

First Nazareth Baptist Church
P.E.A.C.E Life Management Ministry



"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith." Galatians 5:22

Margaret recently left her church home of 23 years after discovering the *real* reason she was not elected treasurer of the AGAPE ministry. A trusted source informed her that her sister-in-law Trudy had initiated a vicious telephone campaign in which lies were spread about her inability to manage her own money. What hurt her the most was that she and Trudy had been as close as sisters. Margaret recently felt the strain of their relationship eight months ago, when Trudy filed for divorce from her brother, who frequently abused alcohol and recently started gambling again. She knew that Trudy suspected her brother was also being unfaithful but this was not the case as her brother also confided in her about their marriage problems. Trudy was previously divorced because of her first husband's infidelity and was prone to thinking that all men cheat. Although Margaret felt caught in the middle, she always tried to maintain some type of objectivity so she could be a much needed sounding board for both her baby brother and sister-in-law, constantly encouraging them to get individual help and work on their marriage. Margaret misses her church home but she's not sure that she can ever return or forgive them for easily believing those lies. She knows she should forgive Trudy, but she just can't get over the mean-spiritedness of what she did to her!

1. What's the likely impact of unforgiveness in Margaret's life? (What are the ways it can show up in her life?)
2. What relationships can be affected if Margaret doesn't forgive Trudy? Her former church home?
3. How might her bitter and hurt feelings toward her former church home affect her current church experience? How will it affect her spiritually?
4. Who else in this story needs to forgive? Why?
5. How has her inability to forgive affected other relationships?
6. If you were Margaret, what would be most helpful to you in moving towards forgiving Trudy (imagine she has asked for forgiveness)?
7. Now imagine that Trudy won't apologize. What steps would you take to forgive her?