

# Forgiveness

## Definitions

1. Giving up the right to get back at someone
2. Release from bondage or imprisonment
3. Pardon of sins - letting them go as if they had never been committed
4. Remission of the penalty
5. To lift, bear up, carry, take
6. To let go, give up a debt

Someone has said "To forgive is to set the prisoner free, and then discover the prisoner was you."

## God's Forgiveness of Us

### Judicial Forgiveness (Salvation Forgiveness)

When we trust Christ as Lord and Savior, we receive forgiveness from the eternal penalty of sins.

Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins. Acts 10:43

In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace. Eph. 1:7

### Parental Forgiveness (Fellowship Forgiveness)

When we, as believers, confess our sins, we receive parental forgiveness. This maintains fellowship with God our Father.

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9

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. Matt. 6:14,15

Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses. Matt. 18:21,35

	<b>Judicial Forgiveness</b>	<b>Parental Forgiveness</b>
	<b>Needed for Salvation</b>	<b>Needed for Fellowship</b>
The Person's Status	Unsaved Sinner (Romans 3:23)	Believer, Child of God (1 John 3:2)
Relationship of God	Judge (Psalms 96:13)	Father (Galatians 4:6)
Result of sin	Eternal Death (Romans 6:23)	Broken fellowship (1 John 1:6)
Role of Christ	Savior (1 Timothy 1:15)	High Priest and Advocate (Heb. 4:14-16; 1 John 2:1)
The Person's Need	Salvation (Acts 16:30)	Joy of salvation (Psalms 51:12)
Means of Forgiveness	What must the unsaved person do? Believe (Acts 16:31)	What must the believer do? Confess (1 John 1:9)
Kind of Forgiveness	Judicial (Romans 8:1) – No condemnation	Parental (Luke 15:21, 22) Father welcomes home His son
Consequence Averted	Hell (John 5:24)	Chastening (1 Cor. 11:31, 32) Loss of reward at the Judgment Seat of Christ (1 Cor. 3:15)
Positive Result	New Relationship (John 1:12) The believer's <b>STANDING</b> in Christ - Position	Renewed Fellowship (Psalms 32:5) The believer's <b>STATE</b> - Condition
Frequency	Once - one bath of regeneration (John 13:10)	Many times - many cleansings (John 13:8)

Adapted from "Here's the Difference" by William MacDonald

## **Our Forgiveness of Others**

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

### **Philemon**

- Philemon – Christian living in Colosse.
- Onesimus – a slave of Philemon, had robbed his master, fled to Rome, met Paul, became a Christian.
- Paul – sends Onesimus back to Philemon with a letter urging Philemon to forgive Onesimus.

### **Spiritual Character of a Forgiver (Philemon) – 1:4-7**

1. Loves the Lord
2. Loves believers
3. Concerned with Fellowship
4. Concerned with Knowledge
5. Refreshes hearts of believers

### **Failure to Forgive Will:**

1. Imprison believers in their past. Matt. 18:28
2. Produce bitterness. Heb. 12:15
3. Give Satan an open door. 2 Cor. 2:10,11 Unforgiveness is lack of love.
4. Hinder fellowship with God. Matt. 6:14,15

**True forgiveness** is hard to extend because it demands that people let go of something they value -- not a piece of jewelry, but pride, perhaps, as a sense of justice, or a desire for revenge. There is a cost to forgive someone.

Most powerful words in human language "I love you."

Second most powerful words "I **forgive** you."

### **Say the words "I forgive you" when forgiving someone.**

Don't Say "That's ok", "Don't worry about it", "It's no big deal"

### **What Personal Forgiveness is Not:**

1. Forgetting – deep hurts can rarely be wiped out of one's awareness
2. Reconciliation – takes two people
3. Condoning – it does not excuse hurtful behavior
4. Dismissing – it takes the offense seriously
5. Pardoning – is a legal transaction, forgiveness is a personal transaction

### **Examples of Forgiveness**

1. Gen. 33:4 – Esau and Jacob – Esau embraced, kissed, wept
2. Gen. 50:15-21 – Joseph and his brothers – Joseph comforted them, spoke kindly
3. Matt. 18:21-35 – King and his servant – King moved with compassion, loosed him
4. Luke 7:41 – 50 – Jesus and woman in Simon's house – woman's response of love
5. Luke 17:3-4 – Brother who trespasses seven times – don't stop forgiving
6. Luke 23:34 – Jesus and those who put him on the cross – "Father forgive them"
7. 2 Cor. 2:6-10 – Assembly in Corinth and immoral man – comfort him, confirm your love to him

### **QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION**

1. Does a misunderstanding of God's forgiveness of us prevent us from worshipping Him privately and/or publicly? Do we think we're not "good enough" to worship?
2. Is it ok to keep sinning since God will forgive us every time we confess?
3. How do repentance and forgiveness tie together?
4. If someone does the same thing too many times, should we stop forgiving them?
5. If we say "I forgive you, but I can never be intimate with you again." Is that forgiveness?
6. How can we forget what someone has done to us after we have forgiven them?

7. Is there something too big that someone can do to us that can't be forgiven?
8. Should we forgive if someone does not confess his or her wrong to us?
9. How can we forgive someone who has hurt a person whom we love very much?

### Forgiveness Stories and Quotes

There's a Spanish story of a father and son who had become estranged. The son ran away, and the father set off to find him. He searched for months to no avail. Finally, in a last desperate effort to find him, the father put an ad in a Madrid newspaper. The ad read: Dear Paco, meet me in front of this newspaper office at noon on Saturday. All is forgiven. I love you. Your Father. On Saturday 800 Pacos showed up, looking for forgiveness and love from their fathers. (Bits & Pieces, October 15, 1992)

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A group of Moravian missionaries once decided to take the message of God to the Eskimos. One of their struggles in teaching the Eskimos was that they could not find a word in the Eskimo language for forgiveness. Finally, they had to compound a phrase to use in the place of forgiveness. This compound phrase turned out to be issumagijoujungnainermik. It's a formidable looking assembly of letters, but the expression has a beautiful connotation for those who understand that it means **"not being able to think about it anymore."**

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A man who was telling his friend about an argument he'd had with his wife commented, "Oh, how I hate it, every time we have an argument; she gets historical."

The friend replied, "You mean hysterical."

"No," he insisted. "I mean historical. Every time we argue she drags up everything from the past and holds it against me!"

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Forgiveness is not that stripe which says, "I will forgive, but not forget." **It is not to bury the hatchet with the handle sticking out of the ground, so you can grasp it the minute you want it.** (Dwight L Moody)

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BURYING THE HATCHET - Old Joe was dying. For years he had been at odds with Bill, formerly one of his best friends. Wanting to straighten things out, he sent word for Bill to come and see him. When Bill arrived, Joe told him that he was afraid to go into eternity with such a bad feeling between them. Then, very reluctantly and with great effort, Joe apologized for things he had said and done. He also assured Bill that he forgave him for his offenses. Everything seemed fine until Bill turned to go. As he walked out of the room, Joe called out after him, "But, remember, if I get better, this doesn't count!"

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Ruth Bell Graham - A good marriage is the union of two forgivers.

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A dog that was later discovered to be rabid bit a man. Hospital tests confirmed that the man had contracted rabies and his fate was sealed. The doctor was forced to relay the bad news declaring to his doomed patient...

Sir, everything possible will be done to make you comfortable, but we can't offer any false hope. My best advice to you is to put your affairs in order as soon as possible.

The dying man sank back in depression and shock, but finally rallied enough strength to ask for a pen and paper. He began writing furiously. When the doctor returned, the man was still writing what the doctor assumed was his will and said...

Well, it's good to see you've taken my advice. I take it you're working on your will.

To which the patient quipped...

This ain't no will, Doc. It's a list of people I plan on bitin' before I die!"

(Gary Inrig)

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D. L. Moody used to picture the Lord's saying to Peter, "Go, hunt up the man who put the crown of thorns on My head and tell him that I love him. Tell him that he can have a crown in my kingdom, one without a thorn. Find the man who spat in my face and preach the gospel to him. Tell him that I forgive him and that I died to save him. Find the man who thrust the spear into my side and tell him that there is a quicker way to my heart." That is how the Lord Jesus has forgiven us. Now it is our turn. We are to forgive others and make an end of our quarrels.

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On the Lord's day a group of missionaries and believers in New Guinea were gathered together to observe the Lord's Supper. After one young man sat down, a missionary recognized that a sudden tremor had passed through the young man's body that indicated he was under a great nervous strain. Then in a moment all was quiet again. The missionary whispered, "What was it that troubled you?" "Ah," he said, "But the man who just came in killed and ate the body of my father. And now he has come in to remember the Lord with us. At first I didn't know whether I could endure it. But it is all right now. He is washed in the same precious blood." And so together they had Communion. It is a marvelous thing, the work of the Holy Spirit of God. Does the world know anything of this? (H. A. Ironside)

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Recently, a survey was made of 200 married adults in regards to forgiveness. The researchers were wondering how one's ability to forgive others would affect their marital satisfaction and personal well-being. The research suggested that there is a huge relationship between marriage satisfaction and forgiveness. In fact, it appears that as much as **one third of marriage satisfaction is related to forgiveness.**

(Peter J. Lawson, NEW FORGIVENESS RESEARCH, January 27, 2003)

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NO FEAR OF THE FIRE OF CONDEMNATION - Some people try to punish themselves for their sins. They do not stand on the promises of forgiveness and Christ' propitiation. "Many years ago, a father and his daughter were walking through the grass on the Canadian prairie. In the distance, they saw a prairie fire, and they realized that it would soon engulf them. The father knew there was only one way of escape: They would quickly begin a fire right where they were and burn a large patch of grass. When the huge fire drew near, they then would stand on the section that had already burned. When the flames did approach them, the girl was terrified but her father assured her, '**The flames can't get to us. We are**

**standing where the fire has already been."** (Erwin Lutzer, Failure, The Back Door to Success)

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Thomas A. Edison was working on a crazy contraption called a "light bulb" and it took a whole team of men 24 straight hours to put just one together. The story goes that when Edison was finished with one light bulb, he gave it to a young boy helper, who nervously carried it up the stairs. Step by step he cautiously watched his hands, obviously frightened of dropping such a priceless piece of work. You've probably guessed what happened by now; the poor young fellow dropped the bulb at the top of the stairs. It took the entire team of men twenty-four more hours to make another bulb. Finally, tired and ready for a break, Edison was ready to have his bulb carried up the stairs. He gave it to the same young boy who dropped the first one. **That's true forgiveness.** (James Newton, Uncommon Friends)

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- To Forgive Is To Turn The Key, Open the cell door, and let the prisoner walk free.
- To Forgive Is To Write In Large Letters across a debt, "Nothing owed"
- To Forgive Is To Pound The Gavel In a courtroom and declare, "Not guilty!"
- To Forgive Is To Shoot An Arrow So high and so far that it can never be found again.
- To Forgive Is To Bundle Up All The garbage and trash and dispose of it, leaving the house clean and fresh.
- To Forgive Is To Loose The Moorings Of a ship and release it to the open sea.
- To Forgive Is To Grant A Full Pardon to a condemned criminal.
- To Forgive Is To Relax A Strangle hold On a wrestling opponent.
- To Forgive Is To Sandblast A Wall Of graffiti, leaving it looking like new.
- To Forgive Is To Smash A Clay Pot into a thousand pieces so it can never be pieced together again. (John Nieder and Thomas Thompson, Forgive and Love Again)

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Corrie ten Boom told of not being able to forget a wrong that had been done to her. She had forgiven the person, but she kept rehashing the incident and so couldn't sleep. Finally Corrie cried out to God for help in putting the problem to rest. "His help came in the form of a kindly Lutheran pastor," Corrie wrote, "to whom I confessed my failure after two sleepless weeks." "Up in the church tower," he said, nodding out the window, "is a bell which is rung by pulling on a rope. But you know what? After the sexton lets go of the rope, the bell keeps on swinging. First ding, then dong. Slower and slower until there's a final dong and it stops. I believe the same thing is true of forgiveness. When we forgive, we take our hand off the rope. But if we've been tugging at our grievances for a long time, we mustn't be surprised if the old angry thoughts keep coming for a while. They're just the ding-dongs of the old bell slowing down." "And so it proved to be. There were a few more midnight reverberations, a couple of dings when the subject came up in my conversations, but the force -- which was my willingness in the matter -- had gone out of them. They came less and less often and at the last stopped altogether: we can trust God not only above our emotions, but also above our thoughts."