

Forgiveness

Gulf Coast Dispensational Church

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The Law that God gave to Israel contained the command that the people love their neighbor as themselves.

Leviticus 19:17-18

Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him. Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but **thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD.**

When He was giving his Sermon on the Mount, the Lord Jesus Christ told the crowds that they should not offer any sacrifice to God for their own forgiveness, until they had forgiven their neighbor.

Matthew 5:23-24

Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; **first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.**

We find out why, when the Lord gave His disciples what we know as the “Lord’s Prayer,” He plainly told them that God would not forgive their sins if they had not forgiven all of the people who had sinned against them.

Matthew 6:12-15

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. **For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.**

Peter asked for clarification about how many times they were required to forgive someone else. The answer, as you know, was 70x7! 490 times is quite a big number!! But, when you think about it, if you really count someone sinning against you 490 times, you have missed the point that there is no limit to the number of times you are required to forgive someone. The most difficult part is that there is no mention that you forgive only if someone apologizes and asks

you to. You are required to forgive, they are not required to ask you to do it!

Matthew 18:21-22, 34-35

²¹Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, **how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him?** till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say **not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.**

³⁴And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise **shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.**

Everything in the Bible is important, but repetition is a sign of something you really need to understand. The gospels of Mark and Luke also have the same information. The people of Israel were required to forgive their neighbors if they wanted God to forgive them.

Mark 11:25-26

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. **But if**

ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.

Luke 6:37

Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: **forgive, and ye shall be forgiven:**

Jesus followed the Law perfectly when He asked His Father to forgive those who crucified Him

Luke 23:33-34

And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left. **Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.** And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.

Stephen, who was killed for speaking to the Jewish leadership by the power of the Holy Ghost followed the Law when he asked God to forgive the men stoning him.

Acts 7:59-60

And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. **And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.** And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

The information contained in the gospels is for the nation Israel who was required to follow the Law. As dispensational Bible students, we know that after Jesus Christ's death, burial, and resurrection, we are not under the Law.

Romans 10:3-4

For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. **For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.**

Christ has fulfilled the Law for us and has forgiven all of the sins of all of mankind. So we have already been forgiven for everything we have ever done or ever will do.

Colossians 2:13-15

And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

We did not ask Jesus for His forgiveness. He died for us while we were yet in our sins.

Romans 5:8-9

But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

God's forgiveness is a free gift that Christ gave to everyone.

Romans 5:18

Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one **the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.**

But, to receive a gift, you must accept the gift. Christ saved all men (people) but only those who accept His forgiveness are saved.

1 Timothy 4:9-11

This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation. For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, **because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe.** These things command and teach.

We do not have to forgive others to receive forgiveness. After we accept Jesus' forgiveness, we can never lose it, whether or not we forgive others.

Ephesians 4:31-32

Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from

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

It is difficult to forgive others, sometimes even when they ask you to. It is especially difficult when the person you need to forgive does not apologize, express remorse, or acknowledge that they have even done something against you.

Paul tells us about how we should treat each other as believers (elect of God.) He says we should forbear (put up with) one another and forgive anyone who has a quarrel against you.

Colossians 3:12-13

Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; **Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.**

As servants of the Lord Jesus Christ, we are not to strive (fight with others) but be gentle with everyone and do our best to teach them about

the salvation that comes from accepting the Lord Jesus Christ's death, burial, and resurrection on their behalf. The phrase, "those that oppose themselves," can best be demonstrated when people do things against their best interest because they are too proud to admit they were wrong about something. We are to pray that they come to their senses and acknowledge the truth.

2 Timothy 2:24-26

And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

We are not to "get people back" for hurting us or others. We are to try to live at peace with all men, knowing that if anyone hurts us, God will avenge us. We are to try to overcome the evil that others do with good deeds.

Romans 12:17-19

Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. **If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.** Dearly beloved, **avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.** Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so **doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.** **Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.**

Our families can cause us the most trouble when it comes to forgiveness. We are interconnected with them in a way that is unlike anyone else. We are instructed to provide for people in our own house. That means spiritually as well as materially.

1 Timothy 5:8

But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.

What do we do when people in our families have a quarrel with us and will not acknowledge any blame on their part?

Paul tells us not to get tired and give up on showing love and doing good to others. This includes our families. We will reap rewards for it (at the judgement seat of Christ.) Another group of people we are to especially try to help are those who are part of the Church, the Body of Christ (believers.)

Galatians 6:9-10

And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, **let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.**

But, like everything there are limits to what you or anyone can do, even for family members or fellow members of the church. Paul says that, in the end, when you have followed all of the things previously outlined in this study, you may just have to avoid some people. It is better to avoid

people than to get drawn into something that will not reflect well on you as a believer.

Romans 16:17

Now I beseech you, brethren, **mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.**

Paul told his young friend and pastor, Titus, that he should avoid fighting with others over “religious” things. It is unprofitable. If you are trying to tell someone about the Lord Jesus Christ and they refuse to listen after the second time, you should “cut them loose” because they are condemned of themselves, it is not your fault. These are the people who oppose themselves!

Titus 3:8-11

This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men. **But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and**

vain. A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject; Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.

Paul also tells us that, as much as possible, don't tie yourself to an unbeliever in any relationship. We are to be patient and try to tell them the truth about Jesus Christ, but many people marry unbelievers, have business partnerships with unbelievers, or even have children with unbelievers. We are to separate ourselves from unbelievers (come out from among them.) We are the temple of God, and people we associate with should reflect our beliefs

2 Corinthians 6:14-18

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I

will be their God, and they shall be my people. **Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord,** and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

Finally, the most important, and most difficult, person for anyone to forgive is themselves. Christ's forgiveness has not only freed us to forgive others, but given us the freedom to forgive ourselves for whatever we have done, because we know Christ has already forgiven us.

We have liberty in Christ and we can get rid of the guilt and remorse that we carry around. Since Christ has forgiven us, why would we carry our sins around with us?

Galatians 5:1

Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.