

## Forgiveness Matthew 18:21-35

### Two Things Are Clear

1. We cannot forgive until the sinner repents. 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. Eph. 4:32

- A. Sin is a terrible burden for any to carry.
1. The magnitude of sin is seen in the result of sin. Ezekiel 18:20; Isaiah 59:1-2; Romans 6:23
  2. Man cannot pay the debt of sin. cf. Matthew 16:26
  3. We need the blood of Christ. Romans 3:23-26; Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 1:18-19.
    - a. Man's need is constant (1 John 1:8); The blood of Christ is always available (1 John 1:9).

### I. WE ARE TO FORGIVE AS GOD HAS IN CHRIST FORGIVEN US. Eph. 4:32

- B. Is God's forgiveness unconditional?
1. Those outside of Christ who sin, must do something. Acts 2:36-38, 40-41; Acts 9:6; Acts 16:30-34
  2. Christians who sin, must do something. 1 John 1:6-10; Acts 8:20-24
  3. God is willing to forgive, **IF WE ARE WILLING TO MEET HIS CONDITIONS!**
    - a. Discuss Luke 23:34; cf. Matthew 23:37
    - b. Discuss Acts 7:60; cf. Acts 9, 22, 26

### II. WHAT FORGIVENESS IS NOT.

1. Just ignoring those who wrong us.
2. Simply refusing to return evil for evil. Romans 12:17-21; Hebrews 10:30.
3. Ignoring sin.
4. Saying, "I'll forgive – but I won't forget".
  - a. This is not the way Jesus forgives; when he forgives sin, he remembers it no more (Hebrews 10:17).
  - b. We cannot forgive one, and then constantly remind him of the sin and hold it over him.
  - c. cf. "I'll forgive you, but I won't have anything to do with you in the future" mentality.
5. Putting the offender on probation.
  - a. Forgiveness must be from the heart. Matthew 18:35

### III. WHAT IS FORGIVENESS?

- A. According to American Heritage Dictionary "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)."

### III. WHAT IS FORGIVENESS?

- B. According to Theological (Greek) Dictionary of NT: From two Greek words: **apo(from)** **hiemi(send)** *“to send away, to let go, give up a debt, to remit”*.
1. Bible example is a scapegoat (*carrying away*). Leviticus 16:21; Isaiah 53:6.
  2. A *“casting out”* – Isaiah 38:17.
  3. A *“starting over”* – Philippians 3:13-14.

### III. WHAT IS FORGIVENESS?

- C. According to God’s word (forgiveness is) being like God...
1. God removes the notation from the record – *Acts 3:19 “Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out.”*
  2. 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.”*

### III. WHAT IS FORGIVENESS?

D. Examples of true forgiveness:

1. The prodigal son’s father – Luke 15:20-24.
2. Stephen forgave – Acts 7:60; chapter 9
3. Paul’s willingness – 2 Timothy 4:16.
4. The sinner in Corinth – 2 Corinthians 2:5-8.

### IV. WHY SHOULD I FORGIVE?

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

### IV. WHY SHOULD I FORGIVE?

- C. **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)

- D. **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.

### IV. WHY SHOULD I FORGIVE?

- E. **Seeking peace requires it!** Romans 14:19
- F. **Love calls for it.** cf. 1 Corinthians 13:4; 1 Peter 4:8
- G. **The Golden Rule demands it.** Matthew 7:12 ; Forgiving others shows strength of character. Romans 12:17-21

## V. OFTEN ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT FORGIVENESS:

- A. Can the mind ever forget? Paul did not maintain a “hate list.” cf. *1 Corinthians 13:5* “*Love does not take account of evil...*”
1. We did when we were children.
  2. We do as parents with our children.
  3. We forget our own faults.
  4. God says we can do both – *Ephesians 4:32*.

## V. OFTEN ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT FORGIVENESS:

- B. How often must I forgive?  
*Matthew 18:21-22; Luke 17:3-4.*
1. Not a matter of arithmetic – but of love for my brother!
    - a. 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.

## V. OFTEN ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT FORGIVENESS:

- C. What if the offender does not ask for my forgiveness?
1. 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.***
  2. *Romans 2:4; 12:17* do not be vindictive.
  3. One who does not repent, has no Godly sorrow for his sin. cf. *2 Corinthians 7:10*

## V. OFTEN ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT FORGIVENESS:

- D. How should we forgive one another?
1. *Matthew 18:35* “*from the heart.*” Fully and completely. The same as God in Christ forgives us (*Ephesians 4:32*).

## V. OFTEN ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT FORGIVENESS:

- E. How do we learn and cultivate true forgiveness?
1. Physically to refuse can lead to health & stress problems.
  2. Spiritually, it can cause – malice, wrath, jealousy and separate us from God.
  3. Remember, how greatly God has forgiven us!
  4. Ask God to assist and help us.
  5. Practice by praying for the offender.
  6. Develop an understanding heart. *Proverbs 8:5.*
  7. Cultivate compassion and mercy – *Matthew 5:7.*

## 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.”*
- Is my soul worth being lost because of the actions of another person???