

Forgiveness

Matthew 18:21–35

Two Things Are Clear

1. Sin is not ignored. Luke 17:3–4
2. If the sinner does repent, we must forgive him, else we cannot receive forgiveness from God ourselves. Matthew 6:14–15

We Are To Forgive As God Has In Christ Forgiven Us. Ephesians 4:32

Sin is a terrible burden for any to carry.

- ▶ The magnitude of sin is seen in the result of sin. Ezekiel 18:20; Isaiah 59:1–2; Romans 6:23
- ▶ Man cannot pay the debt of sin. cf. Matthew 16:26
- ▶ We need the blood of Christ. Romans 3:23–26; Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 1:18–19.
 - Man's need is constant. 1 John 1:8–9

We Are To Forgive As God Has In Christ Forgiven Us. Ephesians 4:32

Is God's forgiveness unconditional?

- ▶ Those outside of Christ who sin, must do something. Acts 2:36–38, 40–41; Acts 9:6; Acts 16:30–34
- ▶ Christians who sin, must do something. 1 John 1:6–10; Acts 8:20–24
- ▶ God is willing to forgive, IF WE ARE WILLING TO MEET HIS CONDITIONS! Luke 23:34; cf. Acts 7:60; cf. Acts 9, 22, 26

What Forgiveness Is Not

- ▶ Just ignoring those who wrong us.
- ▶ Simply failing to return evil for evil. Romans 12:17–21; Hebrews 10:30.
- ▶ Ignoring sin.

What Forgiveness Is Not

- ▶ Saying, "**I'll forgive – but I won't forget.**"
 - This is not the way Jesus forgives; when he forgives sin, he remembers it no more (Hebrews 10:17).
 - We cannot forgive one, and then constantly remind him of the sin and hold it over him.
 - cf. "I'll forgive you, but I won't have anything to do with you in the future" mentality.
- ▶ Putting the offender on probation.
 - Forgiveness must be from the heart. Matthew 18:35

What Is Forgiveness?

“To excuse for a fault or an offense; pardon;
To renounce anger or resentment against. To absolve from payment of (a debt as an example).” (American Heritage Dictionary.)

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What Is Forgiveness?

From two Greek words: **apo(from) hiemi (send)** “to send away, to let go, give up a debt, to remit.” (Theological Greek Dictionary of the New Testament)

- ▶ Bible example is a scapegoat (carrying away). Leviticus 16:21; cf. Isaiah 53:4–6.
- ▶ A “casting out” – Isaiah 38:17.
- ▶ A “starting over” – Philippians 3:13–14.

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What Is Forgiveness?

Forgiveness is ... being like God

- ▶ God removes the notation from the record – Acts 3:19, “*Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out.*”
- ▶ God forgets, putting out of memory – Hebrews 8:12, “*For I will be merciful to their iniquities, And their sins will I remember no more.*”

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What Is Forgiveness?

Example of true forgiveness:

- ▶ The prodigal son – Luke 15:20–24.

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Forgiveness Does Not Remove Temporal Consequences

- ▶ Convicted prodigal does not regain wasted money. **Luke 15:13**
- ▶ Convicted murderer does not escape death penalty. **Acts 25:11**
- ▶ Convicted thief does not escape “*due reward.*” **Luke 23:40–43**
- ▶ Convicted adulterer not free to “*marry another*” or continue adultery. **Matthew 19:9**

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Why Should I Forgive?

- ▶ **God commands it.**
Mark 11:25, “*And whensoever ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any one ...*”
- ▶ **The example of Christ demands it.**
Luke 23:34, “*Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.*”

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Why Should I Forgive?

- **We must forgive because we ourselves have been forgiven.** Ephesians 4:32

Forgiveness is an act of mercy, not justice. Jesus said, *"Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy"* (Matthew 5:7; cf. James 2:13)

- **We must forgive in order that we may be forgiven.** Matthew 6:14–15; Mark 11:25

God's estimate of an unforgiving spirit is found in Matthew 18:23–35. (text)

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Why Should I Forgive?

- **Seeking peace requires it!** Romans 14:19

- **Love demands it.** cf. 1 Corinthians 13:4
"Love covereth a multitude of sins." 1 Peter 4:8

- **The Golden Rule demands it.** Matthew 7:12
Forgiving others shows strength of character. Romans 12:17–21

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Often Asked Questions About Forgiveness:

Can the mind ever forget?

- Paul did not maintain a "hate list."
cf. 1 Corinthians 13:5, *"Love does not take account of evil ..."*

- We did when we were children.
- We do as parents with our children.
- We forget our own faults.
- God says we can do both – Ephesians 4:32.

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Often Asked Questions About Forgiveness:

How often must I forgive?

Matthew 18:21–22; Luke 17:3–4.

- Not a matter of arithmetic – but of love for my brother!
- We must forgive, if need be, seven times in one day or *"seventy times seven."* Not just 490 times, but as often as he repents, I must be willing to forgive.

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Often Asked Questions About Forgiveness:

What if the offender does not ask for my forgiveness?

Jesus on the cross. Luke 23:34

Did this give them forgiveness?

- ❖ **Of course not – conditioned upon their repentance! Acts 2:36–38; 1 John 1:9.**
- ❖ One who does not repent, has no Godly sorrow for his sin. cf. 2 Corinthians 7:10

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Often Asked Questions About Forgiveness:

How should we forgive one another?

- Matthew 18:35, *"from the heart."*
Fully and completely. The same as God in Christ forgives us. Ephesians 4:32

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Often Asked Questions About Forgiveness:

How do we learn and cultivate true forgiveness?

- ▶ Physically to refuse can lead to health and stress problems. Bitterness will destroy you!
 - Contagious. Hebrews 12:15
 - Spiritually, it can cause – malice, wrath, jealousy, and separate us from God.
 - Remember, how greatly God has forgiven us!
- ▶ Ask God to assist and help us. Matthew 6:12
- ▶ Practice by praying for the offender. Matthew 5:44
- ▶ Develop an understanding heart. Proverbs 8:5
- ▶ Cultivate compassion and mercy. Matthew 5:7

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Conclusion

Take it or leave it !

Matthew 6:14–15, *“For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”*

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