



- This video will address an essential element to biblical change: *Forgiveness*.
- Notes have been provided for you so that you can follow along, while also filling in the appropriate blanks.
- Pray for clarity of thoughts and helpful teaching of these biblical principles.

### Video #8 – An Essential Element to Biblical Change: Forgiveness

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**INTRODUCTION:** Biblical counseling is all about helping people grow, as they become more and more like their Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. In 1 Timothy 1:5, the Apostle Paul reminds the biblical counselor, “*The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith*” (cf. Col 1:28), It is the unique ministry of change that centers on the grace of God’s Word and Spirit to communicated transforming truth which leads to true salvation in Christ, which will produce a love for God that will result in a purified spiritual heart attitude (2 Tim 2:22; 1 Pet 1:22), along with a cleansed conscience (Heb 9:22; 10:14), and a genuine faith (Heb 10:22). In addition, another unique result of true biblical counseling will be a love of choice and the will, characterized by self-denial and self-sacrifice for the benefit others, which is the mark of a true Christian (John 13:35; Rom 13:10; 1 Cor 13:1-7; 1 John 4:7-8).

In the counselee’s pursuit of knowing, loving and serving their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they must possess a deep theological understanding of sin and guilt, repentance and faith, forgiveness and replacement (this includes spiritual heart/mind renewal or the process of “putting off putting on”), in order to experiencing lasting biblical change.

But be warned, it is possible to go on holding a grudge if your faith in Christ simply means that you continue to look back to the Cross and concluded that you are “off the hook” for the penalties of your own sin... but you fail to allow the Cross to inform your heart and how you respond to others who have offended and sinned against you! Rather our faith in Christ must compel us to look back not merely to discover that we are forgiven of our sins by our kind God, but will in turn compels us to be a forgiving people!

**PROPOSITION: *The Lord's Prayer describes forgiveness as being pardoned of personal sin debts, as well as pardoning others who have sin against us. So what does the Word of God have to say about God's grace and how followers of Christ are forgiven as well as empowered to forgive others?***

**This lesson will address the various facets of biblical forgiveness:**

1. Forgiveness \_\_\_\_\_ :
  - a) The primary Greek verb translated "forgive" (*aphiemi*) (pronounced: ah-fi-emi) focuses on the \_\_\_\_\_ of forgiveness, which is "to send away" or "to release." Therefore it refers to the actual removal (i.e. process) of canceling, in which God forgives the sin debt and consequences of man's sin (Matt 18:15-35; Luke 17:3).
  - b) The other Greek verb translated "forgive" (*charizomai*) (pronounced: kah-riz-o-mai) focuses more on the \_\_\_\_\_ of the removal... not necessarily the process; it is quality by which God has forgiven you, and in return the follower of Christ is compelled to do the same to others. In Matthew 18:21-22, Jesus Himself points out the quality of a believer's forgiveness, "Then Peter came up and said to him, "Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times." (cf. Eph 4:32).
  - c) Forgiveness Implies a \_\_\_\_\_ and Heart Motivation – While forgiveness means "to pardon sin;" forgiveness can also rightly be described as a "promise of pardon, because when God forgives, He promises that He will never hold our sins against us" (Jer 31:34).
  - d) The \_\_\_\_\_ Practical Definition of Forgiveness – "It is the promise of pardon for sin committed through a biblical process that is both properly practiced and with the right spiritual heart attitude or motivation by all parties involved."
2. Forgiveness \_\_\_\_\_ – Some within the church believe that followers of Christ are to forgive or cover the sins of others, as much as they can, without actually addressing the person's offense! Then when the follower of Christ gets to the point when they are simply overwhelmed by the offenses, it is then that they can go and discuss the offense with the other person.  
⇒ **So the question is... "How much offense is a person to cover with forgiveness?"** Some would point to 1 Peter 4:8 which state that "love covers a multitude of sin;" therefore believers are called to give grace to as much sin as they can and just cover it all with love, without actually confronting the other sinning believer of their sin!

3. Forgiveness Biblically \_\_\_\_\_ – Scripture points out that sinful man has access to God’s “**judicial** or **positional** forgiveness” that results in salvation/ justification, and Scripture also points out that sinners have access to “**parental** forgiveness” that results in the daily forgiveness of sin issues.

a) \_\_\_\_\_ by faith is that doctrine whereby God declares the sinner righteous on the basis of faith (Rom 3:28) through the means of Christ’s death and righteousness (Rom 5:9). Therefore, the sinner can approach the throne of God’s grace (Heb 4:16) because by faith, they have been declared forgiven and righteous by God Himself.

- Romans 8:1, 33–34, *“Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus... 33Who will bring a charge against God’s elect? God is the one who justifies; 34who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.”*

b) \_\_\_\_\_ through God’s Gospel Grace is all of our sin forgiven, everything we need to love and obey God is provided for us through the perfect righteousness of Christ!

- 2 Peter 1:3–4, *“seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. 4For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust”* (cf. John 15:5; Gal 2:20)

c) God's Forgiveness - Man needs forgiveness from God both \_\_\_\_\_ salvation and \_\_\_\_\_ salvation. As previously pointed out, there are two different kinds of forgiveness found in the Scriptures, **judicial and parental forgiveness** (though these names themselves are not used in the Bible). To put it very simply, judicial forgiveness is the forgiveness of a judge and parental forgiveness is the forgiveness of a father.

- The Forgiveness Needed Before Salvation is Called \_\_\_\_\_ Forgiveness - God is the Judge and sinful man is the person on trial. Man is guilty of sinning, and the penalty is eternal death. But the Lord Jesus appears and announces, "I will pay the penalty which man's sins deserved; I will die as a Substitute for him!" This is what the Savior did on the Cross of Calvary. As soon as the man places their faith in the Savior, and repents of their sin, it is then that he receives “judicial forgiveness” of all his sins past, present and future (Psa 103:12; Eph 1:6-8). He will never have to pay the punishment for

them in Hell, because Christ has paid it all. The forgiven sinner now enters into a new relationship: God is no longer his Judge; now He is his Father.

Because God acts as a judge, he declares us righteous forever and delivering us from eternal condemnation because of our personal sin (Rom 4:3-8; Col 2:13-14).

- The Forgiveness Needed After Salvation is Called \_\_\_\_\_  
Forgiveness – With parental forgiveness, God is no longer the Judge, but the Father! So when the follower of Christ sins, their fellowship in the family of God is broken. While the child of God has not lost their salvation, he has sacrificed for a time his joy of salvation. In addition, he may experience the discipline of his Father, designed to bring him back into fellowship. As soon as the child confesses his sin, he receives parental forgiveness.

While judicial forgiveness takes place once-for-all at the time of at salvation; parental forgiveness takes place every time a believer confesses and forsakes his sin. This is what Jesus taught in John 13:8-10 reminding believers that we need the bath of regeneration only once to deliver us from the penalty of sins and Hell, but we need many cleansings throughout our walk with Christ to give us parental forgiveness.

- The \_\_\_\_\_ Between the “Judicial Forgiveness” and the “Parental Forgiveness” of God<sup>1</sup>:
  - ✓ Judicial forgiveness deals with sin's penalty; whereas parental forgiveness deals with sin's consequences.
  - ✓ Judicial forgiveness frees us from the condemnation of the righteous, omniscient Judge whom we have wronged; whereas parental forgiveness sets things right with a grieving and displeased but loving Father.
  - ✓ Judicial forgiveness provides an unshakeable standing before the throne of divine judgment; whereas parental forgiveness deals with the state of our sanctification or spiritual growth at any given moment and is dispensed from a throne of divine grace. Thus, the forgiveness Christians are supposed to seek out in their daily walk is not pardon from an angry Judge, but mercy from a grieved Father.
- Therefore it is necessary for the counselee to \_\_\_\_\_  
and seek \_\_\_\_\_ – *“Lord, I acknowledge  
and renounce my heart of pride as evidence through my \_\_\_\_\_*

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.christianity.com/theology/why-are-you-supposed-to-seek-gods-forgiveness-if-he-has-already-justified-you-11556624.html> (accessed: 121613).

\_\_\_\_\_. *Lord, I realize how my sin of pride offends you, so I ask for your forgiveness and choose seek to humble myself, put off my pride of sin and put on a Christlike spiritual heart attitude."*

⇒ **The difference between the two types of forgiveness may be summarized graphically as follows:**

	<u>JUDICIAL</u>	VS	<u>PARENTAL</u>
<b>The Person's Status:</b>	Sinner (Romans 3:23)		Child (1 John 3:2)
<b>Relationship of God:</b>	Judge (Psa. 96:13)		Father (Gal. 4:6)
<b>Result of Sin:</b>	Eternal death (Rom. 6:23)		Broken fellowship (1 John 1:6)
<b>Role of Christ:</b>	Savior (1 Tim. 1:15)		High Priest and Advocate (Heb. 4:14-16; 1 John 2:1)
<b>The Person's Need:</b>	Salvation (Acts 16:30)		Joy of salvation (Psa. 51:12)
<b>Means of Forgiveness:</b>	Faith (Acts 16:31)		Confession (1 John 1:9)
<b>Kind of Forgiveness:</b>	Judicial (Rom. 8:1)		Parental (Luke 15:21,22)
<b>Consequence Averted:</b>	Hell (John 5:24)		Chastening (1 Cor. 11:31, 32) Loss of reward at the Judgment Seat Of Christ (1 Cor. 3:15)
<b>Positive Result:</b>	New relationship (John 1 :12)		Renewed fellow-ship (Psa. 32:5)
<b>Frequency:</b>	Once (One bath of regeneration) (John 13;10)		Many times (many cleansings) (John 13:8)

d) Every faithful follower of Christ will be a lifelong \_\_\_\_\_ of their personal sin, in order to experience God's all-sufficient forgiveness.

- **2 Samuel 12:7-13 [Nathan's rebuke of King David and his sin of adultery and murder],** *"7 Nathan said to David, "You are the man! Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you out of the hand of Saul. 8 And I gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your arms and gave you*

*the house of Israel and of Judah. And if this were too little, I would add to you as much more. <sup>9</sup> Why have you despised the word of the Lord, to do what is evil in his sight? You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and have taken his wife to be your wife and have killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. <sup>10</sup> Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife. <sup>11</sup> Thus says the Lord, 'Behold, I will raise up evil against you out of your own house. And I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun. <sup>12</sup> For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel and before the sun.'" <sup>13</sup> David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the Lord." And Nathan said to David, "The Lord also has put away your sin; you shall not die."*

4. \_\_\_\_\_ Forgiveness Towards Others – The follower of Christ is to forgive one-another just as God has forgiven them (Eph 4:32; Col 3:13). When a believer grants forgiveness to someone else, they are promising to "not remember" their sins anymore (Jer 31:34); never to bring it up to other people or allow it to come to mind ever again!

- This means that the believer will \_\_\_\_\_ use the sin of another against them, so practically they are saying the following to the one they are forgiving:
  - ✓ "I will not remind you of this sin (unless it would be absolutely necessary to do so for your good)."
  - ✓ "I will not mention it to anyone else (unless it would be absolutely necessary...)."
  - ✓ "I will not allow my mind to dwell on it."
- The believer is \_\_\_\_\_ to forgive. When they fail to make that promise to forgive, they are sinning.

5. Who, What, When, Where, Why & How a Follower of Christ Should \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_?

- Various \_\_\_\_\_ of Forgiveness
  - ⇒ **Luke 17:3-4 View of Forgiveness** - Some passages in Scripture clearly imply that we can only forgive those who ask for it - "*Pay attention to yourselves! If your*

*brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him, and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' you must forgive him" (cf. Matt 6:12)*

⇒ **Mark 11:25 View of Forgiveness** - However, others imply that the follower of Christ should forgive everyone who sins against them, regardless of whether they ask for it or not - *"And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses."*

- **The Question:** Now Mark 11:25 and Matthew 6:12 could imply that a believer is to forgive everyone, whether they confess it or not, and therefore Christians are just to forgive. However, a solid hermeneutic of the Scriptures will not build a theology on two verses. Now is forgiveness conditional or is it not?
- **The Answer:** The overall testimony of the Scripture's teaches that God's forgiveness is *CONDITIONAL...*, BUT His heart desire is to forgive as seen in Psalm 32:1, *"Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered."* The covering mentioned here is described later in Psalm 51:1-19, for once the sin is repented of, then the sin is forgiven and covered (cf. Ps 85:2).

6. The Attitude of \_\_\_\_\_: *Willing to Forgive* - Even though the counselee may not be able to fully reconcile with everyone who sins against them, their spiritual heart attitude towards those individuals should never be one of anger, bitterness, resentment, or any kind of ill will.

#### **Verses Supporting the Demand of God to Forgive Others:**

- Psalm 86:5, *"For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving, abounding in steadfast love to all who call upon you."*
- Matthew 6:12-15, *"and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. <sup>13</sup>And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. <sup>14</sup>For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, <sup>15</sup>but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."*
- Mark 11:25, *"And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses."*

- Luke 11:4, “and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation.”
- Luke 23:34, “And Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” And they cast lots to divide his garments.”

It can be concluded from those verses concerning love and graciousness that any time someone wrongs us, we should pray to God in this way:

*"Father, you know what has happened between \_\_\_\_\_ and me. Help me to not be angry or bitter at him/her, nor to seek revenge in any way, but help me to love him/her and desire only their good. Please work in their heart and bring him/her to repentance so that they can experience reconciliation with me and with You. God use me in any way so that I can help him/her to experience repentance and forgiveness."*

7. Extending \_\_\_\_\_ in Forgiveness: What about Proverbs 17:9, which states, “Whoever covers an offense seeks love...”; and Proverbs 19:11 that also points out, “Good sense makes one slow to anger, and it is his glory to overlook an offense.” Sometimes it is wise to let the sin of another pass by for a time, while taking time to minister to that person. Once the individual’s spiritual heart attitude changes, this will be the more productive time to address the sin issue that has not yet been repented of and forgiven. In some occasions, it is an issue of time and coming alongside an individual that can bring repentance and forgiveness.
  
8. Example of \_\_\_\_\_ Theology – Movie “**Courageous**”
  
9. A Proper Biblical \_\_\_\_\_ to Those Individuals Seeking Forgiveness - Proverbs 28:13 reveals the right response, “He who confesses and forsakes [sin and transgression] will obtain mercy [forgiveness].” Therefore, if a sinning individual seeks forgiveness, Romans 4:6-8 points out that other believer(s) are not to keep a record of sin when it is confessed and forgiven.



10. Therefore Forgiveness is a \_\_\_\_\_ that Takes Place \_\_\_\_\_ Repentance Has Occurred. – When a sinning individual authentically seeks out and asks for forgiveness from God and the individual(s) they have offended, it is then that the “**transaction of forgiveness**” takes place. This “**transaction of forgiveness**” takes place after repentance of the sinner has occurred! Just as God does not make His promise of pardon to people unless they repent (Luke 3:3; Acts 2:38), therefore the follower of Christ cannot actually say “*I forgive you*” to another believer unless they first admit their sin and repent = “**transaction of forgiveness.**”

11. Key \_\_\_\_\_ Pertaining to Forgiveness:

- **Confronting vs. Covering?** - Psalm 27:5 points out that open admonishment or rebuke is better than the love that conceals sin. The “covering of love” only takes place after the sin of another has been repented and forgiveness has taken place.
- **Apologizing/Sorry vs. Asking for Forgiveness?** - When an individual “apologizes”, in general they are expressing regret or that they are sorry for a wrong or injury. However, those who simply apologize are expressing [verbally or not] a secondary meaning that is attempting to give a defense or vindication for something they have done. Many who give an apology present a mixture of expressing regret or remorse for a wrong or injury... while also giving a defense or vindication for what they have done. Therefore, they are expressing remorse for the result of what they did, but not for what they did.

**On the other hand**, forgiveness is a “pardon for something that has been done. When an individual asks for forgiveness it requires humility because they have to admit that they have actually done something wrong and desiring to repent or turn from that act. This is why God uses ***forgiveness of sin to save the lost*** and ***not grief or sorrow from sin.***

Bottomline, an “apology is not asking for forgiveness, rather it is simply being sorrowful for what someone did. For example, both Judas and Cain experienced worldly grief or sorrow, “*For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death*” (2 Cor 7:10); and the result of Judas’ or Cain’s worldly grief was spiritual disaster and death.

An apology is simply not taking responsibility for one’s actions, but biblical forgiveness takes responsibility for sin.

- **What About Forgiving God?** - We do not have to forgive God because He never sins.
- **What About Forgiving Unbelievers?** – The believer is experiencing a process of “turning the other cheek” for the non-believer is not capable of dealing with biblical forgiveness. However, the follower of Christ can tell them “**it’s OK**” and use this

situation as an opportunity for evangelism, sharing the Gospel, and how God can provide them with the wondrous gift of eternal forgiveness.

Keep in mind that the believer should not forgive a non-believer, because it does not reflect a biblical reality, for only believers can be forgiven. However their still remains a Gospel opportunity to point them to the One who can forgive them of all their sins, past, present, and future, resulting in salvation and the hope of eternal life. For a believer, the process of forgiveness involves loving biblical confrontation, according to Matthew 18; whereas for an unbeliever it would involve loving them and sharing the hope of the Gospel, if possible.

- **What About Forgiving Dead People?** – The follower of Christ is not called to forgive dead people. As far as their sin is concerned, either Jesus has forgiven them, and they are in Heaven’s glory or the consequences for their unrepentant and unforgiven sin are taking place in Hell. Only those who are alive can repent of sin with the Father and seek forgiveness and reconciliation.
- **What About Forgiving Ourselves?** - There is no doctrine or scriptural support about forgiving self! According to 1 John 1:9, it is God who forgives based on saving faith trusting in Jesus as Savior and Lord.

However, even though a person has experienced freedom from the bondage of sin (Romans chapters 6-8), they can still choose to remain in it and act as though they were never freed from it.

- **What About Guilty Feelings?** - The follower of Christ can accept the fact that they are forgiven in Christ (Jer 31:34), or they can believe the devil’s lie that they are still guilty and should therefore feel guilty. However, if the believer has sought out forgiveness from former sins but they are reminded of them, they can choose to dwell on those forgiven sins (with the resulting guilty feelings), or they can choose to fill their spiritual heart/mind with thoughts of a faithful God who forgives, while also thanking and praising Him for His grace and forgiveness (Phil 4:8; Mark 9:24).

Therefore, remembering one’s sins should simply remind us to forgive others as they have been forgiven by God (Matt 18:21-35). However, there are people who don’t forgive themselves because they really don’t want to forget their former sins, choosing to continue to relive them in their minds or actually continue to actively pursue them in their daily life. This is sin and must be confessed and repented (Matt 5:28). This continuing cycle of sin and guilt is damaging to one’s personal relationship with Christ and process of sanctification.

- **What About One Believer Showing Unforgiveness to Another Believer?** - This is when someone admits they have sinned, have exercised repentance and are asking for forgiveness (transaction), BUT the offended person says “no” to forgiving that individual. For Example: Matthew 18:21-35, *The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant* – \*\*\*the unforgiving believer will experience the anger and discipline of God in their life.

12. Biblical Forgiveness and the importance of the “\_\_\_\_\_” ...
- The Cross gives us the freedom to seek and receive \_\_\_\_\_ each time we fail!!
  - Each failure and sin reminds us of \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus had to die on the Cross.
  - Each confession reminds us of the forgiveness that \_\_\_\_\_ the “CROSS” could provide.
13. Summary: \_\_\_\_\_ Should Believers Forgive?
- ✓ Immediately (Luke 17:3)
  - ✓ Repeatedly (Luke 17:4)
  - ✓ Lavishly (II Corinthians 2:5-8)
14. Summary: \_\_\_\_\_ should we forgive? - Because the truth of the Gospel motivates us to forgive!

**Practical Application:** The best way to understand biblical forgiveness is to realize one’s own spiritual heart attitude and need for forgiveness to be granted by the Creator, Lord, and Savior. Remembering that our sins are forgiven should make it easier to forgive others of their sins (Matt 7:1-5; 1 Tim 1:15). In addition, forgiveness should remind us of the grace of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ who forgave us and is drawing us closer in loving obedience to Him (Psa 103:2-3,10-14; Rom 5:10). God will allow our sin to come to mind (Satan may intend it for an evil purpose, but God allows it for a good purpose), but He wants us to accept His forgiveness and rejoice in His grace. So, the next time your former sins come to mind, don’t dwell on the sin... rather dwell upon God’s grace and mercies. Philippians 3:13-14, *“Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, <sup>14</sup>I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”*

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION... MUCH GOSPEL GRACE TO YOU!**

**Recommended Reading:**

- ✓ *Unpacking Forgiveness* - Chris Brauns
- ✓ *Forgiving Others: Joining Wisdom and Love* – Timothy Lane

## **People Who Have Hurt Me**

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List each of the individuals who have hurt you in the past.

1. Family members

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2. Friends

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3. Teachers, students, classroom experiences

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4. Believers, church situations, pastor, church leaders, etc.

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5. Others

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"Lord, I choose to forgive (     Name     ) for (     event, hurt, circumstances, pain     ), and I am willing to pay for the emotional pain and consequences that (     Name     ) has caused me. I ask You to take back ground given to Satan through my bitterness and unforgiveness, and I yield that ground to the control of the Lord Jesus Christ."

## Forgiveness Summary Sheet

### I. Definition of Biblical Forgiveness

- Giving up the **RIGHT** to revenge
- To **RELEASE** the offender from your grip
- Clearing the **RECORD** in your heart – and not holding it against them

### II. 3 Characteristics of Forgiveness – what does it mean to forgive?

1. I will not bring it up to you again to use in a hurtful way
2. I will not talk about it to others
3. I will not dwell on it myself

### III. When to Evaluate and See if You Need to Forgive Someone

- Before prayer – see **Mark 11:25** "When you stand praying"
- Before worship – see **Matt. 5:23-24** "Therefore if you bring your gift..."
- Before sleeping – see **Eph. 4:26** "Do not let the sun go down on your wrath..."

### IV. Guidelines for Forgiveness / how to go about it

Forgiveness does not depend on FRUIT, FAITH, or FEELINGS

#### 1. Fruits of repentance are not required (see Luke 17:3)

- We must give the benefit of the doubt to the person who has offended us
- We cannot judge the heart of the other person
- We have to work with the information we have when they say "I repent"

#### 2. More Faith is not needed to forgive (see Luke 17:5)

- It is a question of obedience; no amounts of faith will do it.
- You can't say "I just don't have enough faith to forgive." "I'm asking God to give me more faith." Or "I'm asking God to help me forgive."
- Faith as small as a mustard seed is enough.

### 3. When I Feel like it is not an acceptable condition for the timing of forgiveness

- Obeying God whether I feel like it or not is not hypocritical. It may feel uncomfortable, but it's not hypocrisy.
- Obeying God is right. It does not instantly remove anxiety, hurts or damages that have occurred but it does stop the development of further sinful patterns.

#### V. Consequences of Not Forgiving

- **Anger / bitterness** – see **Heb. 12:15** “lest any root of bitterness... defile many”
- **Self pity** – see **Jonah**

3:10-11 “then God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring, and He did not do it. But it *displeased Jonah exceedingly*, and he became angry.”

4:3-4 “Therefore now, O Lord, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live!”

4:9 “Then God said to Jonah, ‘Is it right for you to be angry... and he said, ‘It is right for me to be angry, even to death!’”

- **Guilt or depression / physical illness** – see **Psa. 32:3-4** “When I kept silent about my sin, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer.”
- **More sin** – one sin always leads to more sin – it spreads – see **Gen. 4:6-7** “Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it.”
- **Torment** – see **Matt. 18:34** “delivered him to the torturers”
- **No forgiveness for your own sins!** – see **Matt. 6:14-15** Lord's Prayer “But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”
- **No answers to prayer** – see **Mark 11:25** “When you stand praying...”

# Forgiveness is a Choice

In my thoughts....

**I will not dwell on the incident or replay it in my mind.**

*"Casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ." 2 Corinthians 10:5*

In my speech...

**I will not talk about the incident with the forgiven person or with others.**

*"Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking." 1 Peter 2:1*

In my actions...

**I will not allow the incident to embitter me against the forgiven person and use it to hurt them.**

*"Love...bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things." 1 Corinthians 13:7*

## Example Prayer of Forgiveness<sup>2</sup>:

⇒ **Matthew 18:21-22 and the Call to Confession:**

*Then Peter came up and said to him, "Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?"<sup>22</sup> Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times.*

⇒ **Prayer of Confession:**

***Merciful Father,***

*We have often been quick to judge and slow to forgive our brothers and sisters. We notice and keep score for every sin that others commit against us. Sometimes we punish them by lashing out in anger, while at other times we treat them with silent coldness, instead of extending mercy and grace. We have dismissed their attempts at repentance as insincere words, and have held grudges against them, instead of forgiving them freely. At times, we have not even given them the chance to make amends by graciously showing them their sin but have simply assumed that they would be unwilling to repent.*

*Thank you, Father, that this is not how you have treated us. You have mercifully accepted our flawed repentance, in spite of our divided hearts. You have not held our sin against us, though we have grieved and sinned against you countless times boldly and brashly, not merely out of ignorance or oversight but with deliberate defiance. Instead you have taken every last one of our sins and crucified them in Jesus, your Son. In place of our failure and sin, you have substituted Christ's perfect obedience and righteousness. Christ's forgiving love pled for the forgiveness of those who were actually crucifying him. We confess that we were the ones who spilt his blood; we have trampled upon your Son. Yet in your grace you see us as having the same forgiving spirit of Christ! We have not been dealt with according to our sins, because Jesus has. We have been given infinite grace by this loving Advocate.*

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<sup>2</sup> Barbara R Duguid and Wayne Duguid Houk. *Prone to Wander: Prayers of Confession and Celebration* (Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 2014), p. 128.

*Gracious Lord, help us to worship you in light of these truths. Enable us to love and forgive one another in the same way that you have loved and forgiven us. Teach us to see every sin against us by a brother or sister in Christ having been nailed to the cross. In place of the record that we keep of one another's wrongs, help us to ponder the record of Christ's righteousness, which is sufficient to pay of our brother's sins, just as it has paid for ours. Help us to become people who, knowing that they have been forgiven much, are themselves deeply forgiving, even toward those who have sinned against us many times. In Jesus' mercifully name, Amen!*

⇒ **1 John 1:8-9 and the Assurance of Pardon of Confession:**

*If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. <sup>9</sup> If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*