

FORGIVENESS

**'FORGIVENESS
IS THE OIL
THAT KEEPS
THE MACHINERY
OF
HUMAN
RELATIONSHIPS
RUNNING.'**



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I. WHAT FORGIVENESS IS NOT:

A. A FEELING

(Luke 17:3-10) We can't command feelings, only actions. Forgiveness is a choice.

1. Forgiveness is to be GRANTED when a sinner repents.
2. Forgiveness is to be GRANTED REPEATEDLY on the same day if a sinner repeatedly professes repentance (vs. 4), something no one would feel like doing. Attitudinal and transactional forgiveness are necessary.*
3. Christ declared that the disciples had the faith necessary to forgive and they did not need to wait to feel STRONGER spiritually but did need to serve.
4. Forgiveness is a matter of OBEDIENCE.

B. FORGETTING

1. There is no COMMAND in the Bible telling us to forget before we forgive.
2. Forgetting is a frequent BYPRODUCT of granting forgiveness biblically, but not always. Forgiving is active, forgetting is often passive. As the relationship changes, the memory fades.
3. References to God 'forgetting' our sins (i.e., Is. 43:25; Jer. 31:34) are really statements of God promising not to 'remember' our sins against us. Remembering is a choice, and as God gives us the example, not remembering is a choice.

C. EXCUSING OF SIN

1. Excusing is a form of minimizing sin, of not taking it SERIOUSLY. Minimizing sin destroys hope because it does not lead to a clear conscience.
2. Excusing is a DISHONEST way of addressing sin; it is calling it something other than what God called it. And it is not being honest about our own feelings so the relationship stays damaged.

II. WHAT FORGIVENESS IS:

A. DEFINITION:

“Forgiveness is a lifting of the charge of GUILT from another, a formal declaration of that fact and a promise (made and kept) never to remember the wrong against that person in the future”.

B. FORGIVENESS IS A DECISION – A PROMISE TO:

1. Acknowledge and accept the hurt as a part of living in relationship in a fallen world
2. Not to DWELL on the incident mentally.
3. Not bring up the incident again and use it AGAINST the other person.
4. Not TALK to others about the incident.
5. Not allow the incident to stand BETWEEN you and the other person or hinder your personal relationship with them.

C. AN ACT OF THE WILL, NOT THE EMOTIONS.

D. FORGIVENESS IS A PROCESS

1. When I fail to keep my promise, I must seek forgiveness for breaking my promise
2. Forgiveness becomes a product when I remember and do not have negative emotions attach to the memory

III. WHY FORGIVE?

A. GOD COMMANDS US TO FORGIVE OTHERS (EPH. 4:32; COL. 3:13).

B. SIN REQUIRES FORGIVENESS IF RECONCILIATION IS TO OCCUR.

Simple apologies or making statements like, “That’s OK,” do not settle sin issues. Don’t talk about apologizing, rather confessing sin and seeking forgiveness. Apologize for mistakes, seek forgiveness for sin. Apologize for the hurt that resulted from the sin but seek forgiveness for the sin.

HOW TO CONFESS: God has convicted me of how wrong I was when I I know I sinned against God but also against you. I have confessed my sin to God and asked His forgiveness. I also want to confess my sin to you and ask your forgiveness. And I want you know that I am very sorry for the pain and hurt you have experienced as a result of my behavior. Would you please forgive me?

IV. WHEN SHOULD WE FORGIVE?

A. EVERY TIME THERE IS REPENTANCE; OVER AND OVER AGAIN!

B. AT ALL TIMES AS AN INWARD WAY OF LIFE

1. If people NEVER ask forgiveness, we don't announce it to them (Matt 18:15ff)
2. However, we must always have a spirit of forgiveness and be ready to offer forgiveness as God does.
3. As Peter, who certainly understood forgiveness having experienced the love of Jesus in John 21 restoring him to fellowship after his denial, teaches us, "Love covers a multitude of sin" (1 Peter 4:8). There are many times when we should recognize the non-intentional offense and choose to have an attitude of forgiveness.

**In the case of physical or sexual abuse and severe emotional abuse, there are other biblical principles that must also be brought into the situation. In such cases I recommend seeing your pastor or another biblically oriented counselor for assistance. In some cases, it may be necessary to engage civil authorities. However, through biblical counseling the above principles we become important to handling the situation appropriately.*



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