

FORGIVENESS

A tombstone in New York City has just one word on it: *Forgiven*. That is enough. Forgiveness is the perfume a flower gives off when stepped on. Apo (from) and hemi (to send) are two words combined to give us one word: forgiveness. It means to send from or to send away. It means sin, punishment, and broken fellowship is put away. It means case dismissed; canceled.

The Eskimos in Lauada have no word in their language for forgiveness, so they say, “not being able to think about it anymore”.

There are three great truths to forgiveness:

1. Jesus forgave me
2. I am to forgive others
3. I am to seek forgiveness from others

THE MAGNITUDE OF GOD’S FORGIVENESS

It is a small thing for a creature to forgive a creature. It is a big thing for a creator to forgive a creature.

Isa. 1:18 says: *“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”*

Our righteousness is as filthy rags. If we got what we deserved, we would all be in hell. God wants to forgive us!

Ps. 103:12 says: *“As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.”* God has a big eraser!

Isa. 38:17 says: *“Behold, for peace I had great bitterness: but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back.”*

A man said, “What if God turns around and sees your sin?” A little boy replied, “When God turns around, His back turns with Him.” What God forgets, He forgets forever.

Matt. 18:23-27 says: *“Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.”*

A talent of silver was worth \$2,000. A talent of gold was worth \$30,000. This means that the man was between \$20,000,000 and \$300,000,000 in debt. There was no way humanly possible he could pay the debt. So the master forgave him. The debt there represents one big sin debt. What a great Forgiver we have!

The precious blood of Christ on Calvary paid for our sin debt.

MY FORGIVENESS TO OTHERS

Matt. 18:28-33 says: *“But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee?”*

A pence was worth 17 cents. The man in debt owed his master \$17.00. The master threw him into prison for that. So, the man who had just been forgiven \$20-\$300 million cast his servant into prison for only a \$17.00 debt without forgiving him! It is a picture of us. If God can forgive us of crucifying His Son, can we not forgive someone who does us wrong?

Jesus, our example, in Luke 23:34 said *“...Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.”* The phrase is in the linear which means He kept repeating it. Jesus had a lifestyle of forgiveness.

Someone said, “He, who will not forgive, burns the bridge over which he himself must one day travel.”

To err is human; to forgive divine!

- To return evil for good is devilish
- To return good for good is human
- To return good for evil is Godly

HOW OFTEN TO FORGIVE

Matt. 18:21-22 says: *“Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.”*

Jesus wants us in the habit of forgiving quickly. Eph. 4:26 says: *“Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath.”*

We are not to be easily offended. Ps. 119:165 says: *“Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.”*

Many times immature people imagine offenses unintended. They are constantly getting their feelings hurt.

EXAMPLES

Joseph forgave his brothers who sold him into slavery. Esau forgave Jacob for stealing his birthright. Stephen forgave the men who stoned him. Jesus forgave those who crucified Him.

WHAT ARE WE TO FORGIVE?

Has someone mistreated you? Has someone physically or mentally damaged you? Has someone spoken destructive words to you? You must learn to forgive them. Better to be the hated than the hater. Better to be the criticized than the criticizer. Better to be the cursed than the one who curses.

Once you taste the heavenly manna of forgiveness you will never be satisfied with the garbage and leftovers of vindication, vengeance and retaliation.

We are to forgive trespasses (people who infringe upon us), debts (financially), evil thoughts of the heart toward us, and sins.

HOW?

Eph. 4:32 says: *“And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.”*

1. Do it as a favor to Christ. If Jesus asked you to forgive them for His sake, would you do it?
2. Recognize the offender as God’s agent to work on you. Joseph told his brothers as he forgave them that “God meant it for good”. Rom. 8:28 says: *“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”*
3. Daily. Never go to bed with ill feelings toward anyone. DaVinci was painting the Last Supper and painted Judas’ face to resemble one of DaVinci’s enemies. After doing that, he had trouble painting the face of Christ. Not until he changed Judas’ face could he paint Christ’s face. For-giveness gave him victory.
4. The stronger person has to take the lead. Matt. 5:23-24 says: *“Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.”*
5. Pray for them. Matt. 5:44 says: *“But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;”*
6. Give them a gift. Matt. 6:21 says: *“For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”* It will cause you to love the person.

COMMANDS TO FORGIVERS

Matt. 6:12 says: *“And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.”*

Matt. 6:15 says: *“But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”*

Mark 11:25 says: *“And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.”*

Col. 3:13 says: *“Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.”*

We win by tenderness. We conquer by forgiveness. (Frederick Robertson)

SEEK FORGIVENESS

Peter asked Christ how to forgive those that hurt us. It never crossed his mind to ask how to ask forgiveness when he hurt others.

Matt. 7:3-5 says: *“And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye.”*

We are keen to notice offenses people do to us and blurred to see our offenses to them. What do you do when you say or do something to hurt a person?

1. Humble yourself and go to them.
2. Take full blame for what you did wrong.
3. Ask forgiveness

Wrong: Yesterday on the phone you were mean to me and I lost my temper and said things I should not have said. We were both wrong. So I am sorry if you are

sorry.

Right: I want to apologize for the way I responded on the phone yesterday. I said things unbecoming a Christian. I was wrong. I am sorry and called to ask if you would forgive me.

FORGIVENESS

It is a key to the Christian life. As long as you serve God you will need to seek His daily forgiveness (I John 1:9), seek forgiveness from people, and learn to forgive.

NOTES:

REVIEW FORGIVENESS - STEP 27

1. Forgiveness is the perfume _____

2. Define apo hemi _____

3. The phrase in Eskimo for forgiveness is _____

4. List the three great truths of forgiveness:

5. What verse tells how far away God put our sin? _____
6. Explain how the story in Matt. 18 (talents and debts) applies to the Christian life: _____

7. Jesus had a _____ of forgiveness.
8. He who will not forgive _____

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9. Immature people imagine _____
10. Name two examples of forgiveness in the Bible:

11. List the reason in Eph. 4:32 for forgiving: _____

12. We are to recognize the offender as God's _____
to work on you.
13. Let not the _____ go down _____
14. Who is to take the initiative in making a relationship right?
(Matt. 5:23-24) _____
15. Matt. 5:43 says we are to _____ for those who have hurt us.
16. We are _____ to notice offenses to us and _____ to notice our offenses
to them.
17. Name the three steps in gaining forgiveness:

18. Is there anything you need to ask forgiveness to God about? _____
19. Is there someone you have not forgiven? _____
20. Is there anyone you need to ask forgiveness from? _____