

Scripture: Matthew 18:21-35

**Notes:** According to Webster the act of forgiving; the pardon of an offender, by which he is considered and treated as not guilty. The Bible teaches us a proper understanding of forgiveness is essential if we hope to live a life reconciled to God. Many never understand they are forgiven because they don't feel forgiven. Some believe they have gone too far for God to forgive. That is never the case. Forgiveness is based on God's grace not human merit. We will see forgiveness is a fact not a feeling.

**I. Eliminate some wrong ideas about forgiveness.**

**1. When life has hurt me deeply I must forgive God.** God is perfect and Holy and never does anything wrong so there is never a need to forgive Him. The problem we are having is we feel cheated or angry because God allowed the pain. Prayer, a good Bible counselor or mentor can help you realize that God desires to carry us through the pain and in so doing increase your faith. You can tell Him you are angry, that you don't understand why things are happening but eventually your trial is an opportunity to seek and experience his love. Resentments against God block our conscious contact robbing us of the healing we need and the fellowship we could enjoy from being reconciled to God.

**2. We do not need to forgive ourselves.** All sin is a sin against God and only God can forgive sin. If we feel we must forgive ourselves we are saying Christ's blood is insufficient. We can have remorse for things we have done but most of those things cannot be changed. Eventually God may direct us to seek out others we have harmed or tell us to forgive people who have harmed us.

**II. Our need is to be forgiven by God and not ourselves.** Acts 26:17,18 Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me. This is Paul's testimony before King Agrippa. He is telling the king Jesus himself told him that all men walk in darkness unless they are brought to the light through faith in Jesus. Jesus is the only way anyone can be forgiven of their sins.

**1. We must realize our forgiveness was by the sovereign work of God's grace.** Ephesians 2:1-2; 8-9 And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:.....For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. We were made alive in Christ by God not through any works we could do. Our salvation was not dependent on us in any way.

**2. God has forgiven us a debt we could never repay.** Matthew 18:23-27 Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. The King in this story is a picture of God; this man owed so great a debt that if he sold everything he had he could never repay the debt. The wages of sin is death; that is what we have earned. No amount of

money could ever pay the debt we owe. We are forgiven because God so loved us He moved with compassion and accepted Jesus blood as a payment for our debt.

**3. Receiving God's forgiveness is not a matter of feeling forgiven but rather trusting God and his promises. Hebrews 11:6; Romans 5:1-2; 1 John 1:9** But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.....Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.....If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. First we must have the faith that Jesus has provided the way for us to be reconciled to God. Faith is another word for trusting God. We must trust God's word which tells that we have peace with God and that we have access to grace. All of us know that we sin after we are saved and sometimes we feel so dirty, so unworthy. We forget that our relationship to God has never been about being worthy. The reason we don't feel forgiven is because our fellowship has been disrupted by our sin. We must not ignore the fact; we have access by faith into grace because God is faithful. God says if we confess he will forgive our sin because He is faithful. When He says confess and He will forgive and cleanse us He will forgive us and cleanse us. Forgiveness is not a feeling it is a fact of God's faithfulness. The enemy wants us to live in the realm of feelings because they are so easily deceived.

**4. When God says there is no condemnation (guilt or lack of forgiveness) in Christ Jesus it is true regardless of your feelings. Romans 8:1** There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Walking after the flesh means I am trying to work my way into favor with God. Walking after the Spirit is living attached to Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit within. Once we are saved the sin slate is wiped clean. Past sins once confessed are forgiven and remembered no more by God. This verse has been such a blessing for me when Satan tries that fiery dart of doubt by bringing up past sins. My answer is that was covered by the blood. **Matthew 18:21-22** Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven. Sometimes we repeat the same sin and ask for forgiveness. The Devil says not this time; God is not going to forgive you. Jesus tells Peter to forgive his brother as many times as it takes and He does the same with us. **1 John 1:9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. When we commit a sin God wants us to mourn, to feel bad. He wants us confess and ask for help in not committing the sin again. God wants us to believe His word which clearly says He has forgiven us and that he has cleansed us so we can resume our fellowship.

**5. When God that He forgives there is nothing that you can or need to do to complete it.** Forgiveness is complete because of Christ shed blood. Forgiveness is a fact of grace. If you believe that you need to do penance or good works in order to be forgiven then you are saying Christ's finished work on the cross was insufficient.