

## FORGIVENESS

Matthew 6:12-15; 1 Cor. 6:1-11

“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, forever: 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.”

There is so much hatred in the world today all because of un-forgiveness. No one is willing to say I am sorry, I was wrong, I never meant to hurt you I mean you no harm. We are too proud to admit our faults. The unfortunate thing is, this does happen outside the church, but it is common among believers. It should not be so among us.

We have Christ' examples to guide us. He never sought revenge. He taught us that peacemakers are blessed. (Matt. 5: 5) they shall be called the sons of God. He said we should turn the other cheek Mat. 5:38) and not follow the law which teaches vengeance that says, “an eye for an eye” (Exodus 21:24) He said we should pray for them and do good to them. (Matt. 5:44)

He was teaching us that in this world we have no rights, but we have an obligation to our brothers and sisters in helping them to come to know the truth. If we do not make peace and forgive those who offend us; How will we be able to witness to them and guide them to know Jesus? It is through our forgiveness and peace-making process that we are able to witness to our enemies. Actually, the process of forgiveness is our biggest witness. How we conduct ourselves under adverse conditions speaks volumes. We should also be conscious that we have been given the “Ministry of Reconciliation” (2 Cor. 5:11-21) Christ has reconciled us to God, therefore we ought to reconcile others so that they are back in fellowship.

Paul encountered this problem in the church at Corinth and rebuked them for allowing it to continue among the members because one member was taking the other to court. (1 Corinthians 6:1-8) Unbelievers establish a court system for unbelievers to settle their differences and receive justice. However, the courts are used more for vengeance than for justice. Paul said that believers should be wise enough to judge themselves and not go to the unbeliever for justice.

One of the main reasons for this decision is that the values of the unbeliever are different from those of the believer. The biggest reason for a believer not going to an unbeliever for justice is that the believer would lose the opportunity to be a witness of the love of God to that unbeliever and help winning him to Christ. He said it is better for the believe who is offended to suffer the loss. By doing so, the very act is a witness to the offender and others which creates the opportunity for witnessing. We should constantly be remembered that it is not about us, it is always about Christ.

We have a responsibility to others to help them come to know Christ and accept Him as Lord and Savior. Forgiveness is one of the ways we must use because as Christ forgave us, we must forgive others. We must use every opportunity given us for this purpose and leave no room for the enemy.

1. We will look at what forgiveness is not.
2. We will get an understanding of what is forgiveness
3. We will consider four reasons why we should forgive.

1. a. **FORGIVENESS IS NOT CONDONING**; Which is failing to see an action as wrong, and in need of forgiveness

- b. Forgiveness is not excusing; That is, not holding the offender responsible for the action.
- C. Forgiveness is not forgetting; That is, removing awareness from your consciousness.

#### SO WHAT IS FORGIVENESS?

2. Forgiveness is the intentional and voluntary process by which a VICTIM undergoes a change in feelings and attitude regarding an offense, letting go of negative emotions such as vengefulness, anger, malice and bitterness, with an increasing ability to wish the offender well.

Forgiveness brings the forgiver peace of mind and frees him / her of corrosive anger.

Forgiveness is absolving or giving up all claims on account of debts, obligations, or other claims.

Please note that both the offense and the offender are taken into account in the process of forgiveness.

3. We forgive because we want God to forgive us. It's for our benefit and it is also a sign of obedience. The scripture tells us to forgive others if we want God to forgive us. (Matt.6:12-15; 2 Cor. 2:9-11)

4. It prevents the enemy from having advantage over us. (2 Cor. 2:9)

5. Forgiveness benefits the forgiver (2Cor. 2:7-8)

6. We forgive so that there can be restoration. (2 Cor. 2:7)

7. Forgiveness brings healing to the one who forgives.

#### IT IS NOT EASY BUT WITH GOD'S HELP, YOU CAN FORGIVE.

God in heaven, I thank you for forgiving me of all my sins , help me to forgive those who have hurt me. Thank you for healing me so that I do not hold any grudge. I ask for forgiveness from

those I hurt; In Jesus name I pray. Amen.

MATTHEW 5:23-24

Romans 12:16-18

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