

A Study on Forgiving Others

Summary: Forgiving others is one of the most important things we do, and one of the most Christ-like things we can do. Everyone needs forgiveness and when someone sins against us we acquire a great opportunity to display the love, grace, and mercy of God. To not take advantage of this opportunity is to allow ourselves to become taken advantage of by satan, to fall victim to his trap and wiles. But let us, who are of the day, forgive others full and free, as God does for us in Christ. For in Christ, our sins have been once-for-all washed in the blood, which also continually cleanses us if we have a lifestyle of walking in the light/in truth, which lifestyle is evident in all true Christians. So then, when others sin against us, may we extend to them, whether in person or not, the same forgiveness we are presently enjoying, that full and free remittance given to us automatically by God in Christ.

I. Definition

- a. Forgive means, *“to pardon; to remit, as an offense or debt; to overlook an offense, and treat the offender as not guilty. The original and proper phrase is to forgive the offense, to send it away, to reject it, that is, no to impute it.”*
 - i. Greek word behind “forgive” means to send away; let go; release; permit to depart. The word has the main idea of releasing or letting go. That is, God has released us from our debt: forgiven us; and we are to do the same with others.

II. Introduction

- a. 2 Corinthians 2:6-11 – *Unforgiveness is a trap and tactic of satan. It is one way he gets advantage over us*
- b. John 20:21-23 – *Forgiveness towards others is very important.*

III. Reflective Questions Before the Study

- a. What if you die without experiencing forgiveness? Or vis versa for someone else?
 - i. What if you never get the chance to forgive in person? What if it’s impossible.
- b. What if that person gets forgiven by God because they go to Him through Jesus, but you are not forgiving them? In conflict with God.
- c. If forgiveness must happen in person, if it must happen only after repentance, then...
 - i. Who decides when a person is truly repentant?
 - ii. What is the stage in between forgiveness and not?
- d. Consider the difference between reconciliation and forgiveness.
 - i. Consider that the way this works between us and God is different than men. God is always willing to reconcile with us through Jesus. Men are not always willing (or safe).

IV. God and forgiveness

- a. Psalms 86:5 – *The Lord is forgiving*
 - i. Forgiving means, *“disposed to forgive; inclined to overlook offenses; mild; merciful; compassionate...”*
- b. Psalms 103:10-12 – *The LORD does not deal with us after our sins*

- c. Ephesians 4:32 – *Forgive others like God forgives us **in Christ***
 - i. 1 John 1:7-9 – *Life style*
 - ii. 1 John 2:12 – *Past tense, **have been forgiven***
 - d. Hebrews 10:17-18 – *God forgives and forgets*
 - e. John 8:11
 - f. Luke 23:34
 - g. Colossians 3:13
 - i. Hebrews 9:15, 22-26; 10:4, 10, 12
 - ii. We have to forgive each other as God forgives us in Christ. Think of that forgiveness and how it works, since we are no longer under the law, nor ever viewed as with fault. But rather, always without fault, without blame, sinless. Is that how I view others? When God corrects me, it is discipline and instruction, guiding me in the way of righteousness. Is that my aim with others? Forgiveness has been done: once for all in Christ, our sins under the OT have been wiped. Deal with others like this too. Forgive, and then any recourse has its aim in righteousness, instruction, etc.
- V. Forgiving others in general
- a. Luke 11:4 – *Notice the assumption: we forgive **everyone** that has done us wrong*
 - i. Forgiveness is like releasing debt
 - ii. Mark 11:25 – *Same concept as above. Notice, while praying*
 - b. Matthew 6:12 – *Forgive us **as** we forgive...How do you forgive?*
 - c. Matthew 18:21-35
 - i. Think about the 490 times, especially as it relates to somebody being genuine or repentant
 - ii. We are the man who owes more
 - iii. People owe us, and it's a lot, but still nothing in comparison to our debt to God
 - iv. We can't pay God; other's can't pay us
- VI. Questions to answer:
- a. **Do they have to repent?**
 - i. Luke 11:4 – *No. Forgive everyone who has done you wrong, regardless*
 - ii. Luke 17:3 – *Forgive when they come to you. However, forgiveness should have really happened in the heart before this. See verses below*
 - 1. C.f., Matthew 9:2
 - 2. C.f., Luke 7:47
 - iii. Matthew 12:32 – *Forgiveness offered and declared*
 - 1. Before sin committed
 - 2. Without repentance
 - 3. Free, full, and everyone
 - 4. (Doesn't mean all will lay hold of it and experience the fruit/blessing of being forgiven – *Forgiveness is something we need to experience, and will not really know that we are forgiven (though we might be) until we ask/go to God/ask that person*)

b. Does it have to be in person?

- i. Mark 11:25 – *No. In prayer is valid*
- ii. Matthew 18:35 – *In your heart*