

Forgiveness

Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another,
if any man have a quarrel against any: even
as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.
Colossians 3:13

Day One

Forgiveness is a simple sort of miracle. When you experience forgiveness, you will experience a very special part of God. Forgiveness is starting over and trying it again with the person who causes you pain. When God forgives, He offers you a new start. He opens his arms to you and says, "I love you and want to be with you in spite of what you have done in the past and what you may do in the future, in spite of everything! Let's start over fresh." When God forgives, He starts a new relationship with us leaving the old behind.

Pray, write out the following verses and describe in your own words what they say to you about God's forgiveness in the space provided.

Hebrews 8:12 _____

God's forgiveness _____

1st John 2:1-2 _____

God's forgiveness _____

Colossians 2:13-14 _____

God's forgiveness _____

God has declared us not guilty thru the debt Jesus Christ paid by giving His life on the Cross at Calvary, and we need no longer live under sin's power. We have not been removed from the world and still have the freedom of choice to obey God or not to obey God. Yes, we still feel like committing sins, and sometimes we do. Now however, we are not slaves to sin, but we are free to live for Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 2:4-6 _____

God's forgiveness _____

Isaiah 43:25 _____

God's forgiveness _____

By God's Word we can trust Him to forgive us of any sins we have committed. When God forgives us, we can also count on a brand new relationship with Him. What better model of forgiveness do we have than God's forgiveness? God's forgiving is a model of what can happen between two alienated human beings. The dynamics are the same.

As forgiveness is given, we shall find that fellowship with our Father is closer and sweeter. We will grow strong spiritually. Forgiving an offense is important for us. By it we are giving evidence that we too have been forgiven. Forgiving others is not natural, yet it is possible through Divine Grace. Our having been forgiven encourages us to forgive others (**Ephesians 4:32**).

Let's take a look at God's promise of forgiveness found in **1st John 1:9**. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness".

Notice the connection between confessing and forgiving. If we confess, He forgives. Confessing sin is not the same as talking about sin. If talking about sin were the same as confessing sin, our society would be on a confessional binge.

Confessing sin is not the same as explaining our sins. One way of getting to know a person is to get to know his faults. When you find faults in a person, you'll usually hear excuses for those faults. I know I'm cold toward people but I've been through the ringer with my brothers and sisters. I'm insensitive because my parents didn't love me. These are explanations and excuses, not confessions.

Memory verse: "Bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do."

Colossians 3:13 NKJV

Each day review the verse with prayer several times. If your Bible is different than the New King James Version, memorize it from your Bible.

Day Two

What is confession?

Confession is an acknowledgment of our responsibility. Somewhere within the personal dynamics of the wrong you do, somewhere inside the working of your mind and will, you make a choice for which only you can give an answer. You chose and you acted and you are accountable. It's not my parents, not my brothers or sisters, not my earlier upbringing, but me, oh Lord, standing in need of prayer. I have not confessed unless I accept responsibility for the wrong I do to my neighbor or to my God.

In view of **1st John 1:9**, list three sins you have not yet confessed and against whom.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Confession is a shared pain. When I truly confess to you that I have hurt you, I'm saying to you: the hurt I caused you now hurts me too. I feel the pain I inflicted on you. I wounded you and now I am wounded by the cuts that I sliced into your life. I share your pain. Only when pain is shared can confession begin; a painless confession is a contradiction. (**2nd Corinthians 7:10**).

Confession includes acknowledgment of your own responsibility and the experience of shared pain. With these any confession can be the beginning of a miracle that tears down a wall that alienates you and can build a bridge you can walk across to each other's forgiveness.

Memory verse: Fill in the blanks. "Bearing with one _____, and _____ one another, if _____ has a complaint against another; even as _____ forgave you, so _____ also must do." **Colossians 3:13 NKJV**

Day Three

Pray, write out the following verses and describe in your own words what they say to you about your responsibility in forgiving others in the space provided.

Matthew 6:14 _____

My forgiveness of others _____

Mark 11:25 _____

My forgiveness of others _____

Luke 17:3-4 _____

My forgiveness of others _____

Ephesians 4:32 _____

My forgiveness of others _____

Colossians 3:13

My forgiveness of others

Where do you start? You start right where you are, not where you wish you were, not where you would be if you could do it all over, but wherever you are now with any person who has hurt you or you have hurt. You can make a new beginning. Open up your arms and your heart and say: "I want to be your friend again; your father; your mother; your daughter; your mate again. Let's start over." This is forgiving. If you have hurt someone, restoration may be instantaneous from them or they may not be ready, always pray before and after you bring something to an individual or group that needs to deal with any hurt, whether you did it or they did it. If you have been hurt by another individual or group, they may not realize that they have hurt you, the Lord calls us to reconciliation with our brothers and sisters in Christ. Yes, sometimes that means that we are called to go to the party who has hurt us and let them know. We should not assume that they know what they have done to us.

As Christians, we follow the One who is willing to forgive all. When He was in the shadow of the cross, Jesus called on us to forgive others (**Mark 11:25**). So important is our forgiving others that Christ tells the injured party to take the first step in reconciliation (**Matthew 18:15**).

Memory verse: Fill in the blanks. "Bearing _____ one _____, and _____ another, if _____ has _____ complaint _____ another; even as _____ you, so _____ also _____ do." **Colossians 3:13 NKJV**

Day Four

Forgiveness is essential to maintaining a proper attitude. In the following verses list what they say about forgiveness and how they apply to you and the way you deal with other people. Don't forget to pray first.

Matthew 5:7

Matthew 5:23-24

Matthew 5:44-48

Who is your enemy? Think about this and pray about who your enemy is. Perhaps it is the very one who has hurt you, though they be a friend or relative. Pray and ask Jesus, what would He have you do? Go and do as He has directed you to do.

Matthew 6:12

The miracle of forgiving is the creation of a new beginning. It doesn't take away the hurt. It doesn't say that the past injury never happened. It does refuse to let them stand in the way of a new start. You both hurt and so you make your shared pain the starting line of a new relationship. What you have after confession, repentance and forgiveness is a new beginning. No guarantee of where it will end. The future is going to bring more pain, you can be sure of that much, more confession, more shared pain with people who hurt you and more new beginnings. We never stand still. Love is sometimes painful, but no love is even more and sinisterly empty pain.

What about people who are beyond our reach? What about that spouse who committed adultery and left you for another? What about your long dead parents who did little else but verbally abuse you? Forgiveness does not deny the past; it can only create a new future. In this case we need to let go of our resentment and spite and start all over by forgiving them and leaving them to God.

Circle any of the following emotions you are experiencing now.

- | | | |
|------------|------------|--------------|
| Bitterness | Resentment | Anger |
| Vengeance | Hatred | Spitefulness |

Memory verse: Fill in the blanks. " _____ one _____, and _____ another, if _____ complaint _____ another; _____ as _____, so _____ also _____." **Colossians 3:13 NKJV**

Day Five

Why should we forgive?

Forgiving others is Christ-like. Even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. (**Colossians 3:13**). Some of Jesus actions are beyond us, but here is One that we can emulate. The joy of being forgiven is only that of a sinner and of earth. The joy of forgiving is Christ's own joy, the joy of heaven. Do we find it difficult to forgive an offense, especially when it's serious? We learn how to forgive by following Christ's example. When He was nailed to the cross His first words spoke of forgiveness. Father; forgive them for they know not what they do. (**Luke 23:34**).

You never know for sure how much you hurt people by not forgiving them. It can hardly be as much as you hurt yourself. When you don't forgive, you lock yourself in your own prison of resentment, bitterness, anger, hatred and preoccupation with vengeance. You slam the door shut locking the horrid memories in with you. Your only hope of freedom is forgiveness.

God will never shut the door to us. He will always forgive, and He expects you to do the same. He puts Himself right at your side and says, "Let's start over. I will be your Father. I will be your friend. I will be your Savior. So, let's get going.

This commandment we have from Him that he who loves God loves his brother also.
1st John 4:21.

Assignment 1: Get an 8½ " x 11" lined sheet of paper. Make a vertical line down the middle of the sheet. On the top left hand write out "Disadvantages of unforgiveness". On the top right hand of the sheet write "Advantages of forgiveness". Use what has been said in Day Five and write out and determine what side of the sheet each sentence should belong.

Assignment 2: Scripture Memorization - Write out **Colossians 3:13** on 5 - 3 x 5 cards. Put one card on the bedroom mirror. The second card on the bathroom mirror. The third card on the refrigerator door. The fourth card on the dash of your car. If you can laminate the fifth card and keep with you. When you pray in the morning include the scripture verse in your prayers. When you get up in the morning look at the card on the bedroom mirror and meditate on it. Use the same procedure when you are in the bathroom and the kitchen and in your car. Whenever you are somewhere else and Satan attacks you in your mind then pull out the laminated card and meditate on the verse. You will understand what is Biblically happening according to **James 4:7 & Romans 8:5**.

Memory verse: Fill in the blanks. " _____ one _____, _____ another, _____ complaint _____ another; _____ also _____."

Colossians 3:13 NKJV

Day Six

Use the graph below to examine specific situations that occur in your life to find Biblical answers to your situation. As you put God's Word into practice you can grow God's Way in learning forgiveness. Use all the Scriptures and explanations above to help you discern where you are as a disciple.

Examples: theft, lied to, person left you, molestation, taken advantage of, ect.

Action	Unbiblical	Biblical	Scripture Used
Hurtful Words	Ephesians 4:29a	Ephesians 4:29b	2nd Corin. 7:10

Question: How, specifically, does this Bible study help you to overcome the sin of homosexuality in your life? Write out your answer on a separate piece of paper or write out your answer to the above question below:

Memory verse: Fill in the blanks. " _____ / _____
 _____ / _____
 _____; _____ / _____."

Colossians __:__ NKJV

An interesting thought about forgiveness: if you were God, how would you deal with you?

FORGIVE AND FORGET

Formula for Forgetting

Hebrews 8:12, Isaiah 43:25

If someone offends you and you decide to forgive them.....

1) DON'T BRING IT UP TO THEM AGAIN!

Temptation: To nag.

2) DON'T BRING IT UP TO SOMEONE ELSE!

Temptation: To have a pity party, or to slander someone.

3) DON'T BRING IT UP TO YOURSELF!

Philippians 4:8-9, 2nd Corinthians 10:5

Temptation: To wallow in self-pity

Ephesians 4:29-32

"Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."

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