

**C3M Ministries and Freedom Seminars**

**Presents**

# **FREEDOM OF FORGIVENESS**

**Actions and Attitudes**

**“To the Lord of God belongs Mercies and Forgiveness.”  
Daniel 9:9**

**A scriptural view of five areas of  
forgiveness and the issues involved with  
forgiving and receiving forgiveness**

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## Introduction

Forgiveness is a foundational issue in Christianity (Hebrews 10:16-18). Remove forgiveness from the equation and the rest of Christianity is unsustainable. Forgiveness forms the basis of our relationship with God and creates the framework for God to be able to work in our lives. Forgiveness between people, especially those who call themselves Christians is also a fundamental Christian principle in our Christian faith and is vitally important to our mental and even physical beings. Early in His earthly ministry Jesus taught the people this important aspect.

**“Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as *it is* in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. 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.”** JKV Mat 6:10-15

## Defining Forgiveness

1. What two words did Jesus use to describe sin or offenses?
2. What do the words “debt” and “debtor” make you think of?
3. What does the word “trespass” make you think of?
4. How do these words relate to your offenses against God?
5. How do they relate to offenses from or to others?
6. Forgiveness: GR: apheresis Freedom; fig: pardon; deliverance, pardon, liberty, remission

## Five areas of forgiveness we all must deal with regularly

1. Asking and Receiving forgiveness FROM God for our sins
2. Forgiving OURSELVES for our sins
3. Forgiving GOD for those things we are mad at Him About
4. ASKING forgiveness FROM others when we offend someone
5. Forgiving others

## Some Basic Concepts of Forgiveness

1. Forgiveness is much more complicated than simply saying – “You just need to forgive.”
2. Forgiveness is a spiritual quality, not simply an emotional one
  - a. Any quality originating in God is Spiritual because God is a Spirit
  - b. “Only imperfection is intolerant of imperfection.”  
Francis Fénelon, Spiritual Letters
  - c. We are made in the Image of God – A Triune Being – I Thes. 5:23
  - d. Understanding our spiritual and natural interfaces
3. Forgiveness is always a legal, not an emotional, issue
  - a. Jesus is our \_\_\_\_\_ I John 2:1
  - b. Justice, justification, redemption, etc are all judicial words
  - c. We shall all appear before the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ. II Cor. 5:10
  - d. God does not wink at sin, but He does forgive sin THROUGH the legal sacrifice of Christ - Romans 6:23, II Cor. 5:21
  - e. If you do what God says you are forgiven regardless of what you might feel temporarily – it is a faith issue, not an emotional issue
4. Forgiveness is NEVER earned it is ALWAYS given – otherwise it is penitence – making up for your sins – canceling them by doing something to make up for them – Catholic concept of penitence and purgatory
  - a. In relation to God
  - b. In relation to others
5. Almost every emotional issue of unforgiveness relates to one of two issues:
  - a. Debt – “You owe me and I want you to pay up.”
  - b. Punishment – “You hurt me and I want you to hurt in return.”
6. Jesus answered the two issues of unforgiveness:
  - a. by PAYING our DEBT : Redemption
    - i. I Cor .6:20
  - b. by SUFFERING our PUNISHMENT
    - i. Isa. 53:4-6
7. Unforgiveness is a sin: Many people are bound to unforgiveness, resentment and bitterness because they do not see their unforgiveness as a sin
  - a. Many people are so caught up in their own sense of hurt over offense or abuse that they fail to see that their own unforgiveness is a sin that must be dealt with as any other sin needs to be dealt with:
    - i. Repentance
    - ii. Asking Forgiveness
    - iii. Yielding to the power of the Cross
    - iv. Walking in the Spirit
  - b. Forgiveness starts with God, not us

8. Forgiveness deals with both actions and attitudes
  - a. Attitude of Forgiveness
    - i. Matthew 18:21 “How often shall I forgive?”
    - ii. Forgiveness MUST be a foundational mindset of the Christian, it is more important than worship - Matt. 5:23-24; Matt. 9:13
    - iii. Gaining your brother Matt. 18:15-18
    - iv. The great debate: “Do they have to ask for forgiveness?”
  - b. Actions of Forgiveness:
    - i. The Act of Forgiveness
      1. While there may be a long period time and chain of events leading up to it – forgiveness happens in an instant
      2. Forgiveness is a decision based on faith, not emotion
    - ii. Path of Forgiveness
      1. Walking out our decision
      2. Emotional re-occurrences do not mean that we haven’t forgiven
        - a. Memories – dealing with the boogeyman in the shadows
        - b. Don’t rehearse it – reverse it
        - c. Take your emotion back to your decision
9. How God deals with sin – A transaction takes place II Cor. 5:21
  - a. Make the “transaction of forgiveness”
    - i. Learn to ask for forgiveness. “I’m sorry.” Is not the same as “Please forgive me.” One is emotional, the other is spiritual
    - ii. “I’m sorry!” “Oh that’s okay.” Doesn’t cut it. There has been no transaction – no forgiveness asked or granted.
    - iii. Do not take it lightly when others ask for your forgiveness – grant it that both the sin and offense might be released.
    - iv. The “straw that broke the camel’s back” syndrome
  - b. Caution: a humble spirit required

## Getting Forgiveness from God

1. Sin (singular) and Sins (Plural)
  - a. II Cor. 5:12
  - b. Eph. 1:7
  - c. Don’t go to hell for something you didn’t do
2. Initially at salvation -
3. Ongoing in our daily lives
  - a. I John 1:7-10 forgiveness and cleansing (table cloth)
  - b. Eph. 4:32 – for Christ’s sake
4. Psalms 51

- a. Verse 1:
  - i. Where is the focus
  - ii. Justice or mercy
- b. Verse 2
  - i. Wash GR The fulling process. lit. To stamp with the feet
  - ii. Cleanse: The result, morally or ceremoniously purified
  - iii. Iniquity: Self will; Sin: Offense (habitual)
- c. Verse 3:
  - i. Acknowledgement – confession
  - ii. Result of sin is a troubled mind
  - iii. Transgression: Revolt
- d. Verse 4 – The real issue of offense to God
- e. Verse 5
  - i. A comprehension of our sin nature
  - ii. Not an excuse but a lack of defense
  - iii. we have this treasure in earthen vessels. / god knows we are but dust / Jesus was tempted in all ways like we ourselves
- f. Verse 6
  - i. Truth in the inward parts - the principle of the sin offering Exo. 29:10-14
  - ii. Truth is honesty – truly acknowledging both our condition and fault - Peter Matt. 26:33 / John 21:15-23
  - iii. The desired result of forgiveness and restoration is wisdom
- g. Verse 7
  - i. Purge / cleanse –internal cleansing
  - ii. Hyssop was a laxative - also used to sprinkle the mingled water and blood
  - iii. Wash / White was external dual principle
    - 1. James 4:8,
    - 2. Rock of Ages: Rock of Ages, cleft for me let me hide myself in thee; let the water and the blood, from thy wounded side which flowed, be of sin the double cure save from wrath and make me pure.
- h. Verse 8 – The result of sin is a lack of joy and wholeness
- i. Verse 9 - another appeal for mercy
- j. Verse 10
  - i. The result of forgiveness is creative work of God. David knew he could not make his heart clean and it needed to be a creative work of God.
  - ii. David's spirit also needed to be renewed.
  - iii. A failure to understand and apply these two issues is often what keeps people out of the spirit after they confess and ask forgiveness. They are trying to FEEL the same as they did before and because the FEELING isn't there they don't believe that God has forgiven them. The real issue is a a different process of God creating and renewing the damage done to our soul and spirit through our sin.

5. Dealing with our Conscience –
  - a. Smoke detector vs. Alarm Clock
  - b. Heb. 9:12-14 Purge: to empty GR: Cleanse
  - c. Our human conscience is not the Holy Spirit; It is the Spirit's job to convince us of sin
    - i. Conviction vs. condemnation- one is spiritual the other satanic
    - ii. Our conscience is in inward set of values we develop by our environment and society
    - iii. Our conscience can only bear witness to the highest standard it knows.
    - iv. Our conscience can be trained improperly to think something is wrong when it is not; thus it produces false guilt. Rom. 14:1-3

## Forgiving God

At first this may seem like a strange concept. Our Christian sensibilities will produce thoughts like this, "God doesn't need forgiveness, He has never done anything wrong." BINGO! He never has done anything wrong. This is an important key to this area of forgiveness.

1. Forgiveness is not always about the other party it is about us being free from past experiences so we can spend our energy moving forward not always wasting it on the past.
2. You can be made at some who has not done anything wrong – you just don't like what they did. (Matt.5:22 - Angry without cause)
3. Luke 7:18-23 The prison principle
4. Offense towards God will kill your faith and make it unable to trust Him.
5. Deal with it: "Dear God, I can't say I have always liked what you have done or not done in my life. There have been times I felt you let me down, or didn't come through, but I know in my heart that you are perfect and love me perfectly and always have my best in mind. I choose to believe that all things work together for good concerning me, even those things I don't yet understand, because you are my God. I choose to release any hard feelings I have towards you and trust you from now on to deal with me according to your perfect will and knowledge concerning my life and future."

## Forgiving Yourself

A major problem hindering many Christians today is the issue of not forgiving themselves. One basic reason is it is rarely discussed in the Church; however much freedom and liberty can result in properly dealing with this issue.

1. Doesn't seem too spiritual does it? Self serving? Arrogant?
2. It sounds very spiritual, but it is not: "Oh I know God forgives me, but I just can't forgive myself." So, you're more righteous than God; with higher standards?
3. This issue directly relates to our Conscience – Heb. 9:12-14.
4. The two issues of unforgiveness, debt and punishment, apply to our own issues, as well as to others. The very real, but often unconscious thoughts sounds something like this:
  - a. Debt: "I fouled up my life and I don't deserve blessings because I owe a debt, therefore I will sabotage my life until I feel the debt is paid and I deserve a good life again."
  - b. Punishment: "If God isn't going to punish me, I will have to punish myself."
  - c. We need to reckon the debt to ourselves and the punishment deserved satisfied at the cross.
5. DO IT!
  - a. Look yourself in the mirror and call your self by name and make the transaction of forgiveness
  - b. "(Insert your name) I forgive you for every stupid thing you've done that has hurt my life and made things more difficult for me. I forgive you for the shame you have caused. Because of Jesus' death I count your debt paid and your punishment fulfilled. I release you to go in peace and be blessed to serve God unhindered from now on."
  - c. When ministering this to other people be sure to give them time to deal with stuff. You will find that this is not as simple as it seems and will bring up a lot of buried issues that need to be dealt with. Don't rush them.

## Asking Forgiveness from Others

At times we all fail in our relations with other people. The apostle John reminds us, "if we say we have no sin we are lying." It isn't the person who never fails that is mature; it is the person who can humbly deal with their failures in a spiritual manner that is mature. Asking forgiveness when necessary is a true sign of spiritual maturity.

1. Pride keeps us from admitting we were wrong.
2. God ALWAYS places the responsibility on us to initiate the transaction of forgiveness.
  - a. Matt. 5:21-24 If your brother has something against you, go to your brother
  - b. Matt. 18:15-17 If you have something against your brother go to your brother

- c. The motive was ALWAYS reconciliation, not confrontation
3. Make the transaction of forgiveness
    - a. Saying “I am sorry” is not the same thing as saying “please forgive me.”
    - b. Asking for forgiveness is humbling and spiritual
    - c. Asking for forgiveness requires the other person to deal with their end, and not just sweep it under the rug.
  4. Our failures can still bring honor to God when we deal with them spiritually | Peter 1:12 – Humility and forgiveness are not significant traits of this world and therefore stand out and give testimony to the reality of God in your life.
  5. Repent! Repent means to “turn and go the opposite direction.” Sometimes we have to admit that we regularly offend people with our actions, manners or words. You may be tempted to say, “Well that’s just the way I am, people will have to get used to me.” The reality is, Jesus died to change, “just the way you are.” We often hear a lot about not being offended, but I would like to hear more messages about not being offensive.
  6. Restitution: On occasion, we must be willing to offer and fulfill restitution or to otherwise accept consequences for our sins and offenses.
  7. Be Humble and allow people to prove your sincerity – don’t get angry because they don’t just accept your repentance and apology.

## Forgiving Others

Forgiveness is not a simple issue. You can not just say to people, “You just need to forgive.” There are many issues, emotional and spiritual, bound up in the issues of unforgiveness. We have left this most important issue until last because in many ways it is more difficult to forgive others, if you have not first worked through the first four issues. If you do not know forgiveness from God it will be nearly impossible to have the motivation to forgive others in a genuine spiritual (as opposed to strictly emotional) sense. If you are mad at God, you won’t be able to have the faith or receive the spiritual power to forgive. If you harbor guilt and unforgiveness towards yourself, your desire to forgive others will be greatly diminished. And, if you have trouble humbling yourself and asking forgiveness from another person, it will be difficult for you to grant forgiveness to others.

The other issue that many people struggle with is what forgiveness actually looks like in real life. Questions like, “How do I treat the person after I have forgiven them?” Or thoughts such as “If I forgive them, they’ll get away with it,” are real issues for people. In this section we’ll deal with some of these emotional and practical issues that hinder forgiveness.

1. The necessity of forgiveness in the life of a Christian
  - a. Matt. 6:10-15 (the issue of “as”)

- b. Matt. 18:15-35 Scriptures we never read together
      - i. Dealing with offense scripturally
      - ii. The 491st principle
      - iii. Binding and loosing
      - iv. Jesus' teaching on the results of unforgiveness
- 2. Some considerations
  - a. Is repentance necessary/to be required before you forgive a person?
  - b. Is there a difference in the way we treat a fellow Christian and a lost person?
  - c. When it comes to God forgiving us and us forgiving others is there a fundamental difference. If so, what?
- 3. Emotional thinking that hinders forgiveness
  - a. "Forgive them? They don't deserve forgiveness."
    - i. No one, including you, deserves forgiveness
    - ii. Forgiveness is not about them as much as it is about you.
  - b. "If I forgive them they will get away with it." (punishment)
    - i. Most likely your unforgiveness will not punish the person in the long term. They may perhaps feel the sting of broken fellowship if there was a close relationship in the first place, however if they were not they couldn't care less. Those that do care will eventually just get over it.
    - ii. Unforgiveness punishes us more than it does those we are trying to punish.
    - iii. There is nothing you can do to the person that will be worse than what God will do to the person if they don't repent. Rom. 12:18-21
  - c. "If I forgive them I'll have to treat them right." (debt )
    - i. How do we treat those that have sinned against us?
    - ii. Does forgiveness mean there are no consequences?
    - iii. Is there a difference between how we treat those inside and outside the church?
  - d. "If I forgive them, it means I accept what they did and send a message it was okay." (debt)
    - i. "Go and sin no more."
  - e. "If I forgive them it means I have to let them do it again."
    - i. The reality and necessity of boundaries
    - ii. The 9 laws of boundaries
- 4. Deal with any issues of unforgiveness in your life

## Addendum 1 Nine Laws of Boundaries

**Acknowledgements:** From a Study by Christoph Kreitz, based on the books Boundaries and Boundaries in Marriage by Drs. Henry Cloud and John Townsend

### **The Law of . . .**

Exposure: Boundaries must be communicated. *Otherwise they are invisible to others*

Proactivity: Boundaries must express what you stand *for*, not just what you are *against*  
*Solve problems on the basis of your values, wants, and needs.*

Sowing and Reaping: Our actions have *consequences*. Someone *will* bear them.  
*Don't interrupt this law by regularly bailing others out.*

Responsibility: We are responsible *to*, not *for* each other.  
*We are to love one another, not be one another.*

Power: We do not have power over *other people*  
*We hardly have enough power over ourselves*

Respect: If we wish our boundaries to be respected we must respect those of others  
*For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.*

Motivation: We must be free to say no before we can wholeheartedly say yes.  
*"Acts of love" are worthless if we don't feel to have a choice*

Evaluation: We need to evaluate the effects our boundaries cause others  
*Hurt and harm are not the same – pain may eventually lead to growth*

Activity: We need to take the initiative to solve our problem

*Don't wait for others to take the first step*

# I OWE YOU

Guilty Party: \_\_\_\_\_

The Offense: \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_ Debt \_\_\_ Punishment \_\_\_ Other

**PAID IN FULL**  
*Jesus*

Your signature of release, transferring all debt and punishment to Jesus:

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# I OWE YOU

Guilty Party: \_\_\_\_\_

The Offense: \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_ Debt \_\_\_ Punishment \_\_\_ Other

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# I OWE YOU

Guilty Party: \_\_\_\_\_

The Offense: \_\_\_\_\_

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Guilty Party: \_\_\_\_\_

The Offense: \_\_\_\_\_

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