**44: When You Can’t Forget**

This is Be Known, and I’m Kerrah Fabacher. You’re listening to episode 44. We were made for relationship, but so often our relationships are broken. And when our relationships are broken, *we* are broken. One of our deepest human desires is to be known, but we often have lost ourselves along the way. This is a podcast to help you get your relationships back to a place of wholeness. A place of authentic connection, where you feel truly known.

So come on in and sit a while. Let’s exchange fear for love and finally see what good relationships are made of. And let’s see what kind of healing happens here.

\*\*\*\*\*

Forgiveness is hard, y’all. Especially when the memory of the hurt keeps replaying in your mind. There are memories I’ll never forget from those I thought I could trust with my life, best friends, boyfriends, pastors, peers and family. There are words I’ll never forget. Actions that won’t leave my mind.

I’ll never forget being humiliated in 6th grade when a girl made fun of my zits in front of everyone.

I’ll never forget the inappropriate sexual comments made by some guys in high school.

I’ll never forget when my best friend stopped talking to me over a boy.

I’ll never forget when my boyfriend pointed out the imperfections of my body.

I won’t forget the boyfriend who told me I was annoying.

The youth pastor who pretty much called me a slut.

The family member who treated me like a piece of meat.

The friend who lied to me.

I won’t forget the best friend who betrayed me.

I won’t forget the guy who broke my heart.

The friends who stopped caring.

The best friend who accused me of something terrible that I didn’t do.

The mentor who forgot about me.

The boss who deceived me and manipulated me and tossed me out like yesterday’s trash.

The family member who gossiped about me.

The pastor who treated me like I was nothing.

I’ll never forget. And those don’t even touch the things *I’ve* done I can’t forget.

Recently I asked you guys over on Instagram what you want to hear talked about on the podcast, and a friend of mine said how to forgive when you can’t forget and all you want is revenge. Even though I can’t claim to be an expert on this topic by any means, I’ll share a bit of what I know.

Just as a side note, Lysa TerKeurst recently released a book called, *Forgiving What You Can’t Forget*, so I think that would be a great resource for you if you are struggling with this.

Just because God chooses to forget our sin because of the blood of Jesus and the power of the cross doesn’t mean we as human beings can forget like that. Jeremiah 31:34 says, “And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

And we also know we are, as believers, supposed to forgive as Jesus has forgiven us. Colossians 3:12-13 says, “Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, 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.”

And if he *forgets* our sin and remembers it no more, does this mean we need to forget and move on, too?

All I know to answer this is that in my own life, I have forgiven, but I’ve never forgotten.

Some of you may find it easier to forget than me, but honestly, I would say most people struggle with this.

So what do we do if we can’t forget?

Does that mean we haven’t forgiven?

I honestly can tell you I don’t have all the answers here, but I do know that for us as humans, it would seem forgiveness doesn’t require us to forget.

We can control our thoughts only so much. We can try not to think about past hurt, push it out of our minds with something else to take it’s place. We can distract ourselves or numb it out. But we can’t force ourselves to forget.

And I’ll say it again. Forgiveness doesn’t mean we just forget.

Because that hurt was real. That pain.

It was real.

And it is a part of what has shaped us into the people we are today, for better or worse.

It’s okay to remember.

What’s not good is when that memory turns back into anger or bitterness. That’s how I’ve known in my own life if I haven’t been able to forgive someone. If I keep bringing up that hurt in my mind or out of my mouth, and the memory hurts just as much now as it did then. That’s how I know. I haven’t let this go.

And that’s really all forgiveness is. It’s letting go of the hurt, the anger we feel. It’s letting God give them consequences instead of feeling the need to give them ourselves. It’s releasing it. Not forgetting. Just releasing it so it no longer has a hold on us.

And when I keep bringing a memory up over and over, that shows me I haven’t been able to let go.

Forgiveness is a process. I truly believe that when Jesus told us we would need to forgive 70x7 times, he meant *this*. That it’s a process. That we’ll have to choose it over and over. That when the hurt comes back up in our minds, we would choose to let it go again.

And eventually, the hurt will fade. You won’t be was angry. It will be a memory you are able to look at and go, “Wow that was incredibly hard. And that shaped me” instead of “I can’t believe that person did that to me. They are the worst person in the world. F them.” No, you look at the memory and the emotions you felt at the time it happened are no longer as present.

You know you’ve let the hurt go.

But we have to keep choosing forgiveness until we get there.

This doesn’t mean staying in a toxic or unsafe situation in the name of forgiveness. And it doesn’t mean justifying someone’s actions.

It’s just a letting go.

As you’d set a leaf down in a stream and slowly watch it go.

My friend,

I know you won’t always be able to forget.

That hurt was real.

That abuse was real.

That betrayal was real.

That deception was real.

That bullying was real.

And the feelings you felt then and now matter about it.

I’m not trying to take that from you.

But if you keep holding the hurtful memories with you behind the wall you’ve built to keep people out, you’ll be lonely for a long time.

And you’ll never be free.

Forgiveness is freedom.

Running free in the wind freedom.

Laying in a field of wildflowers freedom.

It’s true freedom.

So when you can’t forget,

Simply give it back to Jesus, again.

Choose to let it go again.

Don’t sit with the memory too long or you’ll find that bitterness rising up again. You may even want revenge, but let God have justice. It’s his job anyway, not ours.

This hurt has no hold on you anymore.

Let’s stop letting it and be free.

\*\*\*\*\*

Thanks for sitting a while with me. I trust that forgiving what you can’t forget will help you take a step toward wholeness so you can finally see what good relationships are made of.

To finish up, the transcript for this episode is on the podcast page on my website, along with lots of other resources, [www.kerrahfabacher.com.You](http://www.kerrahfabacher.com.You) can always follow along on Instagram @kerrahfabacher or if you need more one-on-one help moving past some past hurt, you can check out how to work with me on my website.

A big thanks to my friend Robert Hargrove for creating the music for the show, and fellow hope\*writer, Alana Dawson, for being a great editor.

Until next time friend, I’ll see you soon.