

Fadeaway Ding-Dongs

In an article in *Guideposts*, Corrie ten Boom, an underground activist held prisoner of war in Nazi Germany, told of not being able to forget a wrong that had been done to her. She had forgiven the person, but she kept rehashing the incident, and so she couldn't sleep. Finally, Corrie cried out to God for help in putting the problem to rest. She wrote:

"His help came in the form of a kindly Lutheran pastor to whom I confessed my failure after two sleepless weeks. 'Up in that church tower,' he said, nodding out the window, 'is a bell which is rung by pulling on a rope. But you know what? After the sexton lets go of the rope, the bell keeps on swinging. First ding, then dong. Slower and slower until there's a final dong and it stops. I believe the same thing is true of forgiveness. When we forgive, we take our hand off the rope. But if we've been tugging at our grievances for a long time, we mustn't be surprised if the old angry thoughts keep coming for a while. They're just the ding-dongs of the old bell slowing down.'

"And so it proved to be," Corrie continued. "There were a few more midnight reverberations, a couple of dings when the subject came up in my conversations. But the force -- which was my willingness in the matter -- had gone out of them. They came less and less often and at last stopped altogether. And so I discovered another secret of forgiveness: we can trust God not only above our emotions, but also above our thoughts."

Corrie's lesson should not be lost on us. If we survey the residents we serve in Life Care, American Lifestyles and Life Care at Home, we could probably correctly conclude that those who are the happiest and have joy and contentment in their lives are the ones who have found the therapy of forgiveness and, in time, hear the ding-dongs no more.

Is there someone you should forgive today?

--Beecher Hunter