

FORGIVENESS

I. Biblical references to "forgiveness"

A. Old testament words

1. *nasah* - "to carry" - Ps. 25:8
2. *salach* - "to pardon, to forgive" - Ps. 86:5
3. *kaphar* - "to pacify, to satisfy" - Ps. 79:9

B. New testament words

1. *aphiemi* - "to release, to forgive" - Col. 1:14
2. *charizomai* - "to show favor, to grant grace" - Col. 2:13

II. Divine forgiveness of sins

A. Divine prerogative - Neh. 9:17; Matt. 9:6; Mk 2:7,10; Lk. 5:21,24

1. Only God can forgive sins because it is His character that has been violated, transgressed and misrepresented.

B. Objectively effected by the death of Jesus Christ

1. Remedial action of Christ's death - He took the death consequences of sin upon Himself vicariously and substitutionally in order to forgive our sins. Matt. 26:28; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14; 2:13; Heb. 9:22;
2. Ontological basis - no forgiveness apart from the presence of the Forgiver. Not just a benign benefit or a grant of privilege
3. Continuing application of forgiveness?
 - a. No other offering for sin - Heb. 10:18
 - b. Confess and appropriate - I Jn. 1:9

C. Subjectively received by the receptivity of faith -

- Lk. 3:3; 24:47; Acts 2:38; 10:43; 26:18
1. Unbelief as basis of unforgiveness - Matt. 12:31,32; Mk. 3:29; Lk. 12:10
 2. Do we need to "ask" for forgiveness? or simply receive such in Jesus Christ, the Forgiver?
 3. What if don't "feel" forgiven?
 4. What if I can't forgive myself?

III. Forgiving others

A. When the Forgiver lives in us, He wants to express His forgiving character to others. - Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13

B. As He does so, we learn to appreciate the forgiveness He has extended to us.

C. The church is the fellowship of the forgiven - I Jn. 1:7 (not the program of the pious)

D. Is God's forgiveness of our sins conditioned or contingent on our forgiving others? - Matt 6:12-15; Mk. 11:25; Lk. 11:4

E. Do we have resentments and bitternesses? Vengeance is assuming a right we do not have - Rom. 12:19

F. Don't "feel" like forgiving? Forgiveness is a decision of faith to allow Christ to act in us.

G. Forgiveness is not a matter of forgetting. Forgiving is a present action; forgetting is a process of time.

H. No mathematical limitation to forgiveness. - Matt. 18:22. When we forgive, then the next offense is always the first.

- I. In forgiving we focus on the action of the offense, rather than on the person of the offender, and recognize that God can cause all things to work together for good - Rom. 8:28.
 - J. Forgiveness involves willing to allow Christ to minister to the other person through us.
 - K. Forgiveness involves willing to suffer abuse - Matt. 5:11,12
 - L. Biblical examples of forgiving others.
 - 1. Joseph - Gen. 42
 - 2. Jesus - Lk. 23:34
- IV. Asking forgiveness of others
- A. Confessing ours sins to another - James 5:16
 - B. Asking forgiveness and seeking reconciliation - Matt. 5:23,24
 - C. Practical observations
 - 1. Identify the basic offense - pride, greed, rebellion (selfishness)
 - 2. Consider how to word your request
 - 3. Determine method of presenting such - letter, phone, visit
 - 4. What if they reject your effort of reconciliation? mock you? berate you?
 - D. Restitution