

Forgiveness

Pastor Timothy Nutt

It is impossible to go through life without being hurt. To be hurt, wronged, or treated unjustly is common. The Biblical response is forgiveness. Understanding God's forgiveness helps us know how we can forgive others. As believers, we must prepare our hearts and minds to offer forgiveness. We should learn to forgive like Christ forgave us.

Why Must I Forgive?

1. Because I have been forgiven. **Psalms 86:5, 1 John 1:9**
"I write unto you, little children, because yours sins are forgiven you for his name's sake." **1 John 2:12** Jesus Christ's death on the Cross demonstrates how far God went to forgive. In comparison, there is no offense done to us that we are not able to forgive.
2. Because God commands me to forgive. **Ephesians 4:32, Colossians 3:13**

How Do I Forgive? Matthew 18:23-25

1. Make a decision to settle your account. Like the king, we must make a decision to settle the accounts with those who have hurt us.
2. Realize Jesus Christ settled your account. **1 John 2:2, 12; Luke 23:34**
The king who forgave the servant of his account expected the servant to likewise forgive others **Matthew 18:32-33**.

When we accept God's forgiveness through Jesus Christ, we are enabled to forgive those who hurt us. Jesus Christ chose to suffer for my sin, so I can choose to forgive those who hurt me.

3. Have compassion on the offender, as Christ did when He forgave us.
Matthew 18:27 –tell the story
The king chose to show compassion on the one who owed him a large debt. Likewise, we should have compassion on those who hurt us or sin against us.
4. Release the offender from all wrong. **Matthew 18:27**
The Lord of the servant released him from a debt he could not repay. (The debt was millions of dollars.) In the same fashion, we are to release those who have sinned against us or hurt us. True forgiveness will result in no longer having negative feelings against our offender.

Further Understanding on Forgiveness

1. Remember that justice is God's business. **Romans 12:17, 19**. We should never attempt to pay back the wrong done to us when God clearly says He will repay. God will repay better than you can.
2. Forgiveness is an act of the will. **Hebrews 8:12**, "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."
God made a conscious decision to be merciful to our sins. Likewise, we should will ourselves to forgive those who have wronged us. We can decide to forgive even when we do not feel like we can forgive. Obedience will produce the right feelings.

3. Pray for those who hurt you. **Luke 23:34**
“and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;” **Matthew 5:44.**
Pray for those who hurt you will change your heart.

The Result of Not Forgiving

1. We will become bitter. **Hebrews 12:15.**
When we are sinned against or offended, it is important that we quickly forgive the offended. When someone sins against us, we will either forgive or become bitter.
2. We will be tormented. **Matthew 18:33-35**
Tormentors were like modern-day debt collectors; they were relentless. They followed and tormented those who owed a debt until it was paid. When we refuse to forgive, we will be tormented by anger and bitterness.
3. We surrender control to the Devil. **Ephesians 4:26-27**
“Lest Satan should get an advantage of us...” **II Corinthians 2:11**
If our anger is provoked because someone has sinned against us, we must take care of it before the sun goes down. Failure to do so will allow the Devil to have a place in our life.

Practical Help on Forgiveness

1. Forgiveness can be a process. **Matthew 18:22**
Forgiving someone is not always a one-time event, especially if the sin against us is inflicted by a loved one or someone we trusted. Each time the emotional pain resurfaces, we are to forgive again.
2. Forgiveness does not mean you will forget the offense. **Matthew 18:27, Romans 13:10**
An all-knowing God does not forget; He chooses not to remember. **Jeremiah 31:34**
3. Rebuilding a relationship is not a condition of forgiveness. **Romans 12:18**
Trust and reconciliation in a relationship can be lost through someone’s sin against us. If the relationship is never rebuilt, forgiveness is still required.
4. The evidences that you have forgiven from the heart are:
 - A. You don’t remind the offender of his offense.
 - B. You don’t discuss the offense with others.
 - C. You refuse to think about the offense in your mind.**Romans 13:10, Philippians 4:8, II Corinthians 10:5**