

A Godly Heart Forgives #6

Text : **Matthew 6: 9-15, 18: 15-20**

S#1.

A. My plan was to end the series with the last lesson, but such wasn't practical.

1. Not trying to beat a dead horse. There were several who still had questions.
2. This is a doctrine with which every Christian struggles on an ongoing basis.
3. The New Testament deals with it more extensively than most any other sin.

S#2.

B. Forgiveness is one of the foundational principles of the Christian faith.

S#3.

1. No other major world religion places such an emphasis on forgiveness.
2. Christianity advocates forgiveness through faith in Jesus Christ's vicarious D.B.R.
3. Christianity offers total forgiveness to any one, any where, any time, for any thing.

S#4.

C. In Christianity God's forgiveness is complete and it is free, but it is conditional.

1. It is only given to those who place their faith in Christ Jesus.
 - a. **John 8: 24** – **Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.**
 - b. **Acts 10: 43** – **Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins.**
2. It is conditional upon the forgiven in turn being forgiving.

S#5.

Matt. 6: 14-15 **For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 "But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.**

S#6.

S#7.

The failure to forgive has dire consequences so we will investigate some of them.

1. We will first refresh some basic concepts in our minds.
2. Unforgiveness has far reaching consequences.
3. Conflict resolution must be dealt with as Jesus instructed.

I. We first remind ourselves of some characteristics of true forgiveness.

S#8.

A. Forgiveness is an act of will, not an emotion.

S#9.

1. Imagine if you could only forgive when you felt like it ?
 - a. No one could be saved.
 - b. We cannot absolutely control how we feel, **but** we can control what we do.

2. We are commanded to forgive.
 - a. Can you imagine if God's commands were generally contingent upon feelings?
 - b. Not take Lord's name in vain ... except when angry
Not steal ... unless you really want something
Not adultery ... unless filled with desire (*obedience is never contingent on feelings*)
3. No matter how sincere the repentance and request for forgiveness, an offender cannot take the hurt away.
 - a. Wounds leave scars **and** scars remind us of the pain. (**illustrate**)
 - b. When we see the scars we must also be reminded of the forgiveness we gave.
4. We forgive because of our Christian heart, not because we feel like it.

B. Forgiveness is a gift that is given by grace, not something that's deserved. S#10.

1. If the offender really has hurt you, he deserves your wrath.
2. It is normal for you to want vengeance, **but** it is not lawful for you to seek it.
3. When you became a Christian, you committed yourself to accept God's rule.
 - a. God is the sovereign ruler of all that is ... **HE** created it for His own glory.
 - b. Adam was a type of all mankind, we choose to do what we want rather than obey.
4. To supplant a legitimate ruler is described as treason and as rebellion.
 - a. When we seek vengeance against anyone, we seek to judge what belongs to God.
Rom. 14: 4 – Who are you to judge the servant of another? S#11.
To his own master he stands or falls;
 - b. When we seek vengeance against anyone, we are usurping the authority of God.
Rom. 12: 19 – Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the S#12.
wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine. I will repay,”
says the Lord.

C. There is a cost associated with forgiveness. S#13.

1. When we forgive a trespass, we forgive a debt that is owed to us.
2. We forfeit the feeling of righteous indignation when we judge the offender.
 - a. When we lower him in the sight of others we can no longer feel vindicated.
 - b. We can't strike out hoping to feel better; anyway, it's never enough to heal the hurt
 - c. Like a nail, every disappointing attempt drives the resentment deeper in our hearts.

D. Each time we forgive, we place ourselves at the bar with our faith on trial, S#14.
will we trust God to avenge us for the hurt we feel ?

1. God has promised, “**I will repay.**”

2. We know those who hurt God's people will be punished on the last day.

I Thes. 1: 5-9 **This is a plain indication of God's righteous judgment so that you will be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which indeed you are suffering. 6 For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, 7 and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, 8 dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9 These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,** **S#15.**

3. HOWEVER, we do not always have to faith to turn it over to God.

- a. In our hearts we think, *"I hurt now so he should hurt now."*
- b. *"God may forgive him so he will get away with hurting me."* (cf- **Jonah**) **S#16.**

E. Forgiveness is a promise and a commitment which involves 5 things. **S#17.**

- 1. A commitment to one's self and to the offender not to dwell on the offense.
- 2. A commitment not to raise the offense again to offender, to others, to self.
 - a. Bringing it up allows the hurt to hurt you again.
 - b. The promise is twofold ... to the person and to God.
- 3. A commitment to deal with the offense as past history, not as the present condition.
 - a. You know that when someone hurts you, all he can do is ask forgiveness.
 - b. He cannot take away the hurt.
 - c. Allow it to heal. Do not keep reviving the hurt. (*Like kid picking at a scab*) **S#18.**
- 4. A commitment not to keep holding the offense over their head and use to control.
 - a. Even God won't force His will on you. (*Don't use it to gain advantage.*)
 - b. Discipline your mind not to dwell on it.
- 5. A commitment to put the hurt, the resentment, the wounded pride aside.

II. Unforgiveness has far-reaching consequences. **S#19.**

A. There are physical consequences. **S#20.**

- 1. "None Of These Diseases" book by S.I. McMillen, M.D.
 - a. Shows how eating and living by biblical principles would improve our health.
 - b. Chapter "It's Not What You Eat – It's What Eats You"
 - c. Demonstrates how negative emotions can cause physical illnesses.

2. Modern scientific research paid for by your tax dollars confirms this to be true.
 - a. Forgiving people tend to live longer healthier lives. (*They put past behind them*)
 - b. Hanging on to negative experiences has been documented to cause panic attacks.
3. There are a host of physical maladies that can be caused by unforgiveness.
 - a. One's hormones are affected resulting in alterations in brain function.
 - b. Bitter people have higher rates of blood pressure, heart rates, heart attack.
 - c. One's immune system is adversely affected by bitter feelings. (*Dr. Carsten Worsch*)
4. Dr. Charles Raison's research revealed other consequences of negative emotions.
 - a. Adversely affects the heart as much as smoking hurts it.
 - b. Unforgiveness elevates the fight or flight instinct which raises the heart rate and raise the level of C-reactive protein which takes a toll on the body over time.

B. There are spiritual consequences.

S#21.

1. It prevents one from receiving God's forgiveness. **S#22.**

Matt. 6: 15 – But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.
2. The one who usurps the throne of God has a crisis of faith. **S#23.**
 - a. One loses his trust in God. **“Vengeance is Mine, I will repay” Says the Lord**
 - b. The unforgiving brother loses confidence that God is with him or caring for him.
3. Unforgiveness destroys relationships. **S#24.**
 - a. Unforgiveness takes away one's ability to feel comfortable trusting others.
 - b. Causes others to lose their confidence in the unforgiving person. **S#25.**

Matt. 18: 31 – So when his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were deeply grieved and came and reported to their lord all that had happened.
 - c. It will invariably affect how others view you and interact with you.
 - d. Some will come to fear that you will eventually condemn them.
4. Unforgiveness may limit one's movements. **S#26.**
 - a. One may not want to go places where they will meet the offender.
 - b. Some even avoid the close friends of the unforgiven.
 - c. A few go to different congregation to avoid the one with which they conflict.
5. We must understand that to refuse to forgive is to withhold love. **S#27.**
 - a. Withholding love puts one in direct rebellion against Jesus. (**Mt 28:18..all authority**)
 - b. **John 13: 34 – A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, ...**

- c. To hold ill will against a brother is paramount to murder. **S#28.**
I John 3: 14-15 We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death.
15 Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.
 (cf .. **Luke 14: 26**)

C. There are consequences to the church. **S#29.**

1. There is no such thing as keeping a problem confined to two people.
 - a. When you get cancer in one of your organs, your whole body is in trouble.
 - b. Left untreated any infection can kill. (*Neighbor's leg removed because of scratch.*)
2. A problem between two members will directly affect their friends.
 - a. We all want to support and defend our friends.
 - b. The ability of the church to function as a unit is soon destroyed.
3. Just as it cannot be contained within the congregation, it reaches the community.
 - a. Reputation is lost along with influence.
 - b. Destroys the congregation's ability to be a light in the community – evangelize.

III. Conflict resolution MUST be practiced as Christ instructed. **S#30.**

A. Our text in Matthew gives the procedure that must be followed. **S#31.**

1. There must be a “four eye conference.” (*not have preacher do sermon about it*)
 - a. One person talking to one person is as confidential as it is possible to get.
 - b. This is a clear and specific imperative ... **one MUST go to one.**
2. If the issue is not resolved, witnesses are taken. *Like the 1st, the 2nd trip is a must.*
 - a. There are to be no more than three witnesses. (*Not ganging up on him.*)
 - b. The primary purpose of the witnesses is to establish facts.
3. If the three cannot resolve the issue, it must be taken before the church.
 - a. The person with the issue and those accusing him both have opportunity to speak.
 - b. If the congregation cannot resolve the issue, the guilty party is expelled.
 - c. He will be treated as one who is not a member, as an unforgiven sinner.

B. From beginning to end, the process given is for someone who is guilty. **S#32.**

1. There is no process for determining guilt.
 - a. The implication of this is that the sin committed is clearly observable.
 - b. The interaction gives the accused an opportunity to defend himself.

2. This text assumes the guilty party is intransigent **“If he refuses to listen to them”**

C. When one is expelled from the fellowship, he does not become an enemy. S#33.

1. The purpose of the entire exercise is restoration. Vs. 15 **“you have won your brother.”**
2. Our responsibility to unbelievers is to win them to Christ.
3. Thus, there must be an ongoing effort to bring the expelled sinner back into the fold.

D. This is made clear in the discipline taken in the Corinthian church. S#34.

1. The man who had his father’s wife was expelled from fellowship. S#35.
 - a. **I Cor. 5: 5** – **I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.**
 - b. The purpose of the expulsion was to save him spiritually.
2. When the man repented, the church was instructed to receive him into fellowship.
 - a. **II Cor. 2: 6-8** **Sufficient for such a one is this punishment which was inflicted #36. by the majority, 7 so that on the contrary you should rather forgive and comfort him, otherwise such a one might be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. 8 Wherefore I urge you to reaffirm your love for him.**
 - b. He is not taken back in on a probationary basis or limited fellowship.

E. ONLY God can bind and loose sins. S#37.

1. We can determine fellowship, **but** God determines salvation.
2. The “binding” and loosing we do is relative to fellowship. (**Matt. 18: 18**)

CONCLUSION :

A. The main thing for us to remember is that God gives no one the right to withhold forgiveness from another person. S#38.

B. God gives no one the right to allow conflicted and hurts to go unresolved. S#39.

1. The attitude of **“Just let it slide, if he wants to pout, let him go.”** is sin.
2. The attitude of **“I’m going to take my marbles and go home.”** is also sin.
3. As Jesus said **“Offenses will come”** BUT Christians must resolve them.

C. The most important conflict to resolve is man’s conflict with God. S#40.

1. God is the offended party.
2. He longs for you to repent so He can forgive you.

INVITATION :

S#41.

Lesson Text :**Matthew 6: 9-15**

9 “Pray, then, in this way: ‘Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. **10** ‘Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. **11** ‘Give us this day our daily bread. **12** ‘And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. **13** ‘And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. [For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.]’ **14** For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. **15** But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.

Matthew 18: 15-20

15 “If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. **16** But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY FACT MAY BE CONFIRMED. **17** If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. **18** Truly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven.

19 “Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven. **20** For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst.”

21 Then Peter came and said to Him, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?” **22** Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.