

God's Forgiveness

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Man holds grudges. When we do wrong to our fellow man and then repent and apologize, often it is the case that the one we have wronged will say "I forgive you." and will go ahead and hold a grudge against you. They forgive, but they do not forget and the very next time you offend them, they remind of you of your past offenses and make it clear that they're still holding them against you. God is not like men, He does not holds grudges against us for our past mistakes, so long as we are penitent and seek forgiveness through His son Jesus the Christ.

It is a part of the human condition to struggle with sin. Each of us may have one particular sin that we struggle with the most often. Perhaps we have committed this sin many times over a period of years. Each time we transgress in that area we feel guilty and we genuinely repent. We know it is wrong and we make ourselves a pledge that we will not commit this particular sin again. We pray that we will be delivered from the temptation with regard to this sin and for the next several months we are successful in our attempts to overcome it.

After some time has gone by, we lose a little bit of our vigilance in this area. It is at this point that perhaps we have a bad couple of days; either we're very tired or very stressed and this temptation comes before us, and because we are at a moment of weakness and are alone, we give into the temptation once more. Afterward, we come to our self, realizing that have done it again and are struck with grief and self-loathing over it. We're genuinely sorry for our sin and we repent of it. Once more we pray for forgiveness and for strength in the face of temptation. Once more we dedicate ourselves to never committing this sin again and for the next several weeks or months we are very vigilant towards it.

Then as time goes by we go through a tough stretch; either we're very tired or very stressed and this temptation comes before us, and because we are at a moment of weakness and are alone, we give into the temptation once more. Afterward, we come to our self, realizing that have done it again and are struck with grief and self-loathing all over again...

Maybe this sequence has played itself out many times in your life and you begin to feel as if you will never overcome it. Perhaps you start thinking that maybe you really have never truly repented and start to question whether God will forgive you again this time. After all, you think, if you had truly repented the times before, you would not have committed the same sin again. Or maybe, you think that God will not believe that you have truly repented and will give up on you. So the question arises in your mind, "Is there a limit to God's forgiveness? Is there a point at which God will no longer forgive my sins?"

Peter asked our Lord the same question with regard to forgiving others, but the same principle applies with God's forgiveness. "Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him?"

till seven times?” (Matthew 18:21) Some in that day were teaching that one only had to forgive someone three times and that after a fourth transgression, no forgiveness was necessary. But notice Jesus’ answer to this question, “Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.” (Matthew 18:22) The number seventy times seven (490) is not to be taken literally in this case, but what he is saying, in essence, is that we must forgive our brother every time he repents. Notice what Jesus said in Luke 17:3-4, “Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.” (Luke 17:3-4) Observe that forgiveness with our brother is conditioned upon his repentance just like our forgiveness with God is conditioned upon our repentance.

If we are to forgive our brother every time he repents without any limitations, then it stands to reason that with God it is the same. “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”(1 John 1:9) God will forgive His children each time they repent of their sins, without fail and without exception. The one who thinks that God will stop forgiving them because they cannot seem to break the cycle of sin is mistaken. The only sins that God will not forgive are impenitent sins committed out a spirit of rebellion against Him. The very fact that a Christian is earnestly struggling against sin in his life and sincerely repenting of his sins shows that he has not committed this type of sin.

When we first became a Christian, every sin that we had committed prior to our obedience to the gospel was forgiven. “This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.” (Hebrews 10:16-17). God forgives and then He “forgets” and treats the sin as if it never occurred. If one sins,

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