

FORGIVENESS In Its Three Aspects

FORGIVENESS...what does it mean?

1. Vine's Expository Dictionary: "*denotes a dismissal, release...it signifies the remission of the punishment due to sinful conduct.*"
2. American Heritage Dictionary: "*to pardon, to release a person from punishment.*"

1. JUDICIAL FORGIVENESS...1st John 2:12; Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 2:13; Hebrews 10:17

A. Three questions in connection with JUDICIAL FORGIVENESS:

1. How is it provided for us? See Hebrews 9:22; Matthew 26:28; Ephesians 1:7...by Christ shedding His blood at the Cross
2. How is it received by us? See Acts 10:43; 13:38,39...by faith in Christ
3. What are its effects upon us? See Psalm 32:1 (Happiness); Luke 7:47 (Love); Psalm 130:3,4 (Reverential Fear)

B. A sinner who believes in Christ as Savior is thus **FORGIVEN** by **GOD AS JUDGE**. God has released him/her from the punishment of Hell.

C. God, as Judge, says this of the believers' sins:

1. Psalm 103:12.....they are *REMOVED*
2. Isaiah 44:22.....they are *BLOTTED OUT*
3. Isaiah 1:18.....they are *WHITE AS SNOW*
4. Hebrews 10:17.....they are *FORGOTTEN*

2. PATERNAL (or RESTORATIVE) FORGIVENESS...1st John 1:9; Psalm 32:5

A. Three questions in connection with RESTORATIVE FORGIVENESS:

1. How is it brought about? See 1st John 2:1; John 13:8; Ephesians 5:25,26...by Christ's work as Advocate
2. How is it received by us? 1st John 1:9; Psalm 32:5...by confession to our Father
3. What are its effects upon us? John 13:8b; Revelation 3:19,20 (restored Fellowship); Psalm 51:12 (restored Joy); Psalm 51:13-15 (restored Testimony)

B. A child of God who confesses his/her sins is **FORGIVEN** by **GOD THE FATHER**. The Father releases him/her from broken fellowship (and the loss of joy and testimony).

C. God's RESOURCES to prevent sin (we are exhorted *NOT TO SIN*...1st John 2:1a)

1. The DIVINE NATURE.....2nd Peter 1:4; 1st John 3:9
2. The HOLY SPIRIT.....Acts 1:8; Galatians 5:16,17
3. The WORD OF GOD.....Psalm 119:11; John 17:14-17
4. The THRONE OF GRACE.....Hebrews 4:14-16
5. The FELLOWSHIP OF BELIEVERS....Hebrews 10:24,25
6. The LORD IN GLORY.....Colossians 3:1,2; John 17:19; 2nd Cor. 3:18

3. GOVERNMENTAL FORGIVENESS... There is no direct Scripture to turn to that illustrates this aspect of forgiveness. To understand it, we must realize that God is not just a JUDGE, and a FATHER, but also the GOVERNOR of His universe.

A. What is God's GOVERNMENT?

1. The PRINCIPLE of God's GOVERNMENT is seen in Galatians 6:7,8: "*Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for **whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.** For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.*"
2. An EXAMPLE of God's GOVERNMENT is seen in Genesis 9:5,6: "*At the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed.*"
3. An EXAMPLE of GOVERNMENTAL FORGIVENESS is seen in 2nd Samuel 12:9,13: "*Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in His sight? **Thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife.....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.*****"

B. Examples of believers NOT being GOVERNMENTALLY FORGIVEN

1. 2ND Samuel 12:9-11...David was NOT released from the punishment of his sin regarding Bathsheba.
2. Genesis 27:1-29; 29:9-25...Jacob "sowed the seeds of deception" and he later "reaped what he had sown" by being deceived by Laban. His mother Rebecca, who aided Jacob in deceiving Isaac, never saw her son again. So, both Jacob and Rebecca were not forgiven governmentally; they had to "reap what they had sown."

C. Examples of other believers NOT being GOVERNMENTALLY FORGIVEN

1. The convict Daniel Mann was incarcerated for murder. He later trusted in Christ as his Savior, thus he was JUDICIALLY FORGIVEN, but the law of land (God's GOVERNMENT) demanded he die and he was hanged.
2. Steve Thomas was saved as a teenager (so he was JUDICIALLY FORGIVEN), but later in life he wandered from the Lord, got into bad company, and eventually killed a man. While in jail he confessed his sin to the Lord (so he was RESTORATIVELY FORGIVEN), but upon confessing his guilt before the court he is now awaiting his sentence for manslaughter which may be up to 10 years in prison.
3. Hypothetical case....suppose a man is converted to Christ and some years later, through a lack of reading God's word and praying, he falls back into his old ways, including drinking heavily. In time he develops a serious liver disease from the alcohol. Being convicted of his sin, he confesses it to the Lord and is restored. But in time he dies of liver failure. He had received JUDICIAL FORGIVENESS at his conversion, RESTORATIVE FORGIVENESS when he confessed his sin, but he died without GOVERNMENTAL FORGIVENESS. He still had to "reap" the consequences of his sin in God's Government.