

Forgiveness

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INTRODUCTION

I. THE BIBLICAL BASIS OF FORGIVENESS

Ephesians 4:31-32

A. Context of the book – chap. 1

Theologically: The major penalty of sin is separation from our God. Forgiveness releases us from this penalty – Eph 2:13; Jer 31:34; Isa 59:2.

B. Immediate context: “Put off the old man, be renewed in the spirit of your mind, put on the new man.”

C. What does it mean “to forgive even as God for Christ’s sake has forgiven us”?

D. Promises of forgiveness

I will not **dwell** on this incident.

I will not **bring this incident up** and use it against you.

I will not **talk** to others about this incident.

I will not **allow this incident to** stand between us or **hinder** our personal relationship.²⁷

For children:

Good thought.

Hurt you not.

Gossip never.

Friends forever.²⁸

²⁷ From the Peacemaker Ministries pamphlet *Peacemaking Principles: Responding to Conflict Biblically*.

II. BROADER BIBLICAL TEACHING ON FORGIVENESS

- A. *aphiēmi* – Mark 11:25; Matt 6:12; 1 John 1:9.
- B. *charidzomai* – Col 3:13; Rom 8:32; 2 Cor 2:10-11
- C. *apoluō* – Luke 6:37
- D. Principle: forgiveness is not a feeling, nor forgetting, or excusing. It is a decision, an act of the will.

III. WHEN SHOULD YOU FORGIVE?

- A. Luke 17:3
- B. Mark 11:25
- C. The issues related to these two passages:

John MacArthur:

“It is a mistake to assume that verses like Luke 17:3 (“If your brother sins, rebuke him”) and Matthew 18:15 (“If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault,” NIV) are absolute prescriptions for every kind of transgression. If we were obligated to confront one another for every paltry misdeed, we would be doing little else.

“Indeed, Scripture gives us another principle for dealing with vast majority of petty infractions: overlook the offense. Forgive unilaterally, unconditionally. Grant pardon freely and unceremoniously. Love demands this. “Keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins” (1 Pet. 4:8). “Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all transgressions” (Prov. 10:12). “He who covers a transgression seeks love” (Prov. 17:9). Love “does not take into account a wrong suffered ... [but] bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things” (1 Cor. 13:5-7). The *New International Version* renders 1 Corinthians 13:5 this way: “[Love] keeps no record of wrongs.”²⁹

Jay Adams:

“It is clear that forgiveness—promising another never to bring up his offense again to use it against him—is conditioned on the offender’s willingness to confess it as sin and to seek forgiveness. You

²⁸ The Four Promises of Forgiveness from *The Young Peacemaker* by Corlette Sande.

²⁹ John MacArthur, *The Freedom and Power of Forgiveness* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1998), 120.

are not obligated to forgive an unrepentant sinner, but you are obligated try to bring him to repentance. All the while you must entertain a genuine hope and willingness to forgive the other and a desire to be reconciled to him or her. Because this teaching runs counter to much teaching in the modern church, it is important to understand it. Such forgiveness is modeled after God's forgiveness which is unmistakably conditioned on repentance and faith."³⁰

IV. WHAT ABOUT THE CONSEQUENCES?

- A. There is a time for mercy (Matt 18:21)

- B. There is a time for consequences (Ps 99:8; Prov 19:19; Num 14:20-23)

Principle: Sin always has consequences (Rom 6:23).

V. OVERCOMING UNFORGIVENESS AND REBUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

- A. Realize that unforgiveness will separate you from God and could state something about your salvation (Matt 18:35).

Suggested homework assignment:

- B. Renounce sinful attitudes and unrealistic expectations
 - 1. Expecting the offender to earn or deserve forgiveness
 - 2. Desiring to punish the offender
 - 3. Demanding a guarantee that this won't happen again.

Counseling hint: Could there be a control worship heart theme going on?

³⁰ Jay Adams, *From Forgiven to Forgiving: Learning to Forgive One Another God's Way* (Amityville, NY: Calvary Press, 1994), 36.

C. Draw on God's strength (Phil 4:13)

D. The reconciliation and replacement principle

1. Reconciliation would mean that:
 - a. The relationship is restored at least to its condition before the conflict arose (if not better)
 - b. Or, you sense the barriers are gone
 - c. Or, a deeper, more realistic relationship
2. The replacement principle—"put off, be renewed in the spirit of your mind, put on the new man"

In **thought** (Phil 4:8)

In **word** (Rom 12:14)

In **deed** (Rom 12:20-21)

In **desire/motive/inner person**

By thought, word, and deed, you can demonstrate forgiveness and rebuild relationships with people who have offended you. No matter how painful the offense, with god's help, you can make four promises and imitate the forgiveness and reconciliation that was demonstrated on the cross. By the grace of God, you can forgive as the Lord forgave you.³¹

3. So, we forgive **To** forget NOT forgive and forget

Expect a battle!

³¹ Ken Sande, *The Peacemaker (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2009)*, 223

FOR FURTHER STUDY

Timothy S. Lane, *Forgiving Others: Joining Wisdom and Love*, CCEF. (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2008). ISBN 9780976230816.

Robert D. Jones, *Forgiveness: "I Just Can't Forgive Myself!"*, Resources for Changing Lives. (Phillipsburg: P & R Publishing, 2000). ISBN 9780875526782.

Jay Adams, *From Forgiven to Forgiving: Learning to Forgive One Another God's Way* (Calvary Press, 1997). ISBN 9781879737129.

John F. MacArthur, Jr., *The Freedom and Power of Forgiveness* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007). ISBN 9781433511301.

David Powlison, *Anger: Escaping the Maze*, Resources for Changing Lives. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2000). ISBN 9780875526812.

Robert D. Jones, *Uprooting Anger: Biblical Help for a Common Problem* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2005). ISBN 9781596380059