

Studies in Christianity Christian Lifestyle #9

S#1.

A Forgiving Heart

S#2.

Text : **Matthew 6: 9-15 , 18: 21-35**

S#3.

A. This lesson on forgiveness is not for the beginning or the casual Christians.

1. Forgiveness does not come naturally to us while we are yet housed in flesh.
 - a. People instinctively hold grudges in their hearts.
 - b. It's part of the tribalism which was essential to survival in ancient times.
2. One must have gone through to transition process to develop a forgiving heart.
 - a. **Rom. 12: 1-2** – Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, **S#4.**
to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. **2** And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.
 - b. When one has the heart God desires for him, he is out of step with the world.
3. This transition process doesn't just automatically occur; it takes concentrated effort.
 - a. **Col. 3: 2** – Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on **S#5.**
earth. **3** For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.
 - b. **Rom. 8: 6** – For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, **7** because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so, **8** and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.
 - c. The word “set” combines the visceral and cognitive aspects of thinking
 - 1) It is an act of the human will.
 - 2) “Transformation” is a radical change; one that puts on out of sync with the world.
4. The difference between Christians and the world is like night and day. **S#6.**
Eph. 5: 8 – Therefore do not be partakers with them; **8** for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light

B. This brief summary of the biblical concept of forgiveness will observe :

S#7.

1. Forgiving others is fundamental to Christianity.
2. Forgiveness Defined.
3. Forgiveness is not ...
4. Developing a forgiving heart.

I. Forgiving others is fundamental to Christianity.**S#8.****A. Jesus taught that His followers must be willing to forgive others.**

1. In our text, the parable from **Matt. 18**, Jesus taught the necessity to forgive others.
 - a. Christians are forgiven more than we can ever be called on to forgive.
 - b. Our sins put the Son of God on the cross as a propitiation for our sins.
2. Peter's question came from the wrong kind of heart. *How often should we forgive?*
 - a. Peter's attitude was as if forgiveness was optional.

- b. He was more generous than the rabbis of his day.

Jose Ben Hanina, a famous rabbi from the 2nd century said, "He who begs forgiveness from his neighbor must not do so more than three times" **S#9.**

Rabbi Jose Ben Jehuda said, "If a man commits an offence once, they forgive him; if he commits an offence a second time, they forgive him; if he commits an offence a third time, they forgive him; **the forth time they do not forgive.**"

* Erroneous teaching based on Amos 1: 3, 6, 9., 11, 13 2: 1, 4, 6

Amos 1: 3 – Thus says the Lord, "For three transgressions of Damascus and for four I will not revoke its punishment, Because they threshed Gilead with implements of sharp iron."

S#10.

- c. The Jews, like most legalist, always want boundaries and limits to be set.
E.G. .. *The Jews defined a Sabbath day's journey as 1500 steps.*
3. Jesus taught that there was no limit to the times one must forgive.
 - a. **Matt. 18: 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?" **S#11.**
22 Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven."
 - b. I'm told "70 X 7" is a Hebrew idiom signifying infinity. 
 - c. Forgiveness is an attitude of one's heart motivated by love.

S#12.**B. The Apostles also commanded that Christians forgive each other and outsiders.**

1. **Eph. 4: 32** – Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.
2. **Col. 3: 12** – So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; **13** bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.

C. The Christian's salvation depends upon his willingness to forgive others. S#13.

Matt. 6: 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.

II. Forgiveness defined :**S#14.****A. Webster defines forgiveness as :****S#15.**

1. : to stop feeling anger (someone who has done something wrong) : to stop blaming
2. : to stop requiring payment : payment of money that is owed (*propitiation*)

B. Strong's Enhanced Lexicon defines the 2 words translated as "forgive" : S#16.**1. Matt. 18 , Mark 11**

Forgive : *aphiemi* : 1 to send away. 1A to bid going away or depart. 1A1 of a husband divorcing his wife. 1B to send forth, yield up, to expire. 1c to let go, let alone, let be. 1c1 to disregard. 1c2 to leave, not to discuss now, (a topic).

2. Eph 4: 32 , Col.3:13

Forgive : *charizomai* : 1 to do something pleasant or agreeable (to one), to do a favour to, gratify. 1A to show one's self gracious, kind, benevolent. 1B to grant forgiveness, to pardon. 1c to give graciously, give freely, bestow.

C. Theological definitions by bible teachers :

1. Forgiveness is a choice to let go of our resentment towards others and to start loving them as Christ does.
2. Forgiveness is the act of setting someone free from an obligation to you that is the result of a wrong done against you.

D. There are three elements in forgiveness.

1. There is an injury, *i.e.*, one person wrongs another.
2. A debt results from that injury; in the mind of the offended party he is owed.
3. The perceived debt is canceled; a moral choice is made to forgive.

S#17.

Note : The "**certificate of debt**" must be removed. The Roman custom was to post charges at the door of a prisoner's cell. (***gave name and listed all charges***)

III. Forgiveness is not ...**S#18.****A. Forgiveness is NOT to approve of or to accept the wrong that was done. S#19.**

1. One must **not** make the offender feel as if he has done nothing wrong. (***It's just me.***)
2. **Jn 8** - Jesus forgave the woman caught in adultery, but told her "**go and sin no more.**"

B. Forgiveness is NOT excusing the wrong.**S#20.**

1. "***It really wasn't a big deal.***" (***That is apologizing for being offended.***)
2. Make the offender face the gravity of his transgression.

C. Forgiving is NOT justifying the offense.**S#20.**

1. In forgiving one should not make excuses for the offender. (*You didn't mean it.*)
2. One who does not face his offense for what it is will not repent before God.

D. Forgiving is NOT pardoning the wrong. (*must deal with sin guilt*, etc)**S#22.**

1. Since your forgiveness doesn't remove sin, the offender must get right with God.
2. If he has broken the law, forgive the offender...then go turn him in to the authorities.

E. Forgiving is NOT reconciliation. (*It is a goal but not automatic.*)**S#23.**

1. If someone has hurt you, you must forgive him, you don't have to invite him to your house for supper or to be his buddy.
2. If the babysitter molested your child, you must be willing to forgive her, but you don't have to let her around your child again or recommend her to others.

* *Forgiveness is not about restoring warm fuzzy feelings.*

F. Forgiving is NOT repressing our feelings.**S#24.**

1. God tells us not to be confrontational, but He never tells us to repress our feelings.
2. Forgiving is not pretending it never happened.
 - a. *"I don't want to talk about it."* (*You must talk about it*, "Go to him alone.")
 - b. *"Be angry, and yet do not sin ..."* Eph. 4: 26

G. Forgiving is NOT forgetting the offense.**S#25**

1. *"I can forgive, but I can never forget."* Don't feel guilty because you remember.
 - a. Forgetting is not a voluntary action. *Memories can't be erased; they can be managed.*
 - b. We can choose not to dwell on an offense, even though we cannot forget it.
2. The bible never tells the Christian that he must forget.
 - a. One can and often does remember the offense and still forgive it.
 - b. When the subject comes up in future, remember it was forgiven and act according.
3. God forgives, **but** .. He is omniscient, meaning that God knows everything.

- a. If God does not forget our sins, what does this verse mean ?

S#26.

Jer. 31: 34 – They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the Lord, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

- b. This is not to say that God no longer has knowledge of forgiven sin, but that He will no longer charge the guilt of those sin to the sinner.
- c. Words of scripture are not always to be taken in their most literal sense. **S#27.**
 - 1) **Isa. 1: 18** – Though your sins are as scarlet, they will be as white as snow; ...
 - 2) **Isa. 38: 17** – For You have cast all my sins behind Your back
 - 3) **Psa. 103: 12** – Just as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.
- d. One can't even forget his own transgressions.
Remember Paul : I Tim. 1: 13 ... formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor

H. Forgiving is NOT pretending you were not hurt by the offense. **S#28.**

- 1. Those who love are not easily offended by those they love. (**I Pet** – *love covers a ...*)
I Cor. 13: 5 – Love ... is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong
- 2. No matter how much you love someone, they can hurt you.
- 3. The old saying, *“Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me.”* is **NOT TRUE**.
- * 4. We can choose how we react or respond to the hurt.
- 5.** Offenders should be made to know that they have caused hurt.

I. Forgiving is NOT optional. **S#29.**

- 1. Forgiving others is a clear command. (*Unambiguous*)
Col. 3: 13 – bearing with one another, and forgiving each other,
 whoever has a complaint against anyone;
 just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. **S#30.**
- 2. Not forgiving others has terminal consequences, unforgiving people are lost.
Matt. 6: 15 – But if you do not forgive others, then your
Father will not forgive your transgressions. **S#31.**
- 3. **Gal. 6: 7** – ... God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.

IV. Developing a forgiving heart ... **S#32.**

A. Remember the verb translated as “forgive” in Ephesians is “*charizomai*” :

- 1. Strong's defines it as : “to give graciously, to give freely, to bestow”
- 2. W.E. Vine defines it as : “to bestow a favor unconditionally”
- 3. As the Christian receives grace, he is expected to give grace.

B. In order to forgive one must :

- 1. Must .. Recognize that everyone is imperfect and all sometimes need forgiveness.

2. Must .. Love others in spite of their faults.
3. Must .. Learn to respond to evil with good. (*Force yourself 'til it's a conditioned response.*)
 - a. **Rom. 12: 21**– Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.
 - b. **Acts 16: 22ff** ... Paul and shared salvation with his jailor after he was beaten.

C. Forgiving others requires faith.

S#33.

1. **Luke 17: 3** – Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. **4** "And if he sins against you seven times a day, and returns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' forgive him." **5** The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!"
2. In order to forgive from the heart, one must trust God to be his avenger.
Rom. 12: 18 – If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. **19** Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine. I will repay." says the Lord. **20** "But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." **21** Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

S#34.

CONCLUSION :

A. True forgiveness is not easy.

1. Though not a man of God, Gandhi was correct when he said,
 "The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong." **S#35.**
- * 2. The famous theologian, C.S. Lewis very astutely said, "***Everyone thinks forgiveness is a lovely idea until they have something to forgive.***" **S#36.**
3. It flows only from transformed hearts. (*The Apostles asked, increase our faith.*)
4. It is contrary to our fleshly nature. (*By nature we want to exact Justice.*)
5. It is countercultural. (*4 out of every 5 lawyers are in the U.S.*)

B. Though it is difficult, against our fleshly nature, and contrary to our culture, developing a forgiving heart is essential to our salvation.

Matt. 6: 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. **S#37.**

INVITATION :

- A. God will forgive you ALL your sins if will cease your sin turn to Him. **S#38.**
- B. He will wash away your trespasses in the blood of Jesus and forgive 70 x 7.

S#39. ... Communion slide

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: 21-35

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.

23 "For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. **24** "When he had begun to settle them, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. **25** "But since he did not have the means to repay, his lord commanded him to be sold, along with his wife and children and all that he had, and repayment to be made. **26** "So the slave fell to the ground and prostrated himself before him, saying, 'Have patience with me and I will repay you everything.' **27** "And the lord of that slave felt compassion and released him and forgave him the debt. **28** "But that slave went out and found one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and he seized him and began to choke him, saying, 'Pay back what you owe.' **29** "So his fellow slave fell to the ground and began to plead with him, saying, 'Have patience with me and I will repay you.' **30** "But he was unwilling and went and threw him in prison until he should pay back what was owed. **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. **32** "Then summoning him, his lord said to him, 'You wicked slave, I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. **33** ' Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave, in the same way that I had mercy on you?' **34** "And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him. **35** " My heavenly Father will also do the same to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart."