

Forgiveness Without Repentance

A friend comes over to the house. It was a Friday afternoon and payday came. The friend was visiting and noticed \$500.00 laying on the table. Their friend cashed the check from payday and was going to use it as they could for bills and what not. However, the friend saw the \$500.00 and took the money and left. After realizing the money was gone the friend confronts the friend about the money. The friend who owned the money said, "I forgive you," but the other friend never repented. Is the sin still there? Did the friend ever try to repay the \$500.00 or make recompense of the situation offering to pay back in some way?

See in our world today both in and out of the church we see the subject of forgiveness brought up and talk about yes, we are to forgive but what has happened to repentance? Did not Jesus say in **Luke 13:3;5** that "unless you repent, you will all likewise perish." What has happened to why we want to downgrade repentance? This is an injustice to teach about forgiveness but neglect repentance not only to the person who needs to repent but also failure on the half of the one offering forgiveness. We want to have a clear conscience but not instruct corrections needing to be made.

Paul instructed the benefit that comes from God's word in **II Timothy 3:16-17**. All scripture is inspired by God, and is profitable for doctrine (**teaching**), reproof (**standard**), correction (**change needed**), and instruction in righteousness. God's word teaches us that we need to be corrected and instructed in righteousness.

We do in fact need forgiveness and God is willing to forgive (**Hebrews 8:12**). However, this forgiveness coming from God has requirements. That is, one needs to repent (**Luke 13:3,5**)! If a brother sins, they need to be rebuked (**Luke 17:3**). They need to know that sin is wrong! They need to understand that change is needed. Notice though with me the next part of this verse, that is "if" he repents forgive him. Then Jesus gets into the discussion about how often (**Luke 17:4**). If one comes forward and says "I repent" we are to forgive. How can we forgive one without them repenting? Again, we are doing them an injustice because their soul salvation is in jeopardy. In the Old Testament it was the same practice and understanding too (**Jeremiah 36:3**). They needed to change from their evil ways and then God would forgive!

Such is the case with Simon the Sorcerer (**Acts 8:9-22**). Simon was one who was numbered with those who was baptized. Yet he wanted to return some to his old way of life. He saw the miracles performed and wanted this same power. His way of thinking was that I can purchase this power. He went and offered the apostles money to purchase this power, and Peter told him he had sinned! Did Peter say well I forgive you and go your way, you are fine? No, he told Simon that he needed to repent and pray that he will be forgiven (**Acts 8:22**). So again, I ask, can we forgive one without repentance?

We may be like Stephen (**Acts 7:60**) and Jesus (**Luke 23:34**) and greatly desire forgiveness. However, if they do not repent, they will be guilty of sin. I may like to be forgiving, which is a good thing, but we must teach that repentance is necessary. These are opportunities to help another one come to the fold of God!

These things might make us feel better and have a clear conscience but still leaves one who needs to repent in a situation of being separated from God! As individuals I cannot just have personal

peace of mind for the salvation of one's soul. For Forgiveness one in fact does need to repent! **Daniel**
N. Sanders