

Forgiveness: Duty, Desire, and Difficulty

Forgiveness is at the heart of the gospel but we often find it very hard to forgive those who have betrayed or wronged us. We will explore these questions: What is the basic biblical teaching on forgiveness? Is there a difference between an apology and asking forgiveness? What about hard cases such as repeated abuse? Is repentance necessary for forgiveness? What does pouring coals of fire on the head of one's enemy mean?

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Fallen human reflex to being sinned against/offended:

Forgiveness

Forgive as you have been forgiven

Seriousness of sin and forgiveness

Matt 18:21-35

Not apology

Name the hurt and your response

Three part promise

Serious warning Matt 6:12-15

Readiness, duty and difficulty Luke 17:3-10

Gift

Decision leading to change of heart attitude

Simple and Difficult situations

A Dilemma:

Process: Attitude and Transaction

Forgiveness and reconciliation

7 Steps of Forgiveness - Romans 12:17-21 +

1. Love your enemies

2. Renounce revenge

Do not repay evil for evil

Do not take revenge Lev 19:18, Rom 12

3. Leave final justice to God

Rom 12:19

Alexander the metal worker has done me a great deal of harm. The Lord will repay him for what he has done. 2 Tim 4:14-16

4. Seek reconciliation

If offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you...first go and be reconciled... Matt 5:23-24

When you are praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him.

Mark 11:25

5. Seek peace

If it is possible as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

Rom 12:18

Above all, love each other deeply for love covers a multitude of sins.

1 Pet 4:8

A man's wisdom gives him patience. It is his glory to overlook an offence. Prov 19:11

6. Overcome evil with good Rom 12:20-21

Don't let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs...be kind and compassionate. Eph 4:29

Don't repay anyone evil for evil or insult for insult. 1 Pet 3:9

7. Provoke/encourage repentance

Fire Therapy!

If your enemy is hungry, feed him;... thirsty... drink. In doing this you will heap burning coals

on his head. Rom 12:20

Rebuke

If your brother sins rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him. Luke 17:3-4

Speck and plank – humility. Matt 7:1-5

If your brother sins go show him his fault just between the two of you... Matt 18:15 (note context)

Rebuke your neighbor frankly so you will not share in his guilt. Lev 19:17

Restore

If someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens... If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing he deceives himself... Galations 6 1-4

Don't rebuke someone you do not

Bold, tough love sets limits and provokes repentance and reconciliation.

To forgive another means to cancel a debt in order to provide (1) an opportunity for repentance and (2) restoration of the relationship.

Dan Allender

Forgiveness

A Process

Attitude

Transaction

Obstacles to Forgiveness

It feels as if justice will not be done

It feels like it denies the pain and seriousness of the damage

It feels like I should be able to trust again but I can't

I would be powerless and vulnerable again if I let them off the hook

I can never forget

I am still in pain and hurting. I don't feel I can forgive

Foundation of Forgiveness

Forgive each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. Eph 4:32

Recommended reading and reference

The Peace Maker, Ken Sande, Baker, 2004

Forgiving and Reconciling: Bridges to Wholeness and Hope.
Everett Worthington
Bold Love, Dan Allender

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