

The Foundation of Forgiveness (Part 3)

How can I learn to forgive others?

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Introduction: God's ways must be taught, learned and practiced.

- A. It all begins with a proper view of God and of ourselves. (Mt 5:3-8)
1. When God is in the center of your life it changes how you view everything.
 2. How do I know my own heart? There will be times where God will allow each of us to be tested.
 3. Hearts are exposed in such tests. God wants us to see us! (Lk 2:34-35)
- B. God makes our willingness and actual practice of forgiveness as an "acid test." (Mt 6:14-15, 18:35)
1. Our willingness to practice it shows that we actually have been deeply moved by our own forgiveness.
 2. The hard hearted, blind "Christian" is one of the most powerful tools of Satan. (Mt 18:29-33)

I. How do I view my hurts and my enemies?

- A. Man is created with a sense of justice and fairness. It is right to want a wrong to be punished. (Deut 16:18-19; 1 Sam 8:3)
1. Children often say "that is not fair!"
 2. This moral sense can only be kept when God is in view. When men become enamored with self then justice only applies to others.
- B. One who serves God understands that life is not "fair."
1. God has plainly told us to get ready for injustice that will never be corrected in this life! (Jn 15:18-21)
 2. Understanding this and responding in grace is a product of a maturing faith.
 3. An immature Christian acts as if the known universe is about to fail because someone has done them wrong!
 4. Even worse many have responded in kind to one who has done them wrong. (Rom 12:20-21)
- C. We are called to respond to injustice just like Christ did! (1 Pt 2:19-23; Lk 23:34)
1. I have seen hurt Christians show great concern for one that hurt them. They are willing to see their own faults and simply want the relationship restored.
 2. I have seen "knowledgeable" Christians express a wrath that wishes harm and exclusion from others. The tongue now expresses great slander towards others.
 3. We should already have practiced letting our hurts draw us closer to God and His blessings! (Ps 23:4-5)

II. How do I handle my desire for vengeance towards others?

- A. Jesus likewise gave His desire for vengeance to the Father. (1 Pt 2:23)
1. The Father delivered both the terms of forgiveness and the certainty of His wrath. (Acts 2:36-38, 41)

2. Many found the forgiveness Jesus prayed for but *the majority did not*.
 3. Many of these will be found at the judgement day *without forgiveness*.
(Acts 4:27; Rev 1:7)
 4. Please remember we are talking about actual offenses (sin) and *not imagined ones* or wounds to our false pride.
- B. We must unconditionally *release our desire to take personal vengeance*.
(Rom 12:17-19)
1. Why is this so hard? It depends upon *the degree of our faith* in our God. He always does what He promises. (2 Thess 1:5-7)
 2. Our confidence in the 2nd coming *impacts how we think and act*.
 3. Selfish people cannot get over the possibility of being cheated. *Was God cheated when he forgave you?*

III. I must forgive all those that repent

- A. Repentance *is always a condition* for both God's forgiveness and personal forgiveness. (Lk 17:3-5)
1. Remember *we are talking about sin!* This one has both sinned against God and against you.
 2. *We cannot be silent*. We must seek to convict another of their sin. Why?
(Jn 8:24)
 3. If you forgive without seeking repentance then you hurt the one you forgive!
 4. Many times *we actually mean* that we let go of personal vengeance. This is the hard part. We can do that and still seek the others repentance.
- B. Humility is a must for one to truly forgive. (Col 3:12-13)
1. A proud person will *pursue the one who injured him* for as long as it takes!
 2. In humility we recognize who we really are. *Let go!*
- C. Self-deception is *very strong* when it comes to forgiveness. (Jas 1:26)
1. We can say we "forgive" while at the same time *harbor bitterness in our hearts*.
 2. Even though we say the right words, it is plain to others that we have a vendetta.
 3. When we forgive *we let the matter go!*
- D. Things which men *substitute* for forgiveness.
1. *To ignore both the wrong done and the person who did it*.
 - a. If we can by love cover a fault then all is well. (1 Pt 4:8)
 - b. But if we bury a hurt and then snub and avoid another, we are in trouble.
 2. *To go by the "eye for an eye" approach. After I get even then all is well!*
 3. *To put the person on probation*.
 - a. I will forgive you but if you do this again....be extra good or else!
 - b. We may think we have forgiven but in truth we have not! What is forgiveness? (Heb 8:12)
- E. We *must learn to be a forgiving people!* (Heb 12:15)

Conclusion: Our own personal forgiveness will give us a heart of love and forgiveness.
(Lk 7:42-43, 47)