

**Scripture: Luke 15:11-30**

**Notes:** We have looked at how to receive forgiveness from God and how to forgive our brothers. Today we will look at how to ask for forgiveness.

**I. God expects us to reconcile our differences with our brother. Matthew 5:23-24** *Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.* Jesus says God is more interested in your relationship to your brother than He is in your gift. Let's face it when you have wronged someone your conscience bothers you. We usually will rationalize our part by saying things like if they had not done this or said then I wouldn't have said or done what I did. When you apologize say I am sorry for what I did I was wrong. Never try to justify your actions. **Matthew 18:15** *Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.* You are right to say wait a minute that is talking about church discipline and you are right. It would have fit in last week's message about forgiving your brother. It fits in asking for forgiveness to. It has been my experience that when I am in an argument I am not totally innocent. Usually the way this works between brothers is one apologizes and the other apologizes and the two calmly discuss their differences.

**1. Remember it is hard to ask forgiveness from someone we have not forgiven.** Sometimes when we have harmed someone we remember how they have harmed us or how other people have harmed us. We use this as a justification for not making amends.

**2. We are still responsible to ask forgiveness for unintentional sin.** Many times we hurt people unintentionally. It really doesn't matter if it was unintentional or not we still caused pain and are accountable for what we have done. Do not make excuses; own it and deal with it.

**II. We should realize we have hurt the ones we love the most. Luke 15:11-32.**

**1. The hurt begins when we fail to realize what our choices do to those who love us. (11-12)** *And he said, A certain man had two sons: And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living.* In this story the son is telling the Father I don't want the kind of life you have provide for me. I want to do my own thing. It is really selfishness and self-centeredness. This is one of the dominant characteristics of addicts. Nobody is going to tell me what to do. We know the story well; parties, riotous living and soon he is broke. While he was in the wilderness he wasn't concerned that his Father was worried; he wasn't concerned how much he hurt his Father when he left the way he did.

**2. When he came to his senses he humbly asked for forgiveness. (17-21)** *And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.* Because of what he had done he wanted only

to be treated as servant but the Father showed him mercy and compassion. When he returned home he got two very different responses.

**A. The Father showed him grace. (22-24)** But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry. He not only took him back but he took him back as a son and threw a party.

Remember this story is a parable and the Father is like God. When we repent God gives us mercy, grace, forgiveness and spiritual cleansing. We will not always receive that from people we have hurt.

**B. The older brother showed contempt. (28-30)** And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and intreated him. And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf. He is jealous, feels slighted and does not believe his brother should be treated this well. There are some older brothers in the church when backslidden Christians come home.

### **III. Forgiveness does not mean consequences will be removed.**

**1. We may need to make restitution. Luke 19:8** And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. Zacchaeus was a tax collector who had stolen a lot of money from people. When he met Jesus he knew he needed to make things right by returning what he had stolen and his fourfold restitution satisfied the Law. Giving half of his goods to the poor proves the change in his heart was real. Can you imagine him saying I'm sorry I stole from you forgive me please.

**2. Realize it will be a while before you get your trust back.** This is something addicts need to understand. They have a long history of lies, stealing and verbal abuse. The words I'm sorry mean very little. What they must do is prove over a long period of time they are over their problem. Remember this message is about us asking for forgiveness. All we can do is say we are sorry without making excuses; we can't control how the other person is going to react.

**3. Do not allow yourself to be a scapegoat. Leviticus 16:20-22** And when he hath made an end of reconciling the holy place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat: And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness. This is part of the Old Testament Law for atonement. The scapegoat was to bear the sins of all the nation. Some folks we have armed carry a huge resentment against us; they blame us for all of their problems. When we try to make amends to these folks they won't forgive us because if they did it would require them to look at themselves. It is easier for them to remain a victim. We must be careful not to allow another person's bitterness to cause us to feel guilt.

**IV. Love is the driving force of forgiveness.** We forgive and ask for forgiveness from others because the love of God flowing through wants us to be one in Christ. God so loved us that Jesus died on the cross so God could forgive us and reconcile us to Himself.