

## Daily Devotional, March 24, 2021 Forgive Me For Not Forgiving Me

***Meanwhile, Simon Peter was still standing there warming himself. So they asked him, "You aren't one of his disciples too, are you?" He denied it, saying, "I am not." One of the high priest's servants, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, challenged him, "Didn't I see you with him in the garden?" Again Peter denied it, and at that moment a rooster began to crow. John 18:25-27 (NIV)***

Forgiveness is a great gift to us from God and it's also a great gift when we receive forgiveness from others. Forgiveness gives us rest and relief from the burdens we carry and brings freedom to our spirits. Forgiveness can help us to start fresh. In our relationships with others, we can begin to build trust again, and find resolution. Sometimes the hardest time for us is in forgiving ourselves. But when we forgive ourselves, we can bring rest from the burdens we have toted around and bring a new freedom to our life as well.

I'm guessing that Peter must have struggled with and even tormented himself with being able to forgive himself after Jesus was crucified. Peter was quite bold in his commitment to Jesus and in the way he followed Him and learned from Him. But he also found himself quick to protect himself as well, in the darker moments of Jesus' arrest. After Jesus was arrested, Peter was asked by several people if he was one of Jesus' followers. Three times he denied this, just as Jesus had predicted. When Jesus had told Peter this would happen, he refused to believe that he would ever be in a situation to do this, but he did. I can only imagine the guilt and pain that Peter felt about denying his Lord.

Have you ever found yourself caught in a situation, where looking back on what you've done you have felt ashamed for your actions? You may have never intended to cause such pain or distrust, yet you acted out of your own self-interest. You know it's not what you wanted to do, but in the moment, the choices were made, and now you are faced with the guilt of the circumstances. In these times, forgiveness is needed from God... *and* from yourself. We cannot move on if we are not ready to forgive ourselves. The guilt will weigh us down, causing us physical anguish and pain, not to mention the emotional and mental torment our minds can put us through.

Through these trying times, God's forgiveness is always available and God is calling us continually into a deeper relationship with Him. Allow God to take your burdens, and even the guilt and shame you have been carrying and allow God to wipe the slate clean. Forgive yourself as Christ has forgiven you. And just like Peter, you can experience the exhilarating sense of God's forgiveness and a new call upon your life, to do important work in sharing God's love and forgiveness with others.

***Prayer: Father, today I ask forgiveness of all the negative and harmful words I have spoken about myself. I do not want to abuse myself in such a way again. Transform my thoughts and let me understand how marvelously you have made me. Change my habits so that I use my tongue to speak hope and approval upon my life, and to show such favor to others. In Jesus' name, Amen.***