



*Unraveling the Power and Freedom of
Grace*

WALKING CHRISTIAN ON FORGIVENESS

Part 1 of 4



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Defining Forgiveness

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Walking Christian on Forgiveness / Forgiveness; Grace; God's Mercy; Human Rights

This lesson will define forgiveness by looking at what it is, what it is not, and its meaning toward others, comparing it to reconciliation, and discussing divine forgiveness.

I. DEFINITIONS: THE MANY FACES OF FORGIVENESS

- A. What Is Forgiveness?
- B. What Forgiveness is Not
- C. The Meaning of Forgiving Others
- D. Forgiveness versus Reconciliation?
- E. Looking at Divine Forgiveness



I. DEFINITIONS: THE MANY FACES OF FORGIVENESS

Luke 17:3-4 *ESV*

³ Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him, ⁴ and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, ‘I repent,’ you must forgive him.”

A. What Is Forgiveness?

Romans 13:8 ESV

⁸ Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.

• **Forgiveness** means dismissing a debt.

In the New Testament, the Greek noun **aphesis** denotes a “_____” or “_____.”

— When you **grant forgiveness**, you _____ the debt owed to you.

— When you **receive forgiveness**, your debt is _____. (You are **released** from any requirement for repayment.)

— When you **grant forgiveness**, you **dismiss** the debt from your _____.

Luke 6:27 ESV

²⁷ “But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,

• **Forgiveness** is dismissing your demand that others owe you something, especially when they fail to meet your expectations ... fail to keep a promise ... fail to treat you justly.

Matthew 5:39 ESV

³⁹ But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.

• **Forgiveness** is dismissing, canceling, or setting someone free from the consequence of falling short of God's standard.

– The holy standard of God is _____, yet we all have sinned.

– The penalty for our sins is spiritual _____ (separation from God).

– Jesus paid the _____ for our sins (our debt) through His sacrificial death on the cross. Therefore, instead of being separated from God, we can have our debt dismissed by God and experience eternal life in heaven.

Acts 10:43 *ESV*

⁴³ To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”

Question: “Is it possible to sin beyond God's ability to forgive?”

Answer: _____. God promises to purify us from all unrighteousness, not just specific sins, but we must first confess our sins. (Confess literally means “_____” with God.) And if we agree with God about our sins, we not only admit we have sinned, but we also turn from our sins and turn to Jesus, entrusting our lives to the One who died for our sins.

Psalm 32:5 *ESV*

⁵ I acknowledged my sin to you,
and I did not cover my iniquity;
I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,”
and you forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah

B. What Is Forgiveness Not

Proverbs 1:5 ESV

⁵ *Let the wise hear and increase in learning,
and the one who understands obtain guidance,*

- **Forgiveness is not** _____ *God's justice....*
 - *It allows God to execute His justice in His time and in His way.*
- **Forgiveness is not** *waiting for “_____ to heal all wounds.” ...*
 - *It is clear that time doesn't heal wounds—some people will not allow healing.*
- **Forgiveness is not** *letting the _____ “off the hook.” ...*
 - *It is moving the guilty from your hook to God's hook.*
- **Forgiveness is not** *the same as _____....*
 - *It takes two for reconciliation, only one for forgiveness.*
- **Forgiveness is not** _____ *unjust behavior....*
 - *It acknowledges that unjust behavior is without excuse while still forgiving.*
- **Forgiveness is not** _____ *away the hurt....*
 - *It is working through the hurt.*
- **Forgiveness is not** *based on what is _____....*
 - *It was not “fair” for Jesus to hang on the cross—but He did so that we could be forgiven.*

- **Forgiveness is not** *being a _____ martyr....*
 - *It is being strong enough to be Christlike.*
- **Forgiveness is not** *stuffing your _____....*
 - *It is resolving your anger by releasing the offense to God.*
- **Forgiveness is not** *a _____ response....*
 - *It is a supernatural response, empowered by God.*
- **Forgiveness is not** *_____ the hurt....*
 - *It is feeling the hurt and releasing it.*
- **Forgiveness is not** *being a _____....*
 - *It is seeing that, if this were so, Jesus would have been the greatest doormat of all!*
- **Forgiveness is not** *_____....*
 - *It is unconditional, a mandate from God to everyone.*
- **Forgiveness is not** *_____....*
 - *It is necessary to remember before you can forgive.*
- **Forgiveness is not** *a _____....*
 - *It is a choice—an act of the will.*

John 8:11 ESV

¹¹ She said, “No one, Lord.” And Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more.”

Question: “If I don’t feel like forgiving, how can I be asked to forgive? That doesn’t seem right.”

Answer: Forgiveness is not based on a _____ but instead on the fact that we—all of us—are called by God to forgive. Forgiveness is not an _____ but is instead an act of the will. Therefore, what “seems right” based on feelings can easily be wrong!

Proverbs 14:12 ESV

¹² There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death.

C. The Meaning of Forgiving Others

Hebrews 12:1 ESV

¹ Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

• **To forgive** means to release your resentment toward your offender.

In the New Testament, the Greek verb **aphiemi** primarily means “_____”—in other words, “to forgive, send away or release the penalty when someone wrongs you.” This implies that you need ...

- **To release** your right to hear “_____”
- **To release** your right to be _____
- **To release** your right to get _____

Romans 12:17 ESV

¹⁷ Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all.

• **To forgive** is to release your _____ regarding the offense.

- **To release** your right to _____ on the offense
- **To release** your right to _____ on to the offense
- **To release** your right to keep _____ the offense

Proverbs 17:9 ESV

⁹ *Whoever covers an offense seeks love,
but he who repeats a matter separates close friends.*

• **To forgive** is to _____ the character of Christ. *Just as God is willing to forgive us, we are called to forgive others.*

- **To forgive** is to extend _____.
- **To forgive** is to give a gift of _____.
- **To forgive** is to set the offender _____.

Matthew 6:12 ESV

¹² *and forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.*

Question: “What can I do when I don’t feel like forgiving?”

Answer: Examine your _____ whenever you don’t feel like doing something you should do. While you can’t control what your offenders do, you can maintain your thinking about your offenders. God gives us much counsel about what we should sift from our thinking. Imagine that the Bible is a “thought-sifter”—a tool that helps us sift the thoughts that should not go into our minds. Evaluate your thoughts about those who offend you. Remember: Your _____ produce your feelings. Do your thoughts naturally flow through “the thought-sifter” in the Scripture below? If not, catch them before they pass through and sift them out! When

you carefully choose what you will dwell on, your emotions will begin to line up, and you will gradually even feel like forgiving.

Philippians 4:8 *ESV*

⁸ *Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.*

D. Forgiveness versus Reconciliation?

Amos 3:3 ESV

³ “Do two walk together,
unless they have agreed to meet?”

- **Forgiveness** can take place with only ____ person.
 - **Reconciliation** requires at least ____ persons.
- **Forgiveness** is directed ____ way.
 - **Reconciliation** is reciprocal ... occurring in ____ ways.
- **Forgiveness** is a decision to _____ the offender.
 - **Reconciliation** is the effort to _____ the offender.
- **Forgiveness** involves a change in _____ about the offender.
 - **Reconciliation** involves a change in _____ by the offender.
- **Forgiveness** is a free gift to the one who has _____ trust.
 - **Reconciliation** is a restored relationship based on _____ trust.
- **Forgiveness** is extended even if it is never, ever _____.
 - **Reconciliation** is offered to the offender because it has been _____.
- **Forgiveness** is _____, regardless of a lack of repentance.
 - **Reconciliation** is _____ based on repentance.

Question: “After we forgive someone, must we also try to be reconciled?”

Answer: The answer to this question

is _____.

2 Corinthians 5:18 ESV

¹⁸ All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation;

1 Corinthians 15:33 ESV

³³ Do not be deceived: “Bad company ruins good morals.”

Proverbs 22:24 ESV

*²⁴ Make no friendship with a man given to anger,
nor go with a wrathful man,*

E. Looking at Divine Forgiveness

Daniel 9:9 ESV

⁹ *To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against him*

• **Divine forgiveness** is the fact that God, in His _____, chose to release you from the penalty for your sins. (Unfortunately, some people refuse to receive this gift from God.)

Psalm 103:8 ESV

⁸ *The LORD is merciful and gracious,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.*

Psalm 103:10 ESV

¹⁰ *He does not deal with us according to our sins,
nor repay us according to our iniquities.*

Psalm 103:12 ESV

¹² *as far as the east is from the west,
so far does he remove our transgressions from us.*

• **Divine forgiveness** was extended by Jesus, who paid the penalty for our sins in full—He died on the cross as payment for the sins of all people. While we owed a _____ we could not pay, He paid a _____ He did not owe.

Isaiah 53:6 ESV

⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have turned—every one—to his own way;
and the LORD has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.

• **Divine forgiveness** is an extension of _____ as seen in the Greek word **charizomai**, which is translated “forgive” and means “to bestow a favor unconditionally.” The Greek word **charis** means “_____.” You express God’s _____ when you forgive others with divine forgiveness.

Ephesians 4:32 ESV

³² Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

Biblical Example

Joseph and His Brothers

cf. [Gen. 37-45](#)

The Secret to Joseph's Success

- **“Do not be distressed and do not be _____.”**

— *When you realize that God, in His sovereignty, will bring good out of the wrongs done to you ... you will have an _____ of forgiveness.*

- **“God _____ me.”**

— *When you realize that God, in His _____, will use your location (wherever you are placed) for good ... you will have an attitude of forgiveness.*

- **“He _____ me.”**

— *When you realize that God, in His sovereignty, will make your every circumstance result in _____ ... you will have an attitude of forgiveness.*

Romans 8:28 ESV

²⁸ *And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.*

Question: “How can I respond Christlike when I’m being treated so unjustly?”

Answer: Realize that Christ _____ unjustly and horrendously to pay the penalty for your sins—to make possible forgiveness of your sins. Therefore, after you become a faithful Christian, you rely on Christ (who lives in you) to _____ you to endure your unjust suffering ... but, even more so, to forgive those who mistreat you. Be clear: every authentic Christian is “called” to suffer, but with that suffering comes a _____.

1 Peter 2:19–23 ESV

¹⁹ For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. ²⁰ For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. ²¹ For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. ²² He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. ²³ When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.