

Forgiveness

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Forgiveness

The word “forgive” is a Grace word, in the English as well as in the Greek (). An early meaning in English was “to give or to grant”. Then, forgive came to mean “to remit a debt; to give up resentment or claim for requital; to pardon an offense.”

All of us are debtors to others, to society as a whole. And we often feel that people owe us many things in our human relationships. We feel we are owed courtesy and consideration. Sometimes we think that we are owed reward or status or promotion in some enterprise, or on the job. We are certainly owed fair treatment, justice, restitution and many other things.

But, many people in America are spiritually, ethically, and morally bankrupt. They simply cannot pay society what they owe! They are thoughtless, selfish, ungracious. What should a Christian do about all of the debts owed to him. Answer: forgive them, as Christ forgave you.

A Christian who practices Grace thinking (divine viewpoint) will become a forgiving person. To forgive means “to give up a claim; to cease bearing resentment”.

The rich man in Luke 7 was able to forgive the two debtors because he was prosperous. He gave to them out of his prosperity. A person can only give to others out of what God has already provided in the way of prosperity. In terms of money, the principle is “Let him that stole, steal no more; rather, let him labor, doing with his hands the thing that is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.”

As a growing Christian, you have many other kinds of prosperity, by the Grace of God. You have intellectual prosperity (divine viewpoint). You have spiritual prosperity (peace with God). You have emotional prosperity (relaxed mental attitude). You have financial prosperity (mastery of details of life). You have social prosperity (stable marriage, stable family life, etc.).

Wherever in your life you find that someone else owes you something, you have the wherewithal to forgive him! God has forgiven all of us who are absolutely without resources of our own. And He is not expecting or demanding some kind of payment in return for His Grace gifts. And we are to be channels of Grace to the world. “Out of your innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.”

The Doctrine of Forgiveness The following study is courtesy of Pastor William E. Wenstrom, Jr., of Wenstrom Bible Ministries in Marion, Iowa. In 1998, he was ordained by Pastor Robert McLaughlin of Grace Bible Church in Somerset, Massachusetts. Pastor Wenstrom has written over seven hundred articles pertaining to various theological subjects, Biblical figures, and Greek word studies. He also has expositions on Genesis, 1 John, Ephesians, Philippians, Romans, Jonah, and 1 Timothy.

Definition and Description There are two categories of forgiveness:

1. Forgiveness of personal sins by God the Father through His Son Jesus Christ at the cross.
2. Forgiveness of others as a function of virtue-love under the royal family honor code.

The believer is both the object and the subject of forgiveness.

The believer should forgive others as God has forgiven him through His Son Jesus Christ.

The forgiveness of sins is appropriated to any individual the moment they make the non meritorious decision to believe in Christ for salvation.

The believer’s sins are forgiven the moment they acknowledge their sins to God the Father.

All sins are forgiven solely on the basis of the Person and Work of Christ on the cross.

The forgiveness of sins is based upon the integrity of God which is composed of His righteousness, justice and love.

The righteousness of God demands that our sins be judged and the justice of God executed that judgment at the cross when the Jesus Christ received the imputation of the sins of the entire world.

Our sins are no longer an issue because the integrity of God has been satisfied by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ's voluntary, substitutionary spiritual death on the cross.

The humanity of Christ in hypostatic union set all precedence for the attitude that the believer is to possess in life which is to always maintain an attitude of forgiveness towards others (Luke 23:24).

Vocabulary Hebrew terms

1. keluhyy, Qal: forgive, pardon (Is. 55:7); niph'al: be forgiven (Lv. 4:20, 26, 31).
2. kaphar, cover, hide; pual: be atoned for (Is. 22:14).
3. nasa, forgive (Ps. 32:1; Is. 33:14).
4. salach, forgive (Nu. 14:19; Lv. 4:20).
5. selichah, forgiveness (Neh. 9:17).
6. shalach, send; piel: let loose (Ex. 22:5).
7. shamat, release, cancel (Dt. 15:2).

Greek terms

1. aphiemi (verb), to disregard, to cancel, to forgive, to pardon.
2. charizomai (verb), to be gracious, to forgive, to release, to pardon.
3. aphasis (noun), release, forgiveness, deliverance, suspension of punishment.

Documentation In Relation to Personal Sins

Exodus 34:7

“One Who provides grace-love for thousands, One Who forgives iniquity and rebellion and never regarding personal sin but never regarding the guilty, guiltless, punishing the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and upon the children's children to the 3rd and 4th generation.”

Numbers 14:18

“The Lord is long of nose (Hebrew idiom meaning “slow to anger”) and great in grace-love, forgiving iniquity and transgressions but not declaring the guilty innocent, punishing the iniquities of the fathers upon the children to the 3rd and 4th generation.”

Nehemiah 9:17

“And they (Exodus generation) refused to obey and did not remember the miracles which You performed among them but they stiffened their neck (scar tissue of the soul) and appointed a leader to return to their slavery in Egypt but You are a God of abundant forgiveness, gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in grace-love and did not forsake them (faithfulness of God).”

Psalms 32:1-2

“How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered!

How blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity, and whose spirit there is no deceit”

Psalms 86:5

“For You O Lord are perfect and forgiving, abounding in virtue-love to all who call upon You.”

Psalms 99:8

“O Lord our God, You did answer them, a forgiving God to them (Israel) and yet an avenger of their evil actions.”

Psalms 103:10

“He (God) has not dealt with us (you and I) according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.”

Psalm 130:4

“But with You there is forgiveness that You may be respected.”

Daniel 9:9

“To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness because we (nation of Israel) have rebelled against Him.”

Romans 8:1

“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”

**Ephesians 1:7

“In Whom (Christ Jesus) we keep on experiencing the redemption through His blood (metaphor for the saving work of Christ on the cross), the release from our failures according to riches of His grace.”

Colossians 1:14

“In Whom (Jesus Christ) we keep on experiencing the redemption through His blood the forgiveness of sins.”

Hebrews 8:12

“For I will be merciful to their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more!”

1 John 2:12

“I write to all of you, young people that all of your sins have been forgiven with the result that they will be forgiven forever for the sake of His Integrity.”

1 John 3:5

“He (the Lord Jesus Christ) appeared in order to take away sins.”

Revelation 1:4-5

“John to the seven churches in Asia (what is today western Turkey):

Grace to you and peace, from Him (the Lord Jesus Christ) who is and who was and who is to come; and from the seven spirits who are before His throne; and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the first-born of the dead (1st to be resurrected), and the ruler of the kings of the earth (Jesus Christ controls human history from His Hypostatic Union). To Him (the Lord Jesus Christ) who loves us, and released us from our sins by His blood (metaphor for Christ’s death on the cross).”

In Relation to Others

Luke 17:3-4

“Be on your guard for yourselves: if your fellow-believer should sin against you (1st class condition: “and he will”) reprove him and if he should repent, forgive him.

Even if seven times in the course of the day he should sin against you, and seven times in the course of the day he should return to you, saying, I repent, you shall forgive him.”

Luke 23:34

“Then Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive all of them, for they know not what they are doing.’”

Ephesians 4:31-32

“Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. And be gracious to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.”

Colossians 3:12-13

“Therefore, put on as the elect of God, separate and beloved, compassionate affections, graciousness, wisdom, humility, patient-endurance; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, if anyone should have a complaint another, even as the Lord Christ forgave all of you, so also you should forgive others.”

In Relation to Restoration of Fellowship through Confession of Sin

Psalm 32:5

“I acknowledged my sin and my iniquity I did not hide. I said will admit my transgressions to the Lord, then You did forgive the guilt of my sin. Selah.”

Matthew 6:14-15

“For if you forgive men their failures (acknowledging your own sin to the Father and forgive others), Your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive men their failures (failure to acknowledge your own sin to the Father and forgive others), neither will the Father forgive you, your failures.”

1 John 1:9

“If we should acknowledge our personal sins, faithful He is and righteous, that He has forgiven us our personal sins with the result He has purified us from all unrighteousness.”

The Believer as the Object

All of humanity are the objects of God’s forgiveness.

Every sin ever committed in human history has been forgiven by God the Father because His justice imputed every sin past, present and future to the impeccable humanity of Christ in hypostatic union and judged Him for all them.

God has forgiven the sins of every person in history because of His Son’s voluntary substitutionary spiritual death on the cross as their Substitute!

The sins of the entire human race are no longer an issue with God.

God does not send any one to the Lake of Fire for all of eternity because of their sins since His Son has already received the judgment for them at the cross.

The unbeliever goes to the Lake of Fire simply for his rejection of Christ as their Savior.

Ephesians 1:7

“In Whom (Christ Jesus) we keep on experiencing the redemption through His blood (metaphor for the saving work of Christ on the cross), the release from our failures according to riches of His grace.”

Colossians 1:14

“In Whom (Jesus Christ) we keep on experiencing the redemption through His blood the forgiveness of sins.”

God does not remember our sins.

Hebrews 8:12

“For I will be merciful to their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more!”

1 John 2:12

“I write to all of you, young people that all of your sins have been forgiven with the result that they will be forgiven forever for the sake of His Integrity.”

God the Father sent His Son to the cross in order die for our sins so that He can forgive us.

He forgives us based upon His integrity and His Son’s spiritual death on the cross.

1 John 3:5, “He (the Lord Jesus Christ) appeared in order to take away sins.”

Revelation 1:4-5

“John to the seven churches in Asia (what is today western Turkey): Grace to you and peace, from Him (the Lord Jesus Christ) who is and who was and who is to come; and from the seven spirits who are before His throne; and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the first-born of the dead (1st to be resurrected), and the ruler of the kings of the earth (Jesus Christ controls human history from His Hypostatic Union). To Him (the Lord Jesus Christ) who loves us, and released us from our sins by His blood (metaphor for Christ’s death on the cross).”

Therefore, believers should never feel guilty for their sins but rather should rebound and recover by applying the doctrine that they already know.

Psalm 32:5

“I acknowledged my sin and my iniquity I did not hide. I said will admit my transgressions to the Lord, then You did forgive the guilt of my sin. Selah.”

1 John 1:9

“If we should acknowledge our personal sins, faithful He is and righteous, that He has forgiven us our personal sins with the result He has purified us from all unrighteousness.”

They should forgive themselves since God has already forgiven them through Christ.

The believer who does not acknowledge his unforgiving attitude towards others will not be forgiven by God meaning that the believer will not be restored to fellowship with Him if he does not acknowledge to the Father his unforgiving attitude toward others.

Matthew 6:14-15

“For if you forgive men their failures (acknowledging your own sin to the Father and forgive others), Your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive men their failures (failure to acknowledge your own sin to the

Father and forgive others), neither will the Father forgive you (restoration to fellowship), your failures.”

The Believer as the Subject

Not only is the believer the object of God’s forgiveness but he has now become the subject of forgiveness since he is to exhibit the same attitude toward others as God has displayed towards him.

Forgiveness of others is an essential function of the Royal Family Honor Code.

It is an essential aspect of virtue-love.

The believer possesses impersonal unconditional love for other members of the human race will be forgiving.

He will possess a forgiving attitude regardless of the extent of injury to him as a person.

The impeccable humanity of Christ in hypostatic union exhibited a forgiving attitude on the cross while enduring the greatest suffering that any member of the human race has ever had to endure in history when He received the imputation of the sins of the entire world as well tremendous verbal and physical abuse from other members of the human race.

He not only taught it to His students but he also put forgiveness into practice at the cross.

Luke 17:3-4

“Be on your guard for yourselves: if your fellow-believer should sin against you (1st class condition: “and he will”) reprove him and if he should repent, forgive him. Even if seven times in the course of the day he should sin against you, and seven times in the course of the day he should return to you, saying, I repent, you shall forgive him.”

Luke 23:34

“Then Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive all of them, for they know not what they are doing.’

His forgiving attitude on the cross while enduring the greatest suffering of any member of the human

race in history set all precedence for the believer here in the Church Age.

The Church Age believer should also possess a forgiving attitude toward other members of the human race, especially members of the royal family of God.

Ephesians 4:31-32

“Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. And be gracious to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.”

Colossians 3:12-13

“Therefore, put on as the elect of God, separate and beloved, compassionate affections, graciousness, wisdom, humility, patient-endurance; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, if anyone should have a complaint another, even as the Lord Christ forgave all of you, so also you should forgive others.”

The Church Age believer has it his disposal all the divine power needed to exhibit this attitude.

The believer who utilizes the 2 power options of the operational type spiritual life will be able to forgive others regardless of the extent that they have been injured or have injured someone that they love!

The believer who can forgive others who have injured them or someone that they love is manifesting the power of God in their lives and are revealing Christ to others with their attitude!

They are in reality revealing the Shekinah Glory of God Who is Christ which is the same Glory that Moses desired to see (Exodus 33:18-19; 34:34:6-7).

The local assembly cannot advance as a spiritual combat unit without each member putting into practice the doctrine of forgiveness.

It is not enough to know the doctrine of forgiveness but it is practicing forgiveness which manifests to others that you are the Lord's student (John 13:34-35).

If the Lord forgave others and He endured more suffering on the cross than any member of the royal family will have to go through, the Church Age believer should manifest the same mental attitude.

Forgiveness is essential in every human relation:

- Local Assembly
- Marriage
- Friendship

A forgiving attitude is a characteristic of a believer in spiritual adulthood.

This attitude matures as the believer advances through the stages of spiritual adulthood.

The believer who consistently (confessing sins when necessary) resides in the dungeon of the cosmic system by functioning according to the arrogance skills will not possess a forgiving attitude is arrogant and will die the sin unto death and eventually be declared a loser at the Bema Seat Evaluation of Christ.

The believer who consistently resides in the royal palace (operational type spiritual life) by functioning according to the spiritual skills is humble and will be declared a winner at the Bema Seat Evaluation of Christ.

The Church Age believer must always keep in mind when involved in any type of relationship whether marriage, the church, friendships or business that if God the Father forgave him through Christ, they should forgive others without exception.