

FORGIVENESS IS A BIG DEAL WITH GOD

Understanding God's forgiveness of us is foundational in thinking about our need to forgive others.

It cost God everything to forgive and save us and we must not forget.

- Suffering unbelievable pain as He was beaten, spit upon, wearing a crown of thorns.
- The agony of becoming a sinless man living in an evil, sin-filled world
- Rejection by those He came to save.
- Separation from His Father as He took our sin upon Himself.
- A painful death on a cross

We received more blessings than we can count in addition to eternal life and forgiveness. Here are just a few of many.

- Adopted us into His eternal family and made us to be heirs with Jesus.
- Promised never to forsake us so that we are never really "alone."
- Promised to meet our needs and answer our prayers.
- Gave us the Holy Spirit to indwell us.

Did we deserve forgiveness? Romans 5:8

What God says He has done with our sin. Psa. 103-10-12; Micah 7:19

How He wants us to deal with those we have sinned against and those who have sinned against us. Matt.5:23,24; Eph. 4:32; Matt. 11:25, 26; Matt.6:14, 15' Matt. 6:12

How many times must we forgive – Matt. 18-21, 22

A fact of life – We will _____ others and we will be _____.

Our human sense of _____ often causes us to

_____ or own sin in comparison to _____

_____ sin.

The Blessing of a Clear Conscience

A clear conscience is being able to look every person in the eye and know that not one of them is able to point a finger and say, "you offended me and you never tried to make it right."

A clear conscience is how God intends us to live in our relationships. Paul wrote in Acts 24:16, *“And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men.”*

Where to Begin

First, we must examine our relationships with parents, siblings, mates, friends, co-workers, employers, and present or former dating relationships. Generally, we know we have offended someone by their reaction, their avoidance of us, an angry/sarcastic retort or possibly a third party letting us know. It may have happened in the past and we assume they have forgotten, but most likely, they haven't.

How we excuse ourselves and minimize our sin.

- I want to explain why I made the “mistakes” I did so they will understand that my motives were good, they just took it wrong. (self-justification and blaming them).
- Concluding that I was only partially wrong and that the other person was mostly at fault (projecting blame)
- Feeling I am over-sensitive, or maybe they are, especially since others do things a whole lot worse (self-justification)

Forgiveness is not a _____ but a choice of _____.

Our feelings and emotions say:

- They don't deserve my forgiveness.
- I want to make them see how it feels
- I don't want to let them off the hook. They need to suffer.

Some actions/attitudes that might help identify fences to be mended from our side involve deception, Irresponsibility, willfulness impurity, argumentation, carelessness, disrespect, impatience, disloyalty, tardiness intolerance, impulsiveness, pride, ingratitude, rudeness or anger.

Steps to mend/resolve the relationship breach

1. Make a list (using initials) of those whom God brings to your mind. It will most likely involve the relationships mentioned plus someone you stole from, lied to, deceived, or defrauded. Ask God to prompt you.

2. Your _____ is as broad as your _____.

3. Make a phone call or personal visit, no documentation.

4. The ideal response is _____., but sometimes they can't say that at the moment. If so, say, “I'm sorry you can't forgive me now, but I pray that sometime in the future you will be able to.”

5. Don't be too specific – work out the wording. Say something in broad, general terms, such as “I was insensitive” or “I didn't respect you, show love, wasn't considerate of your situation”, etc.

6. Ask God to bring across your path those who cannot be located or those for whom a visit or phone call might create misunderstanding or confusion. Be prepared for when He does. Pre-think what you will say.

7. Relive your offenses thru their _____ - what must they have felt because of your words, actions, or inactions.

8. Don't project _____. I was wrong but you were also. “if you hadn't done.....”, “sorry about that.”

9. Zacchaeus' repentance involved restitution – interest. We should find some means of genuine repentance.

If there is a breach in the relationship/fellowship, the move is always _____. The other person may be 98% wrong, but we must take responsibility for our 2%. If your inner computer brings up something from the past that has never been settled, take action. Only then will God bless your obedience and refresh your emotional state.

Have you ever been hurt in some of the following areas?

Rejection by parents, belittled, stolen from, parents divorced, lied to, promises broken, been publicly humiliated, abused (physically, emotionally, sexually), slandered/falsely accused, treated unfairly by an employer, violent crime against self or loved one, rebellious/wayward son or daughter, alcoholic parent or mate, abandoned by parent or mate, etc.,

Our _____ is key to our emotional recovery in the hurt we have experienced.

We can choose obedience or live lives of pain, bitterness, and a broken relationship with God and others. Pretending it didn't happen or trying to ignore the offense doesn't lessen the pain.

The choice and the consequences - To forgive or not. If we don't.....

- We become the emotional prisoner of those who have wronged us.
- Our prayers are blocked. Psalm 66:18
- Failing to forgive is sin. Matthew 5:44
- Our fellowship with the Lord is hindered. Matthew 5:24,25
- Bitterness can take over and other people's lives are poisoned by taking up an offense for us. It can take a real toll on our mental, physical, and emotional health if we harbor bitterness and unforgiveness in our lives. Hebrews 12:15

We must remember that:

- Vengeance belongs to God. Romans 12:19
- Forgiveness can be extended in a moment. Complete healing may take time and involve a process.
- When someone asks for forgiveness, there is the implication that never again will that sin be brought up against the offender, either to God or others.
- What God does with our forgiven sin.

Application:

- ⤴ Identify the offender(s)
- ⤴ Ask God for grace to forgive.
- ⤴ Thank God that He will bring a Romans 8:28 result from the hurtful experience.
- ⤴ Ask God to bless them.
- ⤴ Choose to fully forgive and take action.
- ⤴ Refuse to “meditate” on the hurt by re-living the scenario.
- ⤴ Seek godly Christian counseling, if necessary.

Bibliography:

www.discipleshiplibrary.com

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