

## *Forgiveness for Simon*

Mandisa Hundley, a gospel singer, was hit with some stinging comments about her weight by judge Simon Cowell after her successful *American Idol* audition.

“Do we have a bigger stage this year?” he asked. When fellow judge Paula Abdul commented that Mandisa had a “Frenchie” growl to her voice, Cowell responded that a more apt comparison would be to France itself.

When Mandisa came before the judges prior to the final cut-down to the season’s 24 semi-finalists, she addressed Cowell: “What I want to say to you is that, yes, you hurt me and I cried and it was painful, it really was. But I want you to know that I’ve forgiven you and that you don’t need someone to apologize in order to forgive somebody. I figure that if Jesus could die so that all of my wrongs could be forgiven, I can certainly extend that same grace to you.”

Cowell’s reaction? He told Mandisa that he was “humbled” by her remarks and apologized to her immediately.



Mandisa was eliminated from *American Idol* on April 5, 2006, after making the top nine, and her musical career took off.

Her first full-length album *True Beauty* was released on July 31, 2007. It debuted at No. 1 on the *Top Christian Albums* charts, making it the first time a new female artist had debuted at No. 1 in the chart’s 27-year history. It also debuted at No. 43 on the *Billboard 200*, an unusually high debut on that chart for a Christian artist.

Mandisa won a Grammy Award earlier this year (2014) when her album *Overcomer* won the Best Contemporary Christian Music Album.

The power of forgiveness and the cleansing effect it brings are amazing! It is defined by *Wikipedia* as “the intentional and voluntary process by which a victim undergoes a change in feelings and attitude regarding an offense, lets go of negative emotions such as vengefulness, with an increased ability to wish the offender well.”

Studies show that people who forgive are happier and healthier than those who hold resentments. A study conducted by the University of Wisconsin found the more forgiving people were, the less they suffered from a wide range of illnesses. The less forgiving people reported a greater number of health problems.

(more)

In three separate studies, Dr. Fred Lusken of Stanford University and author of the book *Learning to Forgive*, found that people who are taught how to forgive become less angry, feel less hurt, are more optimistic, become more forgiving in a variety of situations, and become more compassionate and self-confident. His studies show a reduction in experience of stress, physical manifestations of stress, and an increase in vitality.

Forgiving, then, has its benefits. Is there someone you need to forgive today?

*Bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another, even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do (Colossians 3:13 NKJV).*

– Beecher Hunter