

Release

“Don’t judge. Don’t look at the speck in your brother’s eye. Just focus on the log in your own eye.” That seemed like a good idea before, but now it’s way too hard. *My eye?* Did you hear the way she talked to me? Did you hear the things she accused me of? Let’s take a good, hard look at the log in *her* eye. If there happens to be a speck in my eye, we can deal with that later.

Right now, all I know is that she hurt me, and I’ve had it. I can’t take any more. I’m done. I’ve tried for years to be her friend. I’ve given and given, and this is the way she repays me? Enough is enough. I’m not going to let myself get hurt like this again. Not by her, anyway. I’ve spent way too much already on what turns out to be a really bad investment. I’m going to cut my losses.

There’s only one problem. I’m miserable. My thoughts spin round and round, and I can’t seem to stop them. I live and relive the incident, playing and replaying every hurtful word she said. I go to sleep thinking about it, and I wake up (with a headache) thinking about it. Ever since it happened, I’ve hardly thought of anyone but myself. I’ve spent two days licking my wounds and feeling sorry for myself. There’s no fresh air. There’s no rest. I’m trapped.

I’m trapped, and the only way out looks as high as the Himalayas. “Love your neighbor.” Everything in me screams “I can’t,” but I know it’s really “I won’t.” I won’t because it’s an outrage. She shouldn’t get away with it. She should get what she deserves. An eye for an eye. She hurt me, and she doesn’t deserve to be let off the hook. No. I won’t love her. I won’t. I’m a middle-aged, foot-stomping two-year-old.

In the middle of the night, I couldn’t sleep, so I started saying the Lord’s Prayer. “Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.” And then I had a thought -- use her name. So I did. “Forgive me my trespasses as I forgive ___ who trespasses against me.” And just how do I forgive her? By demanding an eye for an eye? By rehearsing her every fault? By imprisoning us both? No. Not any more, at least. I give up. I can’t live in this prison anymore. I can’t breathe in here.

I forgive her. I say yes to letting your love pour through me like a flood. She doesn’t deserve it, and neither do I.

But please do one more thing for me, Father. Please take her words and never give them back to me. They are sharp swords, and they are too dangerous for me to keep. Hide them from me, so I can never again enjoy the pleasure of their poison.

“Release, and you will be released. . . .” Luke 6:37