

So Many Ways to Say “Sorry”



What does granting forgiveness mean to you?



FORGIVENESS: FREEING OUR HEARTS



Fighting Forgiveness

- When we are told that we are to forgive others, we can think of many reasons we should not have to forgive.
- *You don't know what they did to me.*
- *They ruined my reputation.*
- *They have put me through hell.*
- *They hurt my family.*
- *They deserve payback.*
- *They did _____ . How can I forgive them?*

The Reality of Forgiveness

- *“Forgiveness is a lovely idea, until you have something to forgive.” C.S. Lewis*
- Forgiveness sounds like a noble idea and a virtue we need to strive to have.
- In reality, it is tough to forgive. The pain is hard to forget.
- We may say, “ I forgive you”, but our heart and emotions don’t agree.
- Unfortunately, we become an emotional prisoner to whatever occurred.

Forgiveness: A Christian Virtue

- *“Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.”* Luke 6: 37
 - *For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.* Matt 6: 14-15
 - *Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.*
Colossians 3: 13
 - *... it (love) keeps no record of wrongs.*
1 Corinthians 13:5
- The idea of forgiveness is mentioned over 100 times in the Bible.

Quotes from Good Friday

- *20 Wanting to release Jesus, Pilate appealed to them again. 21 But they kept shouting, “Crucify Him! Crucify Him!”* Luke 23:20-21
- *35 The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at Him. They said, “He saved others; let Him save Himself if He is God’s Messiah, the Chosen One.”* Luke 23:35
- *39 One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at Him: “Aren’t you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!”* Luke 23:39



Jesus' Response

- *34 Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."* Luke 23: 34



No More Excuses

- The 12 tortured words in Luke 23:34 make any excuse of ours to not forgive invalid.
- If we are waiting for an apology before we forgive, we may never forgive.
- Jesus never got an apology. He forgave anyways.



What Forgiveness Isn't

- It doesn't mean we pretend the event never took place.
- It doesn't mean letting others walk all over us.
- It does not mean not pressing charges.
- It does not mean the relationship will be restored.
- It does not mean pretending you were not hurt.
- It doesn't mean you become best friends again.
- It doesn't mean that you have to tell the person you forgave them.
- It doesn't mean all of the negative consequences were canceled.
- It does not mean you have forgotten what happened.

Forgiveness: It's a Matter of the Heart

- Forgiveness begins in the heart and works its way outwards.
- It may stay between you and God.
- Forgiveness is a decision to not live in the past.
- It's a choice to release others from their sins so we can be free again.
- Forgiveness doesn't deny what happened, but it allows us to let go and move forward.

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**TO FORGIVE IS TO SET
A PRISONER FREE AND
DISCOVER THAT THE
PRISONER WAS YOU.**

LEWIS B. SMEDES,
ethicist and theologian

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How many times should I forgive someone?

- *21 Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?”*
- *22 Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy times-seven times.”*
- Jesus basically told Peter to forgive every time someone sins against you.
- Have we reached our 490 times with God?
- I am glad He isn't keeping count.

Matt 18: 21-22

Three Levels of Forgiveness

- Lewis Smedes- author of Forgive and Forget
 1. Rediscover the humanity in the person. We are both sinners.
 2. Relinquish our right to get even. Leave the judgement up to God.
 3. Revise our feeling towards the person. We need to give up our hatred and bitterness.

Achieving Total Forgiveness

- We have reached total forgiveness when we are able to ask God's blessing upon them. (...*pray for those who persecute you... Matt 5:44*)
- Granting ultimate forgiveness seems like a miracle. That is why we need God's help in obtaining it. Is there someone we need to totally forgive?

The “Grateful” Servant?

- *23 “Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. 24 As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold was brought to him. 25 Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.*
- *26 “At this the servant fell on his knees before him. ‘Be patient with me,’ he begged, ‘and I will pay back everything.’*
- *27 The servant’s master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.*
- *28 “But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins. He grabbed him and began to choke him. ‘Pay back what you owe me!’ he demanded.*
- *29 “His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.’*
- *30 “But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. Matt 18: 23-30*

Are we a “Grateful” Servant?

- In the parable, the “grateful” servant was forgiven a huge debt, but failed to forgive another servant’s smaller debt.
- *Is this our view of forgiveness? We hope God and others forgive our sins, but we hold tightly to our grudges and bad feelings for the sins committed against us.*

Final Thoughts

- *Forgiveness is **not** optional for Christians. If we are going to follow Jesus, we must forgive as God has forgiven us freely, completely, graciously and totally.*
- *We will forgive to the extent we appreciate how much we have been forgiven.*
- ***We will never be more like Jesus then when we forgive.***
- *We will never be free from past pain until we forgive.*
- *We need to pray that we are able to truly forgive and set ourselves free.*