

# The Bible Says: Forgiveness

By Mark Hatfield

One of the hardest things to do in this life is to forgive someone when they have wronged you. We live in a world that still goes by the old passage "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth". When someone is offended at another's actions, instead of taking a minute to pray and seek godly wisdom as to how to respond, they react out of anger and disobey God's will. Revenge is the first thought that comes to the minds of most people, instead of forgiveness. Let us take a look at what the Bible teaches on the subject of forgiveness.

## MAN MUST FORGIVE MAN

Jesus taught the most fundamental lessons on forgiveness during His time on earth. In Matt 6:14-15, Jesus said, "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." The importance of being a forgiving person, is based on our need for forgiveness from our sins as well.

Some people think that there is a limit to forgiveness, and even though one seeks to repent of their wrong doing, there is a wall of anger that will not forgive the guilty party. Jesus responded to the question of a limit to forgiveness when Peter asked about it in Matt 18:21-22. It is written, "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." This is not a mathematical equation for forgiveness, rather a note that the responsibility to forgive is infinite, if the other party is penitent. Jesus then taught a parable that if we want others to forgive us and we are not forgiving, then we will be held accountable for our sins (Matt 18:35) Jesus set the perfect example while on the cross. After being tormented and mocked, in Luke 23:34, our Lord said in prayer to God "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots." Let us be more forgiving.

## THE LORD CAN FORGIVE MAN

In Matt 9:6, the Lord Jesus began to demonstrate the ability of God to forgive as he would heal the lame and sick completely. He said, "But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house." Jesus not only had this power while on the earth, but today through His blood, can heal all mankind of sin that would come to Him and obey His words.

The Bible is very clear in pointing out the Lord's plan for salvation. If man will only hear the gospel message (Rom. 10:17) while believing in Jesus (John 8:24), this will produce the motivation to repent of sin (Luke 13:3, 5) and will help us to confess Jesus as our Lord and Savior (Acts 8:37). Once we have made known that Jesus is who we want to follow we must be baptized for the remission of our sins (Acts 2:38) and we will be saved (Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16).

Once someone has obeyed the gospel, they will still have some temptations and even find themselves in sin at times. The Lord's forgiveness is still available, if they will only repent and confess their sins that are committed. It is penned in 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." Do you need to repent?

### **MAN NEEDS TO FORGIVE HIMSELF**

Believe it or not, when someone does obey the gospel, they will many times beat themselves up over past transgressions. Even though it is good to be reminded of what you don't want to do again, you need to remember that those sins are washed away. God says in Hebrews 8:12, "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."

Are you one who is guilty of some sin and need to be forgiven?

-Obey the gospel...

Are you holding a grudge with someone you need to forgive?

-Forgive them...

Are you a child of God that needs to forgive yourself ?

-Remember God's forgiveness...