FORGIVENESS/RECONCILIATION

Course Description
This lesson focuses on the subjects of forgiveness and reconciliation as necessary for repairing broken relationships. You will learn the biblical principles and procedures involved in forgiving someone for the sins he has committed against you.

Course Objectives
1. Understand God’s forgiveness of ourselves as an example of how we are to forgive others biblically.
2. Understand the necessary components and steps of biblical reconciliation.
3. List some common misconceptions about biblical forgiveness
4. Put into practice biblical forgiveness

Course Materials
Required reading for this class:
1. The Holy Bible

Recommended reading
1. Peacemaker, Ken Sande

Course Key Verses
- Matthew 5:23-24

Homework
1. Create a Bible Study on forgiveness. The end result should be something that you would give to a counselee struggling with forgiveness.
2. Memorize Matthew 5:23-24. Inform the instructor when this is completed. (on your honor)
Opening Prayer and Scripture Memory

Before you begin this lesson, ask for God’s help in understanding His Word and for wisdom and strength to apply what you learn in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Begin memorizing Matthew 5:23-24. Be prepared to recite them at the end of the lesson.

Introduction

Because of interpersonal problems, many believers have poor testimonies, many families are in conflict, and many local churches are ineffective. Some churches are completely divided. While the body of Christ should be a testimony of love and unity, believers, in leadership, refuse to forgive and be reconciled with each other. This is in direct violation of Jesus’ statement that the way the world can recognize His disciples is by their love for one another.

This lesson focuses on the subjects of forgiveness and reconciliation as necessary for repairing broken relationships. You will learn the biblical principles and procedures involved in forgiving someone for the sins he has committed against you.

We will also distinguish between forgiving another and releasing the one forgiven from the consequences of their unbiblical conduct. This will include: 1) forgiving in your heart before being asked and 2) granting forgiveness when asked.

Also you will learn biblical principles and procedures for asking someone to forgive you when you are the offender.

Understanding God’s Forgiveness

God’s forgiveness is an outpouring of abundant grace and mercy that provides pardon to the guilty. Although God’s forgiveness does not necessarily release the offender from the physical or material consequences of his sin, it provides full release from the guilt of the wrongdoing. For you to practice biblical forgiveness, you must understand and accept God’s gracious forgiveness of you and must follow His example in providing forgiveness to others. (based on 2 Samuel 12:13-14; Psalm 103:10-14; Luke 23:39-43; Romans 5:8; 8:1; Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:12-14, 25)
A. The nature of God is to forgive sins (Nehemiah 9:16-17; Psalm 86:5; Isaiah 43:22-25)

1. Every type of wrongdoing can be forgiven by God (Exodus 34:6-7; Psalm 103:3, 10-12)
   a. He forgives iniquity (a lack of integrity, honesty or justice)
   b. He forgives transgression (crossing over the boundary from right to wrong)
   c. He forgives sin (missing the mark of God's perfection; self-centered lawlessness)

2. He was ready to forgive you while you were still His enemy (Romans 5:10) and before you were ready to ask for or receive forgiveness (Psalm 86:5; Romans 5:8)

3. He forgives you out of His mercy and grace and not because you merit His forgiveness (Romans 5:6-8; Eph. 2:4-7; Colossians 2:13-14)

B. When God forgives you, He forgives completely (Psalm 103:10-12; Jeremiah 50:20; Romans 5:16-21; 8:1, 33-34; 1 John 1:9)

The completeness of His forgiveness is revealed by the following statements:

1. When God forgives you, you are changed.

   At your spiritual birth, God establishes a new relationship with you as your Father and removes the judgment of condemnation from you.

   As your Father, He cleanses you from all unrighteousness as you confess your sins to Him (1 John 1:9)

2. When God forgives you, He no longer deals with you according to your sin (Psalm 103:10). Instead He covers your sin (Psalm 32:1) and blots it out (Psalm 51:9; Isaiah 43:25, 44:22)

3. When God forgives you, He no longer will charge the guilt of your sin to your account (Psalm 32:2; Romans 3:24-25, 4:8, 8:1; 2 Corinthians 5:19)
4. When God forgives you, He removes your sin from you and from His presence (Psalm 103:12; Isaiah 38:17; Micah 7:19) and promises not to remember it against you any longer (Hebrews 10:14-18)

“Not to remember” is an accounting term which means “not to charge against” in the sense of counting a debit, or placing a mark against you. It does not mean “to forget” or “wipe from memory”

For instance, God forgave David’s sin with Bathsheba, but He did not wipe it from His memory, since He recorded it in Scripture. God did not record David’s sin in order to charge it against him or to accuse him, but to instruct us (see 1 Corinthians 10:1-11)

If God were to remove our sins from His memory the Holy Spirit could not remind us of our past sins in order to change from a habitual pattern of sin to a consistent pattern of righteousness. It is a loving and gracious work of God to remind us of our past sins so that we can learn not to repeat the same sins over and over again.

This is a very important truth. Have you ever heard someone say, “When God forgives, He forgets?” This can be a great stumbling block to someone who can’t forget, but is aware that the Bible commands us in Ephesians 4:32 to “forgive each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.” The truth is that we cannot will ourselves to wipe an event from our memory and God does not require that we do so. However, we can cease from remembering (or holding) something against someone; and this is what God does with us.

Just because we remember that the event occurred does not mean that we haven’t forgiven him. For many offenses, it would be very difficult to forget completely that they occurred.

However, it is possible, and expected by God, that we not hold the offense against the offender. Forgiveness is possible even for the gravest offenses, through the power of the Holy Spirit. Continuing to focus (in an accusing way) on what a person did is a good sign that we are still holding it against him. In addition, there is a difference between forgiving someone and having to deal with the consequences of his sin, as we will see in this lesson.

C. God’s forgiveness cost you nothing (Ephesians 2:8-9) but it was very costly to God (Isa. 53:4-12; John 3:16; Acts 20:28; Romans 5:8)
D. God never withholds forgiveness when sins are confessed in a sincere, biblical manner (1 John 1:9)
Responding to God’s Forgiveness

A. You are to forgive others just as God in Christ has forgiven you (Eph. 4:32; Colossians 3:13) You are to:

1. **Willingly** grant forgiveness whenever another confesses sin to you.
2. Forgive any type of sin, no matter how severe or devastating it might seem to be;
3. Forgive on the basis of grace, not on the merit of the person to be forgiven.
4. Expect a renewed relationship with the one who is forgiven;
5. Recognize that it may be costly to you when you grant forgiveness, and
6. Forgive completely and do not remind the forgiven person of his sin in an accusing manner, even though it may not be appropriate to release the offender from all the consequences of his sin.

The only reason to remind anyone of his sins is for restoration or teaching purposes, and even then it must be done in a spirit of gentleness.

As mentioned earlier, it is important to distinguish between forgiveness and the release of consequences. Forgiveness is an act of mercy that reestablishes fellowship with the offender. In other words, there is no longer an estrangement between the offender and the one offended.

On the other hand, consequences should be an encouragement to the offender to change. For example, you may have forgiven a child for breaking a window. But he may be required to replace the window partly or fully with his own money. This will remind him of the importance of not repeating the offense.

B. Forgive others in your heart (mind) even before they ask to be forgiven (Mark 11:25)

You are to forgive in your heart even before the offender asks for forgiveness. You’re telling him that you forgive him, when he has not requested forgiveness, can be construed as your accusing him of sin when he may not yet recognize the conviction of the Holy Spirit.

Telling him prematurely could actually be a stumbling block to him. Telling him is not necessary for you to carry out your responsibility to forgive. There may be an appropriate time
to go to him as loving brother or sister in Christ if he continues in sin, but don’t presume that you need to go to that person to tell of your forgiveness of him.

You must forgive him in your heart. Also keep in mind that the penalty for sin is removed at salvation, but sin (such as lack of forgiveness) by a child of God hinders fellowship with the Father.

Important Principles of Forgiveness

A. Forgiveness is an act of obedience to the Lord (Luke 17:3-10; Eph. 4:32; Colossians 3:13) and must be granted from the heart (Matthew 18:35)

B. Forgiveness gives the offender what he needs rather than what he deserves (Psalm 103:10; Luke 23:39-43; Romans 5:8)

C. Forgiveness is the love of Jesus Christ in action and is a promise to:
   1. Not to keep a record of wrongs suffered (1 Corinthians 13:5);
   2. Not gossip about a person’s sins to others (Ephesians 4:29)
   3. Not dwell on the offense yourself (Philippians 4:8) and
   4. Restore fellowship with the forgiven person or the offender, as far as is biblically possible (Romans 12:18; 2 Corinthians 2:6-8)

D. Forgiveness should include comforting those who have sinned and have repented, as well as reaffirming your love to them (2 Corinthians 2:6-8)

E. Forgiveness is to be granted when requested without limitation (Matthew 18:21-22; Luke 17:3-4)

F. When you forgive another who has sinned against you, you are not to demand restitution; but instead, you are to demonstrate mercy and love toward him with a goal of reconciling with him (based on Matthew 18:21-35, esp. verses 32-33; Luke 6:27-38; 1 Cor. 6:5-7; 2 Cor. 2:5-7)

   Note: It is important to remember that even though you are not to demand restitution; restitution is part of the reconciliation process for the one who has sinned. This should be lovingly brought to his attention.

G. Especially when you pray, if you have something against someone, you must forgive him from your heart (Matthew 18:35; Mark 11:25)
Refusing to Forgive

A. Because you are **commanded** to forgive others (Ephesians 4:32), you sin when you refuse to forgive (James 4:17)

B. You show your base **ingratitude** for God’s merciful forgiveness toward you when you do not forgive others (Matthew 18:21-35)

C. God as your Father **withholds** His forgiveness of your everyday transgressions when you do not forgive others (Matthew 6:14-15; Mark 11:25-26)

Questions and Answers about Biblical Forgiveness

While God’s plan of forgiveness is stated clearly in Scripture, man’s humanistic wisdom has introduced confusion. To protect you from accepting and believing erroneous teaching about forgiveness, follow this simple truth:

If a particular viewpoint is not supported by Scripture, it is not from God and must be discarded – see Proverbs 21:30; Isaiah 55:8-9; Jeremiah 10:23; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 4:12; 2 Peter 1:3-4

1. **It is possible or necessary for you to forgive yourself?**

Man’s wisdom often teaches that “forgiving self” is a prerequisite for experiencing peace and joy. Forgiving self is usually heard in statements such as “I just can’t forgive myself for what I have done”, or “You must learn to forgive yourself to get rid of your guilt”. Even a believer might erroneously say, ‘Now that God has forgiven me, I need to forgive myself.”

Any teaching that emphasizes a need “to forgive yourself” is trusting and exalting “self” instead of relying solely on God’s promises and provision for total and complete forgiveness. If you believe that it is necessary to “forgive yourself” in addition to receiving God’s forgiveness for your sins, you indicate that God’s plan of forgiveness for salvation, and His plan of forgiveness for your continued daily cleansing are not adequate. Remember the following:

Receiving God’s forgiveness is not a matter of “feeling forgiven”; rather, it is a matter of trusting God (Hebrews 11:6) and His promises (such as Romans 5:1-2; Colossians 1:21-23; 1 John 1:1-9)

Since God says there is no condemnation (no guilt, complete forgiveness) for you in Christ Jesus, then it is true, regardless of your feelings (Romans 8:1)
When God says that He forgives you and cleanses you from all unrighteousness, there is absolutely nothing you can or need to do to complete His work.

The “need” to “forgive yourself” presupposes that you have a sense of guilt concerning past sin(s). Since guilt is the result of sin, you are to repent and confess your sin(s) to the Lord (1 John 1:9) and confess to others at the appropriate time (based on Proverbs 15:23, 25:11; James 5:16). Subsequent steps of repentance should include cooperation with God in renewing your mind.

Instead of thinking you need to “forgive yourself” in addition to receiving God’s forgiveness, you should forget what lies behind, reach forward to what lies ahead, and press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus (Philippians 3:13-14)

Conclusion: “Forgiving self” has no biblical support. Scripture has only two perspectives on forgiveness:

You can and need to be forgiven by God (Col. 1:13-14; 1 John 1:9)

You are to wholeheartedly forgive others, following the example of God’s forgiveness to you (Matt. 18:32-33; Eph. 4:32; Colossians 3:13)

2. **Will all the consequences of your sins be removed when you receive forgiveness?**

When you receive God’s forgiveness for salvation, you pass from death to life (John 5:24), thus having the ultimate judgment and consequence of your sin removed (Romans 6:23). In your daily life as a child of God, you do not need to be judged by the Lord (and subsequently disciplined) when you judge yourself rightly and deal with sin immediately (based on 1 Corinthians 11:31-32)

However, receiving God’s forgiveness does not guarantee that all the consequences of your wrongdoing will be removed (Colossians 3:25) For example:

Even though the Lord forgave David for his adultery with Bathsheba (2 Samuel 12:13), the child that was born out of this adulterous relationship died (2 Samuel 12:14-23)

The repentant thief on the cross responded in faith to Jesus Christ but still died for the crimes he had committed (Luke 23:39-43)

You can receive God’s forgiveness for sins committed against another (1 John 1:9), but you still are responsible to reconcile with the person against whom you have sinned (Matthew 5:23-24)
3. What is the relationship between your granting forgiveness to others and God’s granting forgiveness to you?

Before your spiritual new birth, your primary need was to be forgiven by God, which is a sovereign work of grace and is not dependent on anything that you can do. (Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5)

Prior to your spiritual new birth, it was impossible for you to forgive sincerely because apart from Christ:

- You could not understand the things of God (1 Cor. 2:14)
- You were powerless to obey Him (Romans 8:7); and
- You could not conform to something you knew nothing about and had not experienced yourself (Eph. 4:32)

Since your spiritual new birth, your eternal inheritance in Christ is protected by God (1 Peter 1:3-5). Your heavenly inheritance depends only on God’s purpose, mercy, and grace; and you are sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise (Ephesians 1:3-14; 2 Timothy 1:9)

Now, a consistent refusal to forgive others biblically reveals a spirit of vindictiveness and indicates that a spiritual new birth has not occurred (1 John 2:3-4; 3:6, 9-10).

However, a true child of God might sin by placing his focus on himself and fail to grant forgiveness to another person in a particular situation. If you as a child of God sin by failing to forgive another, God the Father’s forgiveness of your current sins will be withheld (Matthew 6:14-15; Mark 11:25-26) and God will discipline you in a corrective, appropriate, and loving manner (1 Corinthians 11:32; Hebrews 12:5-11)

But what about 1 John 1:9 which says I receive forgiveness and cleansing from God when I confess my sins? Remember the true meaning of confession; to confess rightly before the Lord means that you “agree with God about your sin with a corresponding commitment to forsake that sin.”

You are spiritually deluded (James 1:22) if you “confess” some of your sins and expect God’s forgiveness and cleansing from all unrighteousness, yet choose to continue in sin by failing to forgive others (Mark 11:25)

You receive answers to your prayers (including those of “confession” of sins) when you are obedient to God’s Word (1 John 3:22) and ask according to God’s will (1 John 5:14-15).

If you will not forgive another, you are not obedient to God’s Word and will not be asking in accordance with His will. By withholding forgiveness from another, you choose to continue...
sinning (James 4:17). As a result, you will not receive cleansing from the Lord for this transgression.

In addition, many times the memory of the hurt you received will often continue to drain your spiritual vitality. You are to forgive that person and be free from that bondage.

4. **Does God require you to “forgive and forget?”**

Scripture says that God’s forgiveness involves remembering sins against you no more (Isaiah 43:25; Jeremiah 31:34; Hebrews 10:17). This means that He will not hold your sins against you since He has cleansed you with the precious blood of Jesus Christ (Romans 3:23-25; Ephesians 1:7; Hebrews 10:19-22; 1 John 1:7)

The Almighty God and final Judge will bring every act and every careless word to judgment whether good or evil. Therefore since God’s character and His Word give assurance that He does forgive completely, forgetting is not required in order to forgive.

Your responsibility is to forgive another as God has forgiven you (Eph. 4:32) which involves not holding another’s sin against him (i.e. Not remembering) Then you are to commit the fault and the person to the Lord since He is the final and righteous Judge (Matthew 16:27; 2 Timothy 4:8; James 5:9)

Scripture uses the term “not to remember” as meaning “not to mention or bring to mind” or “not to keep an account”. For example, David requested of the Lord “not to remember” (literally, ‘not to mention’) the previous sins of his youth (Psalm 25:7)

Scripture uses “forget” in the sense of “escaping notice” For example, the Apostle Paul could remember (bring it to mind) his earlier sins (1 Tim 1:12-15) yet confidently proclaimed “to forget” (not to take notice) of those things that were behind in order to press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus (Philippians 3:13-14)

Nowhere does Scripture require you to have a blank memory about your own sins or sins committed against you. In fact, the memory of certain sins (even though these sins have been forgiven by God) is important for your training in righteousness, to help you not to repeat them.

For example, notice David’s remembrance of his sins in 2 Samuel 12:13-23 and Psalm 38.

The only requirement is for you to forgive others as God in Christ has forgiven you even when you clearly remember sins committed against you, which now have no power over you.
5. **What about not feeling like forgiving another or not feeling like you have been forgiven?**

Even if you do not “feel like” forgiving another, you can and must obey Scripture and forgive others as God has forgiven you. Biblical forgiveness is costly and often difficult, but it is possible.

It is not necessary for you to think your forgiveness of another is “fair” or equitable. Forgiving others is not to be based on your “feelings” or perceived equity but instead is based on God’s merciful forgiveness of you.

As a child of God, even if you do not ‘feel forgiven’ after sincerely confessing your sin(s), God’s Word promises that you are completely forgiven and cleansed by God, who is completely faithful and just. God’s promise of forgiveness seals the fact of your forgiveness, regardless of your feelings.

As a child of God, your sins which have been forgiven by God do not hinder your present standing before the Lord (Romans 8:31-34; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; Eph. 2:1-7)

In spite of how you “feel” about your forgiven sins, you are to press forward to your high calling in Christ Jesus and forget (don’t take notice of, disregard) what is in your past (Philippians 3:12-14)
Student Handout

Opening Prayer and Scripture Memory

Before you begin this lesson, ask for God’s help in understanding His Word and for wisdom and strength to apply what you learn in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Begin memorizing Matthew 5:23-24. Be prepared to recite them at the end of the lesson.

Introduction

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Also you will learn biblical principles and procedures for asking someone to forgive you when you are the offender.

Understanding God’s Forgiveness

God’s forgiveness is an outpouring of abundant grace and mercy that provides pardon to the guilty. Although God’s forgiveness does not necessarily release the offender from the physical or material consequences of his sin, it provides full release from the guilt of the wrongdoing. For you to practice biblical forgiveness, you must understand and accept God’s gracious forgiveness of you and must follow His example in providing forgiveness to others. (based on 2 Samuel 12:13-14; Psalm 103:10-14; Luke 23:39-43; Romans 5:8; 8:1; Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:12-14, 25)
A. The nature of God is to forgive sins (Nehemiah 9:16-17; Psalm 86:5; Isaiah 43:22-25)

1. Every type of wrongdoing can be forgiven by God (Exodus 34:6-7; Psalm 103:3, 10-12)
   
   d. He forgives iniquity (a lack of integrity, honesty or justice)
   
   e. He forgives transgression (crossing over the boundary from right to wrong)
   
   f. He forgives sin (missing the mark of God's perfection; self-centered lawlessness)

2. He was ready to forgive you while you were still His enemy (Romans 5:10) and before you were ready to ask for or receive forgiveness (Psalm 86:5; Romans 5:8)

3. He forgives you out of His mercy and grace and not because you merit His forgiveness (Romans 5:6-8; Eph. 2:4-7; Colossians 2:13-14)

B. When God forgives you, He forgives completely (Psalm 103:10-12; Jeremiah 50:20; Romans 5:16-21; 8:1, 33-34; 1 John 1:9)

The completeness of His forgiveness is revealed by the following statements:

1. When God forgives you, you are changed.

   At your spiritual birth, God establishes a new relationship with you as your Father and removes the judgment of condemnation from you.

   As your Father, He cleanses you from all unrighteousness as you confess your sins to Him (1 John 1:9)

2. When God forgives you, He no longer deals with you according to your sin (Psalm 103:10). Instead He covers your sin (Psalm 32:1) and blots it out (Psalm 51:9; Isaiah 43:25, 44:22)
3. When God forgives you, He no longer will charge the guilt of your sin to your account (Psalm 32:2; Romans 3:24-25, 4:8, 8:1; 2 Corinthians 5:19)

4. When God forgives you, He removes your sin from you and from His presence (Psalm 103:12; Isaiah 38:17; Micah 7:19) and promises not to remember it against you any longer (Hebrews 10:14-18)

“Not to remember” is an accounting term which means “not to charge against” in the sense of counting a debit, or placing a mark against you. It does not mean “to forget” or “wipe from memory”

For instance, God forgave David’s sin with Bathsheba, but He did not wipe it from His memory, since He recorded it in Scripture. God did not record David’s sin in order to charge it against him or to accuse him, but to instruct us (see 1 Corinthians 10:1-11)

If God were to remove our sins from His memory the Holy Spirit could not remind us of our past sins in order to convict us of a need to change from a habitual pattern of sin to a consistent pattern of righteousness. It is a loving and gracious work of God to remind us of our past sins so that we can learn not to repeat the same sins over and over again.

This is a very important truth. Have you ever heard someone say, “When God forgives, He forgets?” This can be a great stumbling block to someone who can’t forget, but is aware that the Bible commands us in Ephesians 4:32 to “forgive each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.” The truth is that we cannot will ourselves to wipe an even from our memory and God does not require that we do so. However, we can cease from remembering (or holding) something against someone; and this is what God does with us.

Just because we remember that the event occurred does not mean that we haven’t forgiven him. For many offenses, it would be very difficult to forget completely that they occurred.

However, it is possible, and expected by God, that we not hold the offense against the offender. Forgiveness is possible even for the gravest offenses, through the power of the Holy Spirit. Continuing to focus (in an accusing way) on what a person did is a good sign that we are still holding it against him. In addition, there is a difference between forgiving someone and having to deal with the consequences of his sin, as we will see in this lesson.
C. God’s forgiveness cost you **nothing** (Ephesians 2:8-9) but it was very costly to God (Isa. 53:4-12; John 3:16; Acts 20:28; Romans 5:8)

D. God never **withholds** forgiveness when sins are confessed in a sincere, biblical manner (1 John 1:9)

Responding to God’s Forgiveness

A. You are to forgive others **just as God in Christ** has forgiven you (Eph. 4:32; Colossians 3:13) You are to:

1. **Willingly** grant forgiveness whenever another confesses sin to you.
2. **For any type of sin**, no matter how severe or devastating it might seem to be;
3. Forgive on the basis of **grace**, not on the **merit** of the person to be forgiven.
4. Expect a renewed **relationship** with the one who is forgiven;
5. Recognize that it may be **costly** to you when you grant forgiveness, and
6. Forgive **completely** and do not remind the forgiven person of his sin in an accusing manner, even though it may not be appropriate to release the offender from all the consequences of his sin.

The only reason to remind anyone of his sins is for restoration or teaching purposes, and even then it must be done in a spirit of gentleness.

As mentioned earlier, it is important to distinguish between forgiveness and the release of consequences. Forgiveness is an act of mercy that reestablishes fellowship with the offender. In other words, there is no longer an estrangement between the offender and the one offended.

On the other hand, consequences should be an encouragement to the offender to change. For example, you may have forgiven a child for breaking a window. But he may be required to replace the window partly or fully with his own money. This will remind him of the importance of not repeating the offense.
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You are to forgive in your heart even before the offender asks for forgiveness. Your telling him that you forgive him, when he has not requested forgiveness, can be construed as your accusing him of sin when he may not yet recognize the conviction of the Holy Spirit.

Telling him prematurely could actually be a stumbling block to him. Telling him is not necessary for you to carry out your responsibility to forgive. There may be an appropriate time to go to him as loving brother or sister in Christ if he continues in sin, but don't presume that you need to go to that person to tell of your forgiveness of him.

You must forgive him in your heart. Also keep in mind that the penalty for sin is removed at salvation, but sin (such as lack of forgiveness) by a child of God hinders fellowship with the Father.

### Important Principles of Forgiveness

A. Forgiveness is an **act of obedience** to the Lord (Luke 17:3-10; Eph. 4:32; Colossians 3:13) and **must** be granted from the heart (Matthew 18:35)

B. Forgiveness gives the offender **what he needs** rather than what he **deserves** (Psalm 103:10; Luke 23:39-43; Romans 5:8)

C. Forgiveness is the **love** of Jesus Christ in action and is a promise to:

5. Not to keep a **record** of wrongs suffered (1 Corinthians 13:5);

6. Not **gossip** about a person’s sins to others (Ephesians 4:29)

7. Not **dwell** on the offense yourself (Philippians 4:8) and **Restore** fellowship with the forgiven person or the offender, as far as is biblically possible (Romans 12:18; 2 Corinthians 2:6-8)

D. Forgiveness should include **comforting** those who have sinned and have repented, as well as reaffirming your love to them (2 Corinthians 2:6-8)

E. Forgiveness is to be granted when **requested** without limitation (Matthew 18:21-22; Luke 17:3-4)
F. When you forgive another who has sinned against you, you are not to demand restitution; but instead, you are to demonstrate mercy and love toward him with a goal of reconciling with him (based on Matthew 18:21-35, esp. verses 32-33; Luke 6:27-38; 1 Cor. 6:5-7; 2 Cor. 2:5-7)

Note: It is important to remember that even though you are not to demand restitution; restitution is part of the reconciliation process for the one who has sinned. This should be lovingly brought to his attention.

G. Especially when you pray, if you have something against someone, you must forgive him from your heart (Matthew 18:35; Mark 11:25)

Refusing to Forgive

A. Because you are commanded to forgive others (Ephesians 4:32), you sin when you refuse to forgive (James 4:17)

B. You show your base ingratitude for God’s merciful forgiveness toward you when you do not forgive others (Matthew 18:21-35)

C. God as your Father withholds His forgiveness of your everyday transgressions when you do not forgive others (Matthew 6:14-15; Mark 11:25-26)
Questions and Answers about Biblical Forgiveness

While God’s plan of forgiveness is stated clearly in Scripture, man’s humanistic wisdom has introduced confusion. To protect yourself from accepting and believing erroneous teaching about forgiveness, follow this simple truth:

If a particular viewpoint is not supported by Scripture, it is not from God and must be discarded – see Proverbs 21:30; Isaiah 55:8-9; Jeremiah 10:23; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 4:12; 2 Peter 1:3-4

1. It is possible or necessary for you to forgive yourself?

2. Will all the consequences of your sins be removed when you receive forgiveness?

3. What is the relationship between your granting forgiveness to others and God’s granting forgiveness to you?

4. Does God require you to “forgive and forget?”

5. What about not feeling like forgiving another or not feeling like you have been forgiven?