

Forgiveness – Basis for Long Life

One of the first things we read about after the creation of Adam and Eve is God's forgiveness to them both in the story found in Genesis 3. Although we are very familiar with this story, we need to examine it very closely or we miss the steps God is showing us to obtain from and grant forgiveness to others. It is the basis for advancing toward Godliness and holiness.

How important is this process? [Matthew 6:9-15](#) "*This, then, is how you should pray: " 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. **Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.** And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. 'For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.*

[Matthew 5:23-24](#) "*So if you are offering your gift at the altar and remember there that **another believer has something against you**, leave your gift at the altar. First go away and make peace with that person. Then come back and offer your gift.*

There are two types of offenses according to these verses: 1) against us; 2) our offense against others. The resolution is the same.

REMEMBER the actions of Jesus when the Pharisees brought the woman caught in adultery to him? Jesus wrote their names in the sand according to Jeremiah 17:13, causing them to leave without forgiving the woman or receiving forgiveness from Jesus. He did not condemn the woman but said: *I do not condemn you. Go and sin no more.* [John 8:1-11.](#)

Jesus indeed lived up to His teachings in Matthew regarding forgiveness. He also lived up to His Father's standards. Recall that Jesus said: "*I and my Father are one*" [John 10:30?](#) Does His actions match those of His Father in Genesis 3? Let's investigate God the Father's reaction to Adam and Eve's offense against their creator.

- 1) Approaches them civilly rather than what we would do. Most of us would screamed, "*How could you do this to me?*"
- 2) Most of us would have been irate with accusations and scorn toward them as unworthy individuals.
- 3) Many of us would be so offended that we would vow never to talk to them or have anything to do with them again.
- 4) We would carry out that vow by spreading their offense(s) to everyone we could. Of course, we would embellish it.
- 5) But God Himself went to them rather than wait for them to come to Him. He calls out, "*Where are you?*"
- 6) He respected their personhood, and their worth as His special creation.
- 7) He investigated each of them for their reasoning in committing the act by asking them calmly, He addressed their excuses by giving feedback in their own words: *Who told you that?*
- 8) Then He, knowing they had, gently asked them if they violated His command.
- 9) Once He was sure that they were aware of the true nature of their actions, He spells out the consequences.
- 10) He makes it known that their relationship with Him has been permanently broken. No more one to one meetings.

- 11) He says their secure and peaceful “*home*” is gone from their possession. They will struggle in a totally new environment.
- 12) He assures them there is a hope in the future and provides them with clothing to start their new life long sojourn.
- 13) At no point does God display a “*Superior*” Attitude.

The next Chapter in Genesis (4) takes place in the new location on earth for Adam and Eve. It begins with the birth and a description of Cain and Abel. God does the same procedure with Cain that He did for Adam after he was created. He warns Cain by approaching Cain and asks: *Why art thou wrath? and why is thy countenance fallen?* This question is followed by encouragement to change along with a warning of dire consequences if he doesn't. Cain. Like many of us today, did not heed the warning from God.

Read the rest of the story; then compare the actions of God to the steps listed in 1 through 14 above. Is it consistent in both examples?

Now read the description for dealing with offenses in [Matthew 18: 15-17](#). Jesus says He and the father are one. Does His command match the sequence of actions detailed about His Father? Of course there is not enough information to really tell. But, there is a definite order that insures integrity of the procedure. Therefore, based on Jesus' claim in John 10:30, I believe we can make some statements that will guide our actions, which follows the detailed principles of God concerning forgiveness of Offences (sins?).

Not every offence is a sin. Perception is always 100%. It may only be an offence perceived by the offended incorrectly. Hence the need for caution and discussion.

Putting all of this together, we can now state the principles of forgiveness:

- Forgiveness is the Essence of GOD and cannot be separated from His LOVE. Thus we say GOD is LOVE: By the same token, we can also state: GOD IS Forgiveness with Justice.
- If we are to follow GOD's command, we must constantly forgive.
- The aggrieved, if He is a believer, is compelled to initiate forgiveness.
- Forgiveness is the right of the aggrieved and must be instituted by them or endorsed to be fully effective.
- Forgiveness demands that I talk through the situation causing a grievance with the other party where practical. **(I do not know what this means)**
- Forgiveness implies empathy toward all parties.
- Forgiveness requires assessment of the event that causes the person to be grieved.
- Forgiveness necessitates restoration of losses caused by transgressor's action.
- Forgiveness does not depend upon feelings,
- Forgiveness does not demand continued personal or social interaction with the transgressor.
- Forgiveness is toward all, not just your brother believers.
- Forgiveness extends to the inner self; I must also forgive myself for what I have done, once I am repentant.
- Forgiveness is not condoning or tacit approval of other's actions.
- Forgiveness encompasses the person not just the transgression.
- Forgiveness is a restoration of the whole person – body, soul, and spirit.
- Forgiveness leads to more open communication in your relationships.

To be continued Next Week

Shalom