

Total Forgiveness 1 (Matt 6:12-15; 18:21-35)



A. What is 'Forgiveness'?

1. **What is the main cause of sicknesses today?** It is 'psychosomatic.' Let's spring-clean at the beginning of the year.
2. **Release from the torment of 'bitterness'.** 'Forgiveness' is the foundation for all deliverance and the only pathway to spiritual growth! (Matt 18:34-35) Forgive from the heart!
3. In the Lord's Prayer, there is a **direct link between** '*forgive us our debts (Gk. 'as also') we forgive our debtors' and 'lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil'* (Matt 6:12-15). Jesus emphasises this point again in v14-15.

The Lord taught us to **pray daily** to walk in this Godkind of forgiveness. '*And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven any also forgive your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.*' (Mark 11:25)
This is how we keep open heaven.

4. **Forgiveness is NOT:**

- Justifying the evil or minimizing what happened as 'not punishable'.
 - Denying what happened or denying our anger. 'Repression' is like pushing a soccer ball underwater. It leads to exploding on someone else or finding someone else to blame.
 - Pretending we are not hurt or being too proud to admit it.
 - Full reconciliation or restoring the relationship of 'trust'. It takes two to reconcile. Forgiveness is one's inner condition. Forgiveness is given, but trust is earned.
5. **What if we refuse to forgive?** We will be 'imprisoned in bitterness' and walk under closed heaven and in darkness outside of true fellowship with God (1 John 2:9, 11; C.f. Matt 6:14-15). It is like drinking poison and hoping the other person will die. We must forgive for the sake of our own well-being in every way – spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical.

B. Process of Forgiveness

1. We must **acknowledge our hurt and pain before God**. This is the first step.
2. We need to **ask Jesus to help us to forgive. We supply the will and Jesus supplies the power.**
What/whom do we need to forgive? (a) other people's sins and stop blaming them; (b) my sins and myself.
3. **It starts in the will, not in the feeling.** Just as love is a choice, forgiveness is a choice. We obey Jesus' words. When you want to forgive the least is when you need to forgive the most. We grow spiritually when we forgive. Under no circumstances are Christians allowed to say, 'I refuse to forgive.' God calls that wickedness.
4. **Refuse to take revenge** in any shape or form, either overtly or covertly. '*Vengeance is Mine, I will repay' says the Lord.*' (Rom 12:19) We have relinquished all 'rights' to take vengeance into our own hands when we accepted God's total and unconditional forgiveness. It is God's exclusive right to vindicate us in His time and in His way.
5. **Refuse to engage in the mental fantasy** of torturing the perpetrator. This is NOT 'denial' or 'repression', but an active choice to tear up the record of the wrong. (c.f. Micah 7:19) Our willingness to forgive doesn't depend on the perpetrators feeling sorry for hurting us. Most probably those who inflicted the wound, are unaware of what they did, or they may refuse to acknowledge their guilt, or they may be dead so they cannot acknowledge it.

Forgiveness is about the condition of my heart that I know I am truly free, and I have pleased the Lord by obeying Him in letting go of the offense. Do we have a problem forgiving? We have a problem remembering

how much we have been forgiven (Selwyn Hughes). '10,000 talents' (unfathomable) vs 100 denarii (100 days of wage, fathomable). What made the king angry? It was the man's refusal to let go of the offense. The one doing the forgiving is crucifying his flesh. It leads to deep spiritual growth.

6. Take one step further and **actively and verbally bless the perpetrator in the name of the Lord**. 'Forbearance' is the opposite of being unduly rigorous in applying the standard of justice to others to damage the other person. It is demonstrated by what you don't say although if you choose to do so, it would be true. What if the degree of God's blessing and anointing flowing into my life is in proportion to my willingness to forgive and bless others?

Important Rule #1: 'Peace is better than punishment.'

Important Rule #2: 'Never tell a person you have forgiven them unless they are sincerely asking for it.'

7. **Walking in forgiveness is a lifelong commitment. It is a process, not one event.** 'I thought you forgave me.' 'That was yesterday.' When Jacob died, Joseph's brothers panicked. They thought Joseph would finally take his revenge (Gen 50:15-21). But what Joseph did seventeen years ago still held. 'I forgave you then, and I forgive you now.'

As Christians, we want to be in position 6 & 7. Again, forgiveness doesn't mean you must become best friends the next day or giving them the power to hurt you again. It is about being free of resentment from within your heart and setting them free into God's hands.