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## *Letting go of Resentment*

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Forgiveness and the healing of resentment are such important issues today. But when it comes to forgiving others, sometimes we rebel. Why should I be the one to forgive the unkind relative, or the inconsiderate neighbor, or the boss who fired me? Didn't they commit the wrong? I'll forgive them when they change or apologize or stop hurting me! It may seem difficult to let go of resentment. But resentment impedes our progress. It's difficult to walk the path to holiness balancing a basket of resentment.

Jesus taught that blessing comes with forgiveness. The fifth Beatitude is, "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." (Matthew 5:7) Merciful means compassionate, forgiving. Jesus gave us the ultimate example of forgiveness and the blessing it brings. On the cross he prayed for those who wronged him even before they repented or apologized, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34) Then three days later Jesus resurrected. Forgiveness opened the way to overcome the hatred and wrong-doing of others. He refused to allow resentment to impede his progress, his resurrection.

We don't need to wait for others to realize they have been duped by mistaken views. Our progress doesn't depend on the awakening of others. We can cease to feel resentment right now. Then we are freed mentally to take up the cross and follow Christ to victory over evil.

How can we forgive others their wrong-doing? I have found petitionary prayer works for me. Petitionary prayer is asking God for thoughts not things. It is the type of prayer Solomon used when he asked God for wisdom. Jesus used petitionary prayer when he prayed to the Father, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." (Matthew 6: 12) I love this petitionary prayer by Mrs. Eddy, "Stand by the limpid lake, sleeping amid willowy banks dyed with emerald. See therein the mirrored sky and

the moon ablaze with her mild glory. This will stir your heart. Then, in speechless prayer, ask God to enable you to reflect God, to become His own image and likeness, even the calm, clear, radiant reflection of Christ's glory, healing the sick, bringing the sinner to repentance, and raising the spiritually dead in trespasses and sins to life in God. Jesus said: 'If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.'" (My 150: 15) Petitionary prayer is opening our heart to God and being willing to yield to His will.

To truly forgive, we can humbly ask God to remove resentment from our heart and from our thoughts. God will answer this prayer. Recently an old resentment that had eaten at me for a long time came to mind. I realized the resentment was hurting me not the other person. So, I just turned to God and asked Him to completely take away any thought of the incident, not just the resentment but any thought or memory of the incident. It then occurred to me, was I really willing to never think of this again? I had harbored this hurt so long and felt so justified in doing so. Was I really willing to entirely let it go as if it had never happened? I checked my heart and the answer was yes. And so I asked God again in all sincerity that I would never think of this again. Ten minutes later I couldn't (and still can't) remember what it was that I had prayed to have God remove! It was entirely erased from thought.

Petitionary prayer is also effective when we need to be merciful with ourselves and forgive ourselves. Sometimes we have made a mistake that is painful in memory even though we corrected the mistake long ago. Be merciful toward yourself and allow divine Love to remove the memory of a mistake. Divine Love fills our heart with compassion for ourselves and others. Let Love resurrect the depressed sense.

God's blessing is bestowed on those who forgive. We can rejoice in our resurrection from resentment. What freedom and progress come from challenging old hurts and overcoming them!