they would feel forgiveness and repay the same to others.

If you refuse to forgive, then I think you may want to stop telling the Lord that you love Him, because when you do, you are lying to God.

† *If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar*

I also know that people have been hurt by others in the past, and sometimes it take a supernatural (God given) love or even forgiveness for that person. Once again, simply confess that to the Lord and ask Him to do a work in you that you just can't do. It's ok to be honest with God, because it's not like He doesn't already know. But I think He may simply want to hear us cry out to Him and seek His strength on these things, because He knows we are but dust and that we can't do it without Him. Our confession to Him is not for His sake, but for ours as we realize there are those times, as hard as we try, that we just can't do it. It doesn't make us a failure, it makes us human and reliant on God.

† **Psalm 31:24** *Be of good courage, And He shall strengthen your heart, All you who hope in the LORD.*