

What is forgiveness

Luke 17:3 Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and **if he repent, forgive him.** **4** 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.

Forgiveness is a rebuilding of a relationship and this is presuming the offending person sincerely repents (stops doing it) of what they have done. The biblical idea is that forgiveness "is complete" when the offender confesses to the offended, and he repents to never do it again. But Christ pardoned those who murdered him even though they did not seek forgiveness. But **in the process of forgiving, the offender should seek peace with the person he has offended, and the offended should desire peace also, and should not hold a grudge (whether the offender is repentant or not, it doesn't matter, the thing is in God's hands).**

James 5:15-16 "if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him." In this passage, God teaches us that (some) sickness happens as a consequence of the sins of that same person. This person **should repent and seek forgiveness in order to be healed.** The elders of the church should be involved.

Forgiveness is in the Character of God

Isa 43:25 I, [even] I, [am] he that **blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake,** and will not remember thy sins. **Ps 33:5** He loveth righteousness and judgment: the earth is **full of the goodness (mercy) of the LORD.**

God forgives sins **because he wants to see forgiveness fill the earth as a manifestation of God's character.** God wants to see mercy given out for all the world. Because he forgives us, **God imposes his moral character (as the Forgiver) on humanity.** One cannot be saved without taking into himself (embracing) the forgiveness of God as a personal character trait. It is not just about seeking forgiveness for your personal sins, but also about living outwardly a life of forgiveness towards others that offend you so that you can forgive as God has forgiven you.

God returns to you your own Character

Prov 14:21 He that despiseth his neighbour sinneth: but he that hath mercy on the poor, happy [is] he. **22** Do they not err that devise evil? **but mercy and truth [shall be] to them that devise good.** Salvation (good and truth) is "reached" by those that devise good or mercy towards others. This means that you should keep the concepts of truth and mercy in the center of your actions and thoughts (the attitude of your heart).

Jas 2:13 **For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.**

2Sam 22:26 With the merciful thou wilt shew thyself merciful, [and] with the upright man thou wilt shew thyself upright. God examines the life of every person, analyzing their moral character. How you are morally, this is how God will treat you. If you have a good moral character, God will be good with you. If not, then God will treat you with the same wickedness that you are and show to others. God does not accept what you pretend to be, or what you say you are, but only what God really sees in your life, and this is judged by how you treat others.

God wants you to imitate Him

Eph 5:1 **Be ye therefore followers (imitators) of God, as dear children;** God orders us to imitate him. This imitation is in the moral character of God himself. As God is moral, so he requires you to be moral, like Him. **Luke 6:36** **Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.** **37** Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven: God conditions his divine forgiveness on your embracing and practicing the same moral and divine character of forgiving.

Forgiveness is essential in Salvation

Matt 6:12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. **14** **For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: 15** **But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.** Do you want divine pardon? Then make forgiveness and pardon a concept that is in your own heart. Believing God includes believing that pardon and forgiveness is good and worthy of filling your soul. If we are saved,

then forgiveness is not just something we receive but also give. Forgiveness is a spiritual activity of a saved person. **Mark 11:25** And when ye stand praying, **forgive,** if ye have ought against any: **that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. 26** **But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.**

1Pet 3:7 Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with [them] according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; **that your prayers be not hindered.** Our relationship, especially with our mate, is what God examines and determines if we are forgiving or not. If nobody had ever done an offense against us, it would be impossible on an eternal basis that God would find evidence of our forgiveness. **The aggressive act that people do against a child of God is permitted by God so that he can see what we are internally, morally.** Do we really have forgiveness in our hearts?

God will try without mercy those that have had no mercy in their earthly lives

Jas 2:13 **For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.**

Jesus used the parable of **Matthew 18:23-25** to teach about forgiveness. He presents us with a land owner that had a slave. This slave had a great debt that was impossible for him to pay (calculating about 60 million minimum wages). The land owner did an assessing of accounts with him and commanded him to be thrown in jail for his debts. The servant came and begged forgiveness, pardon, and the land owner forgave him that great debt. But that same slave went out and treated harshly a fellow slave over a debt that could be paid in a short period of time (5 months minimum wage). When the land owner heard this he punished the wicked one. The words are clearly that he was sent to hell. The lack of forgiveness, pardon, and mercy in a person claiming to be saved is a problem for that person before God. **Matt 18:32** **Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst**

me: **33 Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity on thee?** **34** And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. **35** **So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.** I do not know how to interpret this except to say that a saved person forgives. The unforgiving are not saved.

Eye for an Eye, Tooth for a Tooth

Many think that the golden rule is to **do unto others as they do unto you**. It is not. God wants us to do unto others as **we would want them to do unto us**. **Matt 5:44** *But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;* The point is that God permits abuses, offenses, and sin demonstrating what each one is in their moral character. Sin is never personal against another person, but rather sin is personal against God's moral character.

Ps 51:4 **Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done [this] evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, [and] be clear when thou judgest.** David ordered the murder of Uriah, betraying Israel by killing one of their key generals in the middle of a war. He left Bathsheba pregnant and a widow. Yet David saw things as God saw them. He had offended God. We are nobody to make an accounting with another, because we also are great offenders before God, and we must leave all that in God's disposition, time, and pleasure. The sins that others do against us are really against God's moral character. When we capture this principle, we will be quick to give up revenge, anger, retaliation, etc. We believe in our God who is the Revenger and who has a hot wrath for sins against his nature and character.

Heb 10:30 *For we know him that hath said, Vengeance [belongeth] unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people.* Only God can demand an accounting and judge. If we try to do it, then God will step outside of things, and justice will not be done. The absence of

forgiveness hurts us spiritually and causes the person to move far away from the presence of God. Pardon is part of salvation, so much so that to receive salvation, our hearts should be filled with the goodness of forgiveness, and it should overflow into our hearts and minds, and into our actions and speech towards others. Our character should show it. **Eph 4:32** *And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.* **5:1** *Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; 2 And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.* The point of forgiving is that it is in order to follow of Christ's example. Christ forgave his murderers. So, can you not follow Christ's example and also forgive whatever lesser crimes others do against you?

How many times should I forgive

Luke 17:4 *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.*

Matt 18:22 *Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.*

The Bible does not present a limit on the number of times you have to forgive. The idea is an infinite number of times. While it continues to happen, you continue to have the obligation to forgive. How many times will God have to forgive you? Is there a certain number you are considering? No, you want limitless forgiveness. How about how grave of an offense? Again, anything.

Rom 12:21 *Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.*

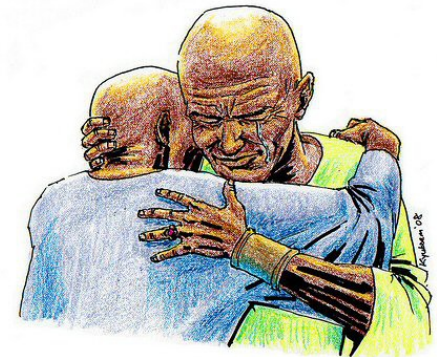
God wants you to respond to evil and aggression against you without vengeance, hate, retaliation, etc. We should show the love of Christ towards those that hate us.

God wins when you forgive others.

Forgiving as we are Forgiven

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Matt 6:12 *And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. 14 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:*

God wants us to live in such a way that we do not hold grudges, we do not seek aggression nor vengeance, and we don't constantly seek conflict and friction with others. Forgiveness is key in our spiritual life. So then, God conditions us for divine forgiveness for our sins, by allowing offenses to happen in our life, and he sees how we react. Without forgiveness as a foundation in our lives forming part of our moral character, we cannot receive divine forgiveness for our own sins. Embracing Christ is embracing forgiveness as a concept in our lives. As we have learned forgiveness and exercise it in our own relationships, thus God forgives us, that is God's promise (or threat). Scary thought! Forgiveness is not something we just want for OUR sins, but it is something that we believe in like Jesus' death and resurrection. It is a practiced way of life for us. God sees that in how you forgive those that have aggression against you. Let it go! Forgive!