



Inver Grove Church of Christ

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Project Outline:

1. Learning God's Forgiveness
2. Ignorance, Forgiven; Presumptuous, Not
3. Joseph's Forgiveness
4. Why Can't I Forgive?
5. Overcoming Unforgiveness
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7. Esau's Forgiveness
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9. How Do You Learn And Cultivate Forgiveness?
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Project 1: Gods Forgiveness



Exodus 34:1-10 (Read for context)

Exo 34:6-7 (6) And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, **merciful** and **gracious, longsuffering**, and **abundant in goodness and truth**, (7) Keeping **mercy** for thousands, **forgiving iniquity** and **transgression** and **sin**, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.

Define these terms.....

Merciful _____

Gracious _____

Longsuffering _____

Abundant in goodness and truth _____

Keeping **Mercy** for thousands _____

Forgiving iniquity and **Transgression** and **Sin** _____

for·give·ness

/ˌfɜːˈɡɪv nə s/

noun

the action or process of forgiving or being forgiven.

"she is quick to ask forgiveness when she has overstepped the line"

synonyms: **pardon, absolution, exoneration, remission, dispensation, indulgence, clemency, mercy;**

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There is no more important characteristic found in the human heart than forgiveness. Its importance is seen in the home, church, community and nation. Someone has said there are "three kindred spirits in the heart -- giving, thanksgiving and forgiving. Usually where one is found, all are found." A forgiving heart is an essential quality every child of God should have (Eph. 4:32).

Reasons To Be Forgiving

God commands it (Mark 11:25). This should be sufficient reason for any right-thinking person to be forgiving because God's promises rest upon obedience to His word. But forgiveness is mere obedience to God's command and it usually falls short of what it should be.

Anything done out of a sense of duty or necessity is usually not from the heart (cf. 2 Cor. 9:5-7). Consider the parent who makes the child say "I'm sorry" when, in reality, he is not sorry at all. He says it but only to appease his parent.

The example of Jesus (1 Pet. 2:21; Phil. 2:3-5; Luke 23:34). As our example in all things, He would not require of us that which He would not do Himself. Even when His life was taken from Him, He had a forgiving attitude. It is said of Him, "He gave all, then forgave."

We have been forgiven. God, in Christ, has forgiven the sins of the Christian (Eph. 4:32). As Christ has forgiven him, he is to forgive others (Col. 3:13). One who is unwilling to forgive after he has been forgiven is viewed disdainfully by the God of heaven (Matt. 18:21-35).

In order to have true forgiveness.. (Matthew 6:14-15).

What It Means To Forgive.....

Forgiveness is more than just speaking the words. It must be sincere and from the heart. It must be patterned after the forgiveness God has granted to us. It must be accompanied by actions which show true forgiveness.

Forgiveness involves a kind attitude -- abandoning all animosity and hatred. All bitterness, anger, wrath, clamor and evil speaking should be put away (Eph. 4:31). We can hold no grudges. One must deny the impulse to get even and seek to do the forgiven one good.

Forgiveness involves forgetting (Heb. 8:12), but what does it mean to forget? It is impossible for a person to completely obliterate the wrong from his mind. Rather it means to not hold the person accountable for it anymore. When forgiveness is granted that should end the matter. It should never again be dredged up or held against the one who has been forgiven.

Forgiveness should be given by the "golden rule" (*Matt. 7:12. Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.*)

One should always be willing to forgive -- even at repeated offenses. Matthew 18:21-22 has the apostle Peter asking, "'Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?' Jesus said to him, 'I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.'"

Jesus was willing to forgive those who crucified Him, but they were not forgiven until they acknowledged their wrong and repented of it (Luke 23:34; Acts 2:36-39). When one refuses to repent, he is to be regarded as a "heathen and a tax collector to you" (Matt. 18:15-17).

How do you feel when you realize you have forgiven someone?

Project 2: Ignorance, Forgiven, Not Presumptuous, Not



Quick Question...If someone made a mistake should I be forgiving towards them?

*Num 15:(29) Ye shall have one law for him that sinneth through **ignorance**, both for him that is born among the children of Israel, and for the stranger that sojourneth among them.(30) But the soul that doeth ought **presumptuously**, whether he be born in the land, or a stranger, the same reproacheth the LORD; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people.*

Let's Read Numbers 15:22-36

Define these words....

Ignorance _____

Presumptuously _____

Let's have a conversation talking about these two types of "attitudes" Why does God see them different and why does he react differently?

Do we act the same way?

This project begins in **Numbers 15:17-31**

(29) Ye shall have one law for him that sinneth through ignorance, both for him that is born among the children of Israel, and for the stranger that sojourneth among them.

(30) But the soul that doeth ought presumptuously, whether he be born in the land, or a stranger, the same reproacheth the LORD; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people.

Mistakes will be made, have we felt bad for messing up, doing the wrong thing, hurting others, hurting God, when done in ignorance, what do you think the actions will be to follow?

Apollos....

Acts 19:1-7 Let's read what he did....

There will be those that will NOT care if they are doing the wrong thing.

Acts 18:24-28 (24) And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus. (25) This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. (26) And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly. (27) And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace: (28) For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ.

Why did he teach John's baptism only?

When Apollos learned he was wrong, how did he handle it?

What happened when he learned the truth?

Saul's Sin.....

1Sa 15:10-19 (10) Then came the word of the LORD unto Samuel, saying, (11) It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments. And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the LORD all night. (12) And when Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning, it was told Samuel, saying, Saul came to Carmel, and, behold, he set him up a place, and is gone about, and passed on, and gone down to Gilgal. (13) And Samuel came to Saul: and Saul said unto him, Blessed be thou of the LORD: I have performed the commandment of the LORD. (14) And Samuel said, What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear? (15) And Saul said, They have brought them from the Amalekites: for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed. (16) Then Samuel said unto Saul, Stay, and I will tell thee what the LORD hath said to me this night. And he said unto him, Say on. (17) And Samuel said, When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the LORD anointed thee king over Israel? (18) And the LORD sent thee on a journey, and said, Go and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed. (19) Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the LORD, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the LORD?

We will need to read the rest of the chapter.

What did God ask Saul to do?

Did he do it?

What was the reason he gave for doing this?

What did Saul beg Samuel to do to fix the problem?

Do we see anything wrong with his attitude?

Project 3: Josephs Forgiveness



Quick Question..... How can someone respond in a Christlike manner when being treated so unjustly?

Many of us know this story, but let's make sure we capture God's role in Joseph's life.

The project begins by reading **Genesis 37-45**. It's only obvious we were not going to read all of this in class, so I am relying on each one of you to read this fresh for this study.

Family Friction generally causes resentment, Joseph is a great example of someone that could have chosen to be vindictive, rather than forgiving.

Joseph was Jacob's favorite son, from his favorite wife, which you may understand why his 10 brothers were so bitter and jealous, and why they ended up selling him as a slave while making their father believe he was killed by a wild beast.

Later Joseph was falsely accused of attempted rape, unjustly imprisoned, and forgotten for years by a friend who promised to help.

Joseph has every reason to sever ties with his family, vent hatred on humanity, and slam the door on God, but he doesn't. Later Joseph becomes "prime minister" of Egypt as severe famine plagued the land. But through God's involvement with Joseph, Egypt is well prepared.

When Joseph's brothers heard there is food in Egypt they make their long journey from Canaan, After realizing Joseph is alive and now "prime minister" they fear for their lives, Joseph had all the power to execute his revenge upon all of them, instead he chooses to forgive them. And tells them all their actions were all part of God's plan for their good and the good of the Jewish people.

Genesis 45:5-8 Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life. (6) For these two years hath the famine been in the land: and yet there are five years, in the which there shall neither be earing nor harvest. (7) And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. (8) So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.

What was Joseph's secret to his success?

Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves,

When God brings out the good out of the wrongs done to you, you receive an attitude of forgiveness

God did send me ..

When you realize you are where God wants you to be, you will have an attitude of forgiveness

He hath made me

When we realize God will make our circumstances all around us are good, forgiveness is present

Romans 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

Let's Read **Genesis 45:1-4**

How did Joseph react?

What came from Joseph's suffering?

1Peter 2:19-23 *For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. (20) For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. (21) For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: (22) Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: (23) Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:*

What was Christ's example for us to follow?

Did you notice Joseph did this?



Quick Question... What should I do if I don't want to reap the damaging results of unforgiveness ?

Psalm 32:5 I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.

David was confident that God had forgiven him as he confessed his transgression, “*thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin*” He understands God is true and just, and when he repented and turned back to God he was released from his sin. You don't see David doubting God's forgiveness here. God forgave him!

Everyone has been created with three God given needs -- the need for love, for significance, and for security. Many people who have been hurt feel insignificant and powerless therefore they try to get their need for significance met by withholding forgiveness. Unforgiveness gives them a sense of power in superiority.

If you ever betrayed by a friend, for time you may have felt powerless to stop the pain. Since no one likes to feel powerless, unforgiveness provides an illusion of power. By refusing to forgive, you feel a sense of power. By holding onto the hatred, you feel infused with strength. By retaliating with revenge, you carry out a power play.

Wrong belief: 'It's natural for me to resent those who have wronged me. If I forgive them they'll get away with it. My offenders need to pay for the wrongs committed against me.'

Result: This belief reflects an attitude of pride that set you up as a judge higher than God himself - God, who is willing to Forgive and forget.

Isaiah 43:25 I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.

Right belief: Because god has totally forgiven me, I can release my resentment and choose to forgive others. I will rely on Christ who is living within me, to forgive through me.

Result: This belief reflects a the heart of humility that results in desire to forgive others in the same way God forgives you

Mat 6:14-15 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: (15) But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Project 4: Why Cant I Forgive?

We had a similar question to this back in November about forgiving each other in Jim's class.

Jim's question was... Why is it so hard for us to forgive one another?

What kind of answers did you come up with?

So let's ask a simple question why should we forgive?

The obvious answer to the question, "why forgive?" is this, because God said so! But why does God say so? First because others need it. And second, because we need it! Long ago, George Herbert said that the person who cannot forgive "breaks the bridge over which all must pass if they would ever reach heaven; for everyone has a need to be forgiven."

Let's look at God's heart on forgiveness.

God commands that we forgive each other...

***Eph 4:32** And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.*

God wants us to forgive others because he forgives us.

***Col 3:13** Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.*

God wants us to see unforgiveness as sin.

***Jas 4:17** Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.*

God wants us rid of unforgiveness and have a heart of mercy.

***Mat 5:7** Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.*

God wants us to do our part to live in peace with every one.

***Rom 12:18** If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.*

God wants us to overcome evil with good.

***Rom 12:21** Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.*

God wants us to be ministers of reconciliation.

***2Cor 5:18** And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; (19) To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.*

When I don't forgive who really carries the burden around?



Quick Question... What are some questions we can ask ourselves to ascertain if we have really forgiven another?

There are three kindred spirits of the human heart – giving, forgiving, and thanksgiving. And, usually where you find one, you will find the others.

What is forgiveness?

Forgiveness is not: (a) just ignoring those who wrong us. Now, this is fine if we are ignoring the slight because the offender did not have a chance; but if we ignore it on the basis of contempt for the offender, that is a different matter. (b) Forgiveness is more than a refusal to strike a blow for blow, tooth for tooth. One might refrain from such but still harbor bitterness and ill will. (c) Forgiveness is not ignoring the sin. God does not overlook sin; nor, should man. Jesus says rebuke, not to ignore. (Luke 17:3). (d) Forgiveness is not putting the offender on probation, while we discuss how inexcusable his behavior was, and then promising to forget it providing no other offenses are forthcoming.

We can tell what forgiveness is by observing what God does when he forgives. (a) He removes the notation from his record, Acts 3:19. (b) He forgets, putting it out of his memory Hebrews 8:12 (c) And He treats us just like He did before we had sinned, receiving us back wholeheartedly. Luke 15:20-24.

Forgiveness when exemplified, can be better understood. Esau forgave Jacob, Genesis 33:4 Joseph forgave his brethren, Genesis 45:5-15; 50:10-21. Moses forgave Miriam and Aaron, Numbers 12:1-13. David forgave Saul, 1Sam 24:9-22. The father forgave his wayward son Luke 15:11-32.

We can tell if we're forgiving another by taking the "Have I Really Forgiven My Offender" test.

- (a) Do I secretly rejoice when I hear some misfortune assailing my offender?
- (b) Do I purposely avoid his or her presence?
- (c) Do I speak to them hesitantly and only under duress?
- (d) Do I vividly remember the wrong committed?
- (e) Do I ever sit in silence and meditate and brood over the wrong done me?
- (f) If a particular circumstance arose related to the offender demanding prayer, would I be happy and anxiously go to God on his behalf?

The importance and necessity of forgiving one another

1. **It is a command.** (Mark 11:25; Col 3:13). Now, read (Revelation 22:14) and (John 14:15). And, there are no non-essential commandments! Forgiving one another is no more non-essential than baptism and the Lord's Supper.
2. **The example of Jesus impels it.** (Luke 23:34; 1 Pet 2:21-22; Phil 2:5) We follow his example in being baptized, eating the Lord's Supper, and attending worship services, etc. Will we not follow His example him forgiving others?
3. **The examples of the early disciples teach it.** (Acts 7:60) An atheist once said, If there be a God, why didn't he help Stephen who prayed for his enemies as they stoned into death? "He did by giving him grace to Pray for his murderers" was the reply.
4. **Love calls for it.** (1 Cor 13:4; 1 Pet 4:8) Hate is the preventive to forgiveness.
5. **Forgive because we have been forgiven.** (Eph 4:32) the parable of the unmerciful servant illustrates this point (Matt 18:23-35)
6. **In order that we might be forgiven** (Matt 6:12,14,15; Mark 11:25) These verses relate one of the flatest statements in the bible. It is a "take it or leave it" proposition. It is forgive and be forgiven; or refuse forgiveness and have forgiveness refused! The most expensive thing in the world you can do is harbor ill will toward another. You have paid the price of the loss of heaven. We must give mercy to receive mercy. (Matt 5:7; Jas 2:13) He who will not forgive breaks the bridge over which he himself must pass. If we cannot forgive another we clog the channel through which through which divine forgiveness flows; So, let us not clog our hearts with hate, malice and ill will
7. **We must forgive to walk with God** (Amos 3:3) We cannot have fellowship with someone whose entire philosophy of life differs from our own. This applies to us and God (1 John 1:7) Thus to walk with God, since he is so forgiving, we must be forgiving.
8. **Forgive, for it may be later than you think** (a) Christ may come (Mark 13:32) and, who would want to be found at his coming estranged from his fellow man? (2 Pet 3:14) (b) The object of your revenge and hate may die. Thackeray and Dickens, the two great English literary masters back in the 19th Century, became rivals. After several years of estrangement they met accidentally in London, Frigidly facing one another. On an impulse, Thackeray turned back and seized the hand of Dickens, who was touched by the gesture. They left smiling with the old jealousy destroyed. In just a few days Thackeray died; and the next time Dickens saw him was when he looked down at his form in the grave. A writer, later recalling the story, wrote "Is it not always well to seek forgiveness now," (c) You can stand on the verge of eternity with the possibility of dying in any moment. After the death of Queen Caroline, Lord Chesterfield said a sad thing "An unforgiving, unforgiven dies"
9. **The parable of the unmerciful servant** (Matt 18:21-35) Points out two very bad things about the unforgiving man (a) He is mean or wicked (vs 32) Some may not have missed a service in 30 years but will be called "wicked" by the Lord at judgment because their hearts were filled with ill will, resentment, and they were unforgiving. (b) He was on his way to torment (vs 34) and; this, though he had been previously forgiven!



Quick question: What are some statements which reveal an improper attitude toward forgiving others?

Attitudes toward forgiveness

- (1) **“I cannot forgive”** No, God does not require the impossible it is rather a “ I will not forgive” now read (James 2:10) . The greatest of men have been able to forgive the severest of offenses. Joseph and Steven are examples of this.
- (2) **“I’m going to forgive you, but in a future I’m not going to have anything to do with you”.** We are to “forgive” as Christ “forgives” (Eph 4:32) and he certainly does not forgive this manner. Do you remember the definition of forgiveness?
- (3) **“It’s a favor from me to you”** Actually, the reverse is true; for the penitent offender can be forgiven of God without my extending forgiveness, but I cannot be forgiven unless I do forgive him! With this improper attitude towards forgiveness, the offended will usually extend forgiveness only upon certain rigid conditions. However, we must avoid putting such qualifications on our forgiveness. “ Freely forgiving one another”, (Col 3:13)
- (4) **“I’m going to forgive you but I’ll never forget it”** This is like burying the hatchet with a handle sticking out. It is like sweeping the room, but leaving the dirt behind the door. Spurgeon said, Spurgeon said, “Forgive and forget”; when you bury a mad dog don't leave his tail above the ground. We must avoid keeping a file system, God does not. (Hebrews 8:12; 10:17)

How am I to Forgive?

- (1) **“From the heart”**(Matthew 18:35) we must avoid mere lip forgiveness (Matthew 15:8) While we continue to harbor malice and ill will in our hearts.
- (2) **“As God forgives”** (Matthew 18:33; Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:13) but “even as” of (Colossians 3:13) means “in the same manner” God forgives (a) freely - no constraints (b) abundantly -- no peace-meals (c) immediately -- no time payments and (d) finally -- he does not bring it up again

How often must I Forgive?

Peter thought seven times was sufficient. The rabbi said to forgive three times. Peter doubted and added one, thinking such would be entirely sufficient. But, in (Mat 18:22) Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven. Jesus is teaching is qualitative and not quantitative. He is saying, do not keep a ledger; for, forgiveness “it is not a matter of arithmetic or of bookkeeping, but of love; and, love has no limits.” Let us avoid saying, “it will do no good to forgive him, he will do it again.” As long and as frequently as a man will turn and say, “I repent,” we are to forgive him. (Luke 17:3-5)

Who must take the initiative in the manner of defecting forgiveness?

- (1) ***The offender.*** (Matthew 5:23-24) yes, before the offender can worship specially, he must first get the thing straight out with the offended one. Thus, the shortest way to God is the distance it to your brother's house. If the inspired instructions of this passage are followed, a lot of worship service and would be broken up. There is no use trying to talk to God if we are not on speaking terms with our brother.
- (2) ***The offended,*** (Matthew 18:15-17) and, yet, we oftentimes take the attitude, “well he sinned against me so let him take the initiative”. Was not the Lord the offended one; yet, did he not leave heaven and come seek and save the sinner?
- (3) ***Let us suppose a case:*** here is Brother A and Brother B. A sins against B. When the bible is followed, and both will take the initiative; and, will meet about halfway, and reconciliation will follow.

You will not have much to forgive

- (1) ***If you refuse to be thin skinned.*** Love is not easily offended (1 Cor 13:5) little minds are wounded by little things. Avoid caring a chip on your shoulder, for such indicates wood higher up. In fact the heaviest of all loads to carry, is the chip on the shoulder. If you'll take responsibility on your shoulders there will not be room enough for chips.
- (2) ***If we get lost a large, preoccupying cause..*** Men's lives must gravitate toward some center. As long as “self” is the center, a person will be easily offended and hurt. However if he will get lost in the work of the church of the Lord, he will have no time for petty offenses and imagined slights and insults.



Quick Question: How do you feel when someone forgives you?

Jacob was forgiven of his wrong doings by his brother, for taking advantage of him when he was hungry, he talked him into selling his birthright, then eventually he received Esau's blessing in deceit,

Gen 27:33-41 *And Isaac trembled very exceedingly, and said, Who?(41) And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him: and Esau said in his heart, The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I slay my brother Jacob.*

Then his mother told Jacob to flee to Laban's house.

Then Esau ran to meet him and embraced him, threw his arms around his neck, and kissed him. And they both wept. - Genesis 33:4 One of the greatest examples of forgiveness in the Old Testament is Esau's forgiveness and acceptance of his brother Jacob. Often overlooked and forgotten in the New Testament by the church fathers, Esau (Edom) is always remembered for selling his birth right, having his father's blessing stolen from him, and receiving the lesser blessing (if not a curse) from Isaac, his father.

Esau's story is sometimes more relatable to me as a leader than his brother Jacob's story. I understand his mistake in selling his birth right. He made the poor decision when he was hungry and tired. Two physical states that often lead to poor decision making and even sin in my own life.

So Esau returned that day on his way unto Seir. (17) And Jacob journeyed to Succoth, and built him an house, and made booths for his cattle: therefore the name of the place is called Succoth. (18) And Jacob came to Shalem, a city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Padanaram; and pitched his tent before the city. (19) And he bought a parcel of a field, where he had spread his tent, at the hand of the children of Hamor, Shechem's father, for an hundred pieces of money. (20) And he erected there an altar, and called it Elelohe-Israel.

When we harbor unforgiveness and live with the consequences of un-reconciled relationships, our relationship with the LORD also suffers. Up to the point of this event, Jacob had spent his entire adult life burdened by his estrangement from his family. His guilt and separation impacted his relationship with others, and his relationship with God. It was the restoration of his relationship with God that prompted the reconciliation with Esau. This is an important point. Our joy will never be full as long as we reject God's call to reconciliation with others in our lives.

Project 7: Esaus Forgiveness

The scriptural call to forgive others is clear, with many verses leaving little doubt. For example,

Matt. 6:12. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

Matt. 6:14. For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:

Matt. 6:15. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Mark 11:25. And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.

The scriptural call to reconciliation with others is also clear:

2 Cor. 5:18. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

Summary

- It is God's purpose for us to love Him and to love each other. That purpose is thwarted when we allow conflict to divide us.
- God calls us to reconcile (2 Cor. 5:18ff, et. al.).
- The way of caution often is the way of wisdom. Jacob took caution and thought out his response to meeting with his brother.
- We should humbly seek forgiveness from the people whom we have wronged. What is the nature of a relationship when one individual has wronged another? Often that relation is strained at best, or estranged at worst. What happens when forgiveness and reconciliation take place? Often the longer we wait for reconciliation, the more difficult it becomes. This certainly was the case with Jacob, as he had waited for twenty to thirty years.
- Often the people who have been wronged seek reconciliation as much as the other. Likewise, we should be willing to forgive and to seek reconciliation with those who have wronged us.
- Other people are almost always affected by our reconciliation or separation.
- We must first forgive ourselves. Sometimes we may need to make amends before we can do this.
- As we forgive one another we seek forgiveness from God. Like Esau running to Jacob, and the father of the Prodigal running to his son, God runs to us with open arms and forgiveness if we will seek him.

REFLECTION

Is there someone in your life that you need to forgive?

What are the effects of not forgiving someone?

Are you creating a culture with those you love and lead that promotes forgiveness and second chances?



Quick Question: From the negative stand, list a few things that are hard to forgive.

Were Adultery and Murder in your list above?

I am not here to cut anybody slack with the sins we commit, but, we may have done some things God calls sin. (1 John 3:4) Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. We have transgressed, All of us have. (Rom 3:10) As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:

I feel it necessary to remind ourselves that we have been forgiven, by men and most importantly God. Even we have forgiven others for the foolish sins they have committed, repented and confessed to us, we forgave them. We need to remember to forgive ourselves. Which brings us to our lesson today, David, a man after God's own heart!

David was a man of tears. He had many afflictions and learned early to cry out to God for deliverance. He learned this lesson by studying the lives of God's people. While the righteous had many troubles, he saw that the Lord always delivered them. "Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all" (Psalm 34:19) David also cried unto the Lord for mercy and pardon; he asked for the forgiveness of his sins. "Have mercy upon me, O God...Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin" (Psalm 51:1-2).

Remember what God did in his reply? (Psalm 32:5) I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou ***forgavest the iniquity of my sin.*** Selah.

He forgave him, remember his sins? (2 Samuel 11) And it came to pass in an eveningtide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon. ... ***We will read the chapter***, then, Nathan revealed his sins to him, (2 Sam 12:13) And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.

God was able to see David's heart in the sins he had committed, and he forgave him, there were some things David would have to live with, the baby's death, sword always be in his home, and problems with his wives.

God's forgiveness is shown to us through the many men and women God has forgiven in the Holy Scriptures, when we say we don't know how to forgive, were not listening.

(Micah 7:18-20) Who is a God like You, Pardoning iniquity, And passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He does not retain His anger forever, Because He delights in mercy. (19) He will again have compassion on us, And will subdue our iniquities. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. (20) You will give truth to Jacob And mercy to Abraham, Which You have sworn to our fathers From days of old.

Hopefully we can see the pattern here with God, he forgives and forgets, we have a hard time with the forget part at times, bury the axe, yet the handle we leave it sticking out. We need to stop thinking like men and think like God does, after all nobody is perfect!

(Psalm 103:8-13) The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. (9) He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever. (10) He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. (11) For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. (12) As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. (13) Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him.

We need to see this example God is showing us, we need to forgive others, it may cost us our souls!

(Mat 6:14-15) For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: (15) But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Many of these verses are plain and understood by us all, so be encouraged as we study this again today.

(Eph 4:32) And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. (Col 3:13) Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.

(1 John 1:4-10) And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full. (5) This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. (6) If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: (7) But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. (8) If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. (9) If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (10) If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

When we have a hard time forgiving ourselves....

In order to forgive ourselves, we first have to admit to ourselves that we blew it. We have to take ownership and acknowledge the flaw or mistake—and that feels almost counter to our sense of survival!

Retain what you learned from the event but release everything else.

"How unhappy is he who cannot forgive himself." Publilius Syrus Many of us know that forgiveness is a good thing, right? It frees us from bitterness and anger, two emotions that not only don't feel good but they can also ruin our physical health and hold us back from all the good we might achieve and experience. I know that many of you have worked on forgiving others. But what about forgiving ourselves?

Project 9: How Do You Learn And Cultivate Forgiveness?



Quick Question: “I know God has forgiven me of my sins, but how do I forgive myself?”

How do you learn and Cultivate forgiveness?

- (1) ***Remember that hatred, ill will and bitterness, while such harms the object, does far more harm to the hater.*** Batsell Barrett Baxter It tells the story of riding on the plane next to a blind man who was an executive. Not being able to resist asking what caused his blindness, the blind man answered Brother Baxter by telling him how a competitor of his hired a gangster to throw acid on his face. Brother Baxter asked him if he knew who he was. “Yes, but I could not prove it in court,” He said. I asked if he felt terrible resentment, He said “I did for years but it dawned on me that I was doing myself the real injury. I forgave this man and actually done him some favors in recent years.”
- (2) ***You will find it easier to forgive when you consider how greatly you have been forgiven.*** The parable of the unmerciful servant portrays this (Matt 18:23-35) “went out” (vs 28) are key words for this parable. It is because we go out of the presence of God, forgetting his mercy extended toward us, that we are in danger of acting as did the unmerciful servant.
- (3) ***Ask for the assistance of God.*** But make sure you really want to be forgiving. This is the difference in saying and praying a prayer.
- (4) ***Recite a portion of the disciple’s prayer inserting your offender’s name.*** Thus, you will pray, “Forgive me my trespasses as I forgive (insert name) his trespasses”
- (5) ***Practice praying for your offender.*** Be specific and call his name. Jesus prayed for his offenders; not for their punishment but for forgiveness to be extended to them (Luke 23:34) forgiveness has to do with feelings; and, through meaningful prayer on the behalf of the offender we come to create and love and feeling that is hard to obtain otherwise.
- (6) ***Speak to others in a kindly manner about the person who has done you an injustice.***
- (7) ***Develop an understanding heart.*** (Proverbs 8:5, 1 Kings 3:9, 12) there is usually a cause why a person acts discourteously, he may be a victim of his own heredity or environment; or, he may have had something misrepresented to him, resulting in his offensive behavior.
- (8) ***Cultivate the grace of mercifulness and compassion.*** (Matthew 5:7; James 2:13: Matthew 18:33

Is there a different way for me to tell my story, a way in which: -at the least, I am not a victim, and at the most, I am a hero?

Examples:

A) "My parents hated me, were cruel to me, and ruined my life."

Can be changed to any one of these:

"My folks were not very skilled at parenting, but they did the best they could."

"I am one of the many kids who had a rotten childhood, but today I'm okay."

"My folks were terrible parents, but today I have the opportunity to parent myself."

B) "I wasted seven years of my life with that loser husband of mine, who was afraid of intimacy while we were together, and now just bad mouths me to all our friends."

Can be changed to any one of these:

"I chose a really exciting but very immature guy to marry, and ignored all the warning signs and my friends' advice. I will encourage others to choose far more carefully."

"I get to move on with my life, but am saddened that the guy I cared enough about to marry is stuck in the past, unwilling to utilize any tools to heal, and will probably end up a very lonely and bitter old man."

"I have honored my sadness over the breakup of my marriage, but life is short and I am living it. Not only are there so many quality men out there, but so many friends and wonderful opportunities to cultivate my God-given skills and to be of service."

C) "My baby is dying – I know God hates me and is abandoning & punishing me – why else would he take my baby?"

Can be changed to any one of these:

"I know it's the heart defect that is taking my baby's life, and I am so grateful that God will be there to receive him."

"I'm so grateful I have this moment, this hour, this day to love & hold my baby."

"I am so blessed to have a God who may not be able to alter what is happening to my baby, but who is a Co-Sufferer – who weeps with me over the impending death of my child, but who will be there to receive and love my child in Heaven."

Imagine if we can reword all our blame towards others and be forgiving people, And Cultivate Forgiveness.

cul·ti·vate definition - 1) try to acquire or develop (a quality, sentiment, or skill 2) to promote or improve the growth of (a plant, crop, etc.) by labor and attention.



Quick Question: How do we encourage others to “consider their ways”?

Luke 23:34 Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.

Jesus spoke these words right after they nailed him to the cross. You would think it would be hard to say anything at this point, yet he pleaded with God, to forgive them, they did not know what they were doing.

He paid the penalty for the sins that we commit in our ignorance (and even the ones we’ve committed deliberately). In forgiving us, Jesus fulfilled yet another Old Testament prophecy (*Isa 53:12 Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.*). He also made a reality of His own preaching. He had said, “Love your enemies” (Matthew 5:44); now He was proving it.

Luke 23:34 Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do."

I believe God wants us understanding something that is not so obvious to the casual reader. I believe God is trying to communicate to disciples of Jesus today that forgiving those who have hurt us is the wisest decision we can make about such people. Forgiveness is a spiritual weapon God gives us that helps protect us from the devil robbing, stealing and destroying joy and peace and faith in our lives.

Let’s think of the other side of this, if Jesus did not forgive where would that place him? It’s obvious we need to forgive, While the positive outcome of forgiving someone is great, there are serious consequences for those who refuse to forgive. In fact, choosing not to forgive can drastically and severely affect nearly every area of your life.

Let’s take a look at what happens when you choose not to forgive...

I have heard it said that holding onto unforgiveness is like continually drinking rat poison, hoping the rat will die. By holding onto the desire to get even, you continually drink the toxic poison of unforgiveness, hoping to get back at the person who hurt you. Not only does it sound crazy, but it doesn’t work! Unforgiveness is like a boomerang—you can throw it at the person who has hurt you, but it eventually comes back and hits you.

Unforgiving People Can Become...

Prideful, Angry, Resentful, Bitter, Vengeful, Hostile, Judgmental, Lonely, Fearful, Joyless,

Defensive, Exhausted, Blaming, Irrational, Violent, Manipulative, Non-Communicative, Self-Destructive, Indifferent To Helpful Advice, Emotionally Dead, Untrusting, Self-Absorbed, Negative, Cynical, Self-Righteous, Stubborn, Hopeless, Spiritually Bankrupt...

If you are refusing to forgive someone, which of these descriptions fit you best?

When you choose to forgive, you free the offender, but more importantly, you free yourself.

God's weapon of forgiveness He exhorts believers to use that kindles our anger against those who have wrongly hurt them doesn't cancel out the wrath God will execute against them in due season for their sin(s) against us. Every person who has wrongly hurt you who doesn't receive the forgiveness of God through Christ Jesus for it before they die will be eternally tormented for the wrong that person has done to you.

Col 3:12-14 Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; (13) Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. (14) And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.

Jesus came to help all, the sinner and the saint alike, the sinner to see the error of their way, the saint to be forgiving, not allowing others hinder your fellowship with him.

Forgiving someone who has hurt you could be the greatest challenge of your life. But if you choose to forgive, you will join those who are not being destroyed by bitterness, anger, hurt or other toxic emotions. There is nothing quite like living in peace, knowing you are a forgiving person.

Mark 2:7 Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God only? This scripture can help us by understanding we need God's help to forgive others. If we are having a hard time forgiving others DO WE ASK GOD FOR HELP?

If anyone ever had good reason to withhold forgiveness from his enemies, it was the Lord Jesus. He was the only true victim—totally innocent of any wrongdoing. He never broke the law of God. He never sinned in His actions, words, or thoughts. He never yielded to any temptation whatsoever.

Scripture says, “[He] committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in his mouth” (1 Peter 2:22). He “has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15). He is “holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners” (Hebrews 7:26).

No one was less worthy of death than He. Even the evil Roman governor Pontius Pilate testified repeatedly, “I find no guilt in this man” (Luke 23:4; cf. Mark 15:14; John 19:4, 6).

At the height of His agony, at the very moment when most victims of crucifixion might scream out in fury with a curse, Christ prayed for forgiveness for His tormentors: “*Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing*” (Luke 23:34).

Move on. It's time to stop dwelling on what happened. By forgiving someone you're promising not to bring it up again to use against him or her.

Project 11: Servants Forgiveness



Quick Question: Though we live wholly on mercy and forgiveness, why we are backward to forgive the offences of our brethren?

Mat 18:22-35 Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven. (23) Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. (24) And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents.

What is the lesson here?

Why did the King forgive the servant?

How does the amount owed by the fellow servant compare to the amount forgiven by the king to the unmerciful servant?

Contrast the attitude of the unmerciful servant toward his fellow servant to the attitude of the king toward the unmerciful servant.

Were the fellow-servants of verse 31 wrong in informing their master of the actions of the unmerciful servant? Explain your answer.

The king symbolizes God and to take account symbolizes divine judgment. The 10,000 talents was more money than was circulating in all of Israel. The talent was the largest unit of currency equivalent to approximately 6,000 days wages. And 10,000 is the highest single number that can be expressed in Greek. The sum represents the sinner's hopeless debt to God. Selling the debtor, his family, and possessions would hardly begin to recoup his debt. Forgiving such a loan is an astounding act of grace.

The hundred pence (denarii) was equivalent with 3 months' wages. The contrast between the 10,000 talents and the 10,000 denarii shows all the sins of others against us are trivial in comparison to the enormity of our own sins against God. The drudge begged the slave to have patience just as the slave begged before the king but the drudge was more honest in his pleas and promises because his debt was actually manageable.

The parables point is now revealed since God has shown believers such great mercy by pardoning their sins they should in turn sincerely forgive the sins of others.

Do we understand the depth of this lesson, forgive others, or God will not forgive you.

We can learn several principles from the Parable of the Unforgiving Servant:

- Our sins are great.
- God abundantly forgives.
- Offenses committed against us are comparatively small.
- We should abundantly forgive as our Master does.
- If we do not, God will be justly angry and punish us.

Reminds me of my baptism...I came into the church with a covenant I made with God, I will repent, he will forgive me of ALL of my sins, do you remember that day you were made free?

God fulfilled his part, I am still failing.

No need to share this with anybody.... Think about how you offended someone and they forgave you. Can you think of someone you have not forgiven? Ask yourself why, and then write down the things that same person has done for you out of love. Perhaps you will be able to see how much this person means to you when you are forgiving.

Forgiveness reflects the highest human virtue, because it so clearly reflects the character of God. A person who forgives is a person who emulates godly character. Nothing so much demonstrates God's love as His forgiveness. A person who does not forgive is therefore a person lacking in godly character and without Christ-like love, no matter how correct his theology or how outwardly spotless his morals appear to be. A Christian who will not relinquish a hateful, resentful attitude toward someone who has wronged him is a person who knows neither the true glory of his redeemed humanity nor the true glory of God's gracious divinity. An unforgiving Christian is a living contradiction of His new nature in Christ. It is central to the heart of God to forgive, and only the Christian who radiates forgiveness radiates true godliness.

Considering forgiveness from another direction, Christians need to forgive because they themselves need forgiveness. They are spiritual children and, like all children, are ignorant, weak, selfish, disobedient, and regularly in need of forgiveness, both from God and from each other. Forgiving is a give-and-take issue of life.

Forgiveness is therefore the key to spiritual unity in the church, because it is the key to love and the key to all meaningful relationships. Only forgiveness can break down the barriers that sin continually and inevitably erects between people, including God's people.



Quick Question: If someone comes to you and apologies to you without using the “right words” can you still forgive them?

Prov 13:10 Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom.

Personally I am a stickler to make sure I am clear of the matter I am discussing with someone, I try to recall the incident to their memory so they remember, so when I apologize, or ask forgiveness, I am clear of the matter.

This Project hopefully will help us do two things:

1. Make sure I am clear in what I want forgiveness for, or what I am forgiving you for.
2. Listen when others come to me and ask me to forgive them.

Joshua 7:18-21 And he brought his household man by man; and Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken. (19) And Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the LORD God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me. (20) And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done: (21) When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it.

We can at times just say “I have sinned, forgive me!”

I sure hope when we go to God and confess that sin were a little more detailed, we actually can be more clear with another as well, “forgive me for my attitude the other day” may seem clear to you but...not so to the hearer.

Be specific, be clear, don’t excuse ourselves as were confessing (remember we came to be forgiven, not justified) enough details to recall the situation, all the gory details are not always needed. (If you said a bad word, don’t say it again as your apologizing for saying it)

Asking forgiveness is not a light thing, as a matter of fact, when we really consider were in a bad place with God (or separated from God because of sin) it is a very sobering thing.

Even when addressing God, we should name names, places, sins by their names as a way of feeling sorrowful for what we did, *2Cor 7:9-11 Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. (10) For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.*

2Co 7: (11) For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.

Listening to others as they come to you, first of all it is hard, they are sorry, they are squelching their pride, words may not come out as they want them, have compassion not heckle them. And consider the fact they are coming to you to be free of guilt, don't correct them on trivial things like time, dates or colors. And let it be their words, not what you want to hear, listen to what is said, not what you feel needs said.

2 Kings 5:11 But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the LORD his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper.

Not done his way so he was mad!

I want to introduce more words, ***forgiveness redefined.***

Pardon:

Psalm 25:11 For thy name's sake, O LORD, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great.

Jer 33:8 And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me.

Isaiah 55:7 Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

Remission:

Acts 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Acts 8:39 And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.

Mercy:

1Chron 16:34 O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever.

Psalm 6:2 Have mercy upon me, O LORD; for I am weak: O LORD, heal me; for my bones are vexed.

Luke 1:50 And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation.

Jude 1:21 Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

Antonyms: *mercilessness, punishment* (consider these words as you refuse to forgive, Pardon, Remit or fail to have mercy.

God has defined his forgiveness in many ways, we need to look for what he has done to show his forgiveness, and mimic his love for us to others, and not get caught up on self.



Quick Question: How can we be partakers of this divine nature.? (below).

The Way Of Christ is the way of forgiveness. But forgiving others is not human nature: "To err is human, but to forgive is divine" (Alexander Pope).

A. DEVELOPING FORGIVENESS...

1. It helps to remember why we must forgive:
 - a. We cannot be forgiven by God unless we forgive others – Mat 6:14-15
 - b. The unforgiving person will be punished without mercy! – Mat 18:35; James 2:13
 - c. Vengeance belongs to God, not us; our duty is to show mercy -- Rom 12:19-21
2. It helps to remember as we try to forgive:
 - a. Sins against us pale in comparison to our sins against God -- Mat 18:23-34
 - b. We are called to follow the example of Christ - Eph 4:32; 5:1-2
 - c. Those who injure us need sympathy and love, which we owe them - Rom 13:8
3. It helps to remember practical reasons to forgive (from the Mayo Clinic website):
 - a. Healthier relationships
 - b. Greater spiritual and psychological well-being
 - c. Less stress and hostility
 - d. Lower blood pressure
 - e. Fewer symptoms of depression, anxiety and chronic pain
 - f. Lower risk of alcohol and substance abuse

-- The spirit and willingness to forgive increases as we grow in Christ

EXPRESSING FORGIVENESS...

1. *We should forgive when others ask for it*

- a. Whenever a brother repents - Luke 17:3
- b. Whenever a brother says "I repent" - Luke 17:4

2. *Can we forgive those who have not asked for it, or repented?*

- a. It is true that God requires repentance before forgiveness - Acts 2:38; 3:19; 17:30
- b. But we are not God; God is the only true Judge - James 4:11-12
- c. God is perfect, He knows the hearts of men; we are prone to misread and misjudge
- d. Ultimately it is God who forgives the guilt of sin; we can only give up grudges
- e. Harboring grudges hurts ourselves, making us embittered ("judges with grudges")
- f. We are to forgive as we pray, not necessarily wait until one repents - Mark 11:25-26
- g. Jesus and Stephen forgave others who had yet to repent – Luke 23:34; Acts 7:60

3. *What about, "I'll forgive, but not forget"?*

- a. "I can forgive, but I cannot forget, is only another way of saying, I will not forgive. Forgiveness ought to be like a cancelled note - torn in two, and burned up, so that it never can be shown against one." - Henry Ward Beecher
- b. Forgiveness is the letting go of resentment; remembering is not letting go!

-- Knowing my own imperfections, I prefer to err on the side of being too forgiving

CONCLUSION

1. We have considered why it is important to forgive others...

- a. To receive forgiveness from God
- b. To follow the example of Christ and His early disciples

2. This simply confirms what we studied previously...

- a. *The Way Of Christ* is the way to life, love, joy, and peace
- b. A path where forgiveness is both received and extended by those who are on it

"And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses." - Mark 11:25-26