



- More compassion, kindness & peace
- Healthier relationships
- Improved mental health
- Less anxiety, stress and hostility
- Lower blood pressure
- Fewer symptoms of depression
- A stronger immune system
- Improved heart health
- Improved self-esteem

GUIDING PRINCIPLES 6

SEARCH OUT the true meaning of biblical forgiveness and identify specific people that have harmed us in order that with God's help and the help of someone we trust to work towards forgiving them God's way, learning the distinction between forgiveness and reconciliation and being careful not to blame ourselves for what someone else did.

WORKING DEFINITION OF FORGIVENESS

Choosing to not hurt a person for hurting us and as best we can treat them as if the offense did not happen.

WHAT FORGIVENESS IS NOT

- Excusing the offender for the offense.
- Condoning the offensive behavior.
- Not taking logical steps to protect oneself from further harm by the offender.
- Automatic reconciliation of the relationship with the offender.
- Ruling out natural consequences (i.e. loss of trust), or Divine judgement or consequences given by a lawful authority (i.e. needing to pay back, jail, etc.)

SOME TYPICAL OUTCOMES OF UNFORGIVENESS

- Anger and bitterness impacts other relationships.
- Lose valuable and enriching connectedness with others
- Become so wrapped up in the wrong that a person can't enjoy the present.
- Become depressed or anxious.
- Feel that life lacks meaning or purpose.
- Puts a person at odds with Christian beliefs & convictions about forgiving resulting in guilt.

**BENEFITS OF FORGIVENESS:
Letting Go of Grudges & Bitterness**

From the www.mayoclinic.org

REASONS WE DON'T OR WON'T FORGIVE

1. We want the person to suffer sufficiently for what they have done. (Questions: Can the offended be a just judge as to the sentence? How much suffering is necessary to satisfy the offended?)
2. We don't want to give up the excuse for our sinful or unhealthy ways of coping with the offense.
3. We don't really understand godly forgiveness.
4. Because we misunderstand what it is, we think it is impossible to do.

TROUBLING THINGS ABOUT ISAIAH 52-53

52⁴ His appearance was so marred beyond human semblance.

53³ He was despised and rejected by men.

- A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.
- From whom men hide their faces.
- He was despised, and we esteemed him not.
- ⁴ Surely he has borne **OUR GRIEFS** and carried **OUR SORROWS**.
- Yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.
- ⁵ But he was pierced **FOR OUR TRANSGRESSIONS**.
- He was crushed for **OUR INIQUITIES**; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.
- ⁶ **ALL WE LIKE SHEEP HAVE GONE ASTRAY**.
- **WE HAVE TURNED—EVERY ONE — TO HIS OWN WAY**.
- The Lord has laid on him 11. **THE INIQUITY OF US ALL**.
- ⁷ He was oppressed.
- He was afflicted.
- Yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth.
- ⁸ By oppression and judgment he was taken away; cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for **THE TRANSGRESSION OF MY PEOPLE**.

- ⁹ And they made his grave with the wicked although:
He had done no violence.
There was no deceit in his mouth.
 - ¹⁰ Yet it was the will of the Lord:
To crush him.
Put him to grief.
An offering **FOR GUILT**.
 - ¹¹ Out of the anguish of his soul ... He shall bear **THEIR INIQUITIES**.
 - ¹² Numbered with the transgressors; yet he **BORE THE SIN OF MANY**.
1. **The total innocence of Jesus that deserved no punishment for sin.**
 2. **The depth of suffering that Jesus endured in order to secure forgiveness for us.**
 3. **The fact that most human's will not accept their own guilt, their need for forgiveness, and, therefore, will remain in an unnecessary broken relationship with God.**
 4. **That we somehow believe that our perceived offenses by others are too great to be forgiven.**

GOD'S CLEAR EXAMPLE FOR FORGIVENESS

¹⁸ Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression for the remnant of his inheritance? He does not retain his anger forever, because he delights in steadfast love. ¹⁹ He will again have compassion on us; he will tread our iniquities underfoot. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. **Micah 7:18-19**

⁷In him we have redemption

[Release effected by payment of ransom; deliverance. Literally, "buying back from, re-purchasing (winning back) what was previously forfeited (lost)."]

through his blood, the forgiveness of sins,

[A sending away, a letting go, a release, pardon, complete forgiveness.]

according to the riches of his grace,

[Refers to God freely extending Himself (His favor, grace), reaching (inclining) to people because He is disposed to bless (be near) them.]

^{8a}that he has lavished on us... Ephesians 1:7-9a

[To be over and above, to abound]

FORGIVENESS PICTURED IN MATTHEW 18:21-35

Asterisks indicate excerpt from:

www.workingpreacher.org/commentaries/revise-common-lectionary/ordinary-24/commentary-on-matthew-1821-35-2

By Karl Jacobson

²³ "Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴ When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents.

ONE CALCULATION: 10,000 talents = 200,000 years of labor, 60 million working days, or In modern money \$3.48 billion.

²⁵ And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. ²⁶ So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' ²⁷ And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt.

²⁸ But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii,

100 denarii = 4 months wages or In modern money, \$5,800.

and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, 'Pay what you owe.' ²⁹ So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' ³⁰ He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt. ³¹ When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place. ³² Then his master summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³ And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?' ³⁴ And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt.

³⁵ So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart." **Matthew 18:23-35**

***"Forgiveness in this parable is both an extravagant and a precious thing."**

"Forgiveness in the Gospel of Matthew is not only relational it is reciprocal and reliant. When teaching his disciples to pray Jesus would have us say, "Forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors" (Matthew 6:12)."

¹² and forgive us our debts, as, **[like as, even as, when, since, as long as].**
we also have forgiven our debtors.

*** "This fifth petition of the Lord's Prayer is echoed in the lesson of this parable about the kingdom, reflecting it back in reverse. We ought to forgive as our King has forgiven us, Jesus says."**

*** "In answering the disciples' request for help in praying Jesus teaches them that forgiveness -- both the**

giving and the receiving of it -- is reciprocal, one cannot have it without doing it. "For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matthew 6:14-15)."

²¹ Then Peter came up and said to him, "Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?" ²² Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times. [seventy times seven - NASV, NKJV] (Matthew 18:21-22)

*** "In answering Peter's request for help in understanding how far forgiveness needs to go Jesus teaches that God's forgiveness surpasses both our deserving and our comprehension of it; we who have first been forgiven must, therefore and thereupon, forgive those who have wronged us so much more lightly."**

*** "The point of this parable is clear, and its demands both in the context of the Gospel of Matthew and its application in our congregations today is urgent. Forgiveness lies at the heart of our faith in God and our love of one another. Forgiveness, which we receive from God our King in the person of Jesus is what our King expects from his subjects in their dealings with each other."**

*** "Forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors; as a prayer this puts the emphasis on what we will receive in turn for the forgiveness we have offered. Forgive your brother or sister from your heart; the parable turns the tables, teaching us that we have been first forgiven and encouraging us to forgive in turn. Taken together, this is a composite picture of the kingdom of heaven, and the kingdom we practice, both of which are driven by forgiveness."**

³⁵ "So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother **from your heart.**" Matthew 18:35

"FROM YOUR HEARTS"

Forgiveness is far more than mere words or a positive feeling towards an offender, but really and truly to act toward the ones we are forgiving as if they have not offended us.

¹² Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, ¹³bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Colossians 3:12-13

³¹ Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. ³² Be kind to one another,

tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. Ephesians 4:31-32

²⁵ And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses."
Mark 11:25

How can we who have been forgiven so much refuse to forgive others?

THE INGREDIENTS TO FORGIVENESS: INVOLVING MY WHOLE BEING

- 1. In faith I submit to the authority of the truth of God's Word regarding forgiveness.**
- 2. I work at hiding His word in my heart so that I might not sin against Him. (Psalm 119:11)**
- 3. I intentionally work to discipline my mind to think God's way about this.**
- 4. With the help of the Spirit, I prepare to repeatedly return to these teachings whenever faced with being hurt by someone.**
- 5. With a desire to be an obedient disciple of Jesus, I will use my will to make an intentional choice to forgive those who have hurt me, as shown by:**
 - Giving up a "perceived" right to hurt someone for hurting me and turning the matter over to God to be the judge.**
 - Willfully working with God's help to treat the offending person like someone I am not holding anything against.**
- 6. I will accept forgiveness as an obedient act based in faith not just a feeling.**
- 7. Because forgiveness is often a process not a point in time, I will often have to act in forgiveness with no assurance when, or even if, I might feel it.**
- 8. I will trust and obey God even if I struggle with my feelings about it, asking Him to help me treat the person as He would, to help me practice turning it over to Him as often as necessary, and to help me have victory of obedient action over feeling.**

Decisional and emotional forgiveness are not mutually exclusive. Many times, forgiveness starts with a decision to grant forgiveness and to refrain from holding a grudge or punishing someone for a past offense. Emotional forgiveness usually comes later, as time and prayer allow positive feelings to replace the hurt and pain someone has caused.

It is also important to remember that Jesus has demonstrated so clearly that forgiveness is a choice, is

not conditional upon what the offender does or doesn't do and may often not result in reconciliation.

Reconciliation only takes place when the offender demonstrates a real regret and genuine change and the offended forgives from the heart and let's the offence go.

SOME SIGNS THAT WE ARE "FORGIVING FROM THE HEART"

1. When we stop wanting to get even with the person with revenge, paybacks, and retaliation.
2. When we stop looking for or hoping bad things would happen to them.
3. When saying "I am letting it go" doesn't simply mean we are hiding behind denial of the pain that we know still gnaws at us.
4. When we think about them and whatever happened without getting upset at.
5. When you know if they needed help you would help them.
6. When you can think more positively rather than negatively about this person.

7. When you can fully accept that God loves the offender just as much as He loves you.

APPLICATION OF GOD'S EXAMPLE IN JESUS

1. That our sins are great.
2. That God freely forgives them.
3. That the offences committed against us by our brethren are comparatively small.
4. That we should therefore most freely forgive these debts.
5. That if we do not, God will be justly angry with us and will impact His forgiveness of our debts.

4 IMPORTANT QUESTIONS REGARDING FORGIVENESS

1. Have I received forgiveness for my sin by God's grace through faith in what Jesus did on the cross?
2. Who do I need to seek forgiveness from in order to try and make amends?
3. Who do I need to forgive?
4. What do I need to forgive myself for?

Weekly Going Deeper Study Guide For

Forgiveness: Finding Freedom from Psychological & Spiritual Baggage

- Before beginning each day simply ask God to help you see things that He would have you to see.
- When finished, pray again asking for the faith and the courage to follow His lead in areas He speaks to you about.

DAY 1

1. **Using your inventory** read the verses on p 38 (My Body) and make notes under any verse God speaks to you.
2. If God has convicted you by any of the verses, put an "X" at the top of the page.

DAY 2

1. **Using your inventory** read the verses on page 42 (My Family) and make notes under any verse God speaks to you.
2. If God has convicted you by any of the verses, put an "X" at the top of the page.

DAY 3

1. **Using your inventory** read the verses on page 46 (My Church Life) and make notes under any verse God speaks to you.
2. If God has convicted you by any of the verses, put an "X" at the top of the page.

DAY 4-5

1. **Using your inventory** read the verses on any of the pages you have not already done (14, 18, 22, 26, 30, 34) and make notes under any verse God speaks to you.
2. If God has convicted you by any of the verses, put an "X" at the top of the page.