

WHAT FORGIVENESS IS AND IS NOT

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We probably all have some misgivings about how forgiveness actually works. How far should it go, how is it done, and how can we be sure that we have forgiven as God expects and commands? Clarification from the Bible is always what is needed to relieve such concerns. According to Scripture, let's consider what forgiveness is and what it is not.

UNDERSTAND WHAT FORGIVENESS IS NOT.

- Not Approving or Dismissing: Forgiveness is not agreeing that an action is acceptable or regarding it as less than serious.
- Not Excusing: Forgiveness is not minimizing the accountability of one's actions.
- Not Justifying: Forgiveness is not a legal declaration that something wrong is right.
- Not Pardoning: Forgiveness is not an official decision freeing a wrongdoer from the penalty of trespasses.
- Not Reconciling: Forgiveness is not "forcing" two parties to terms that restore a relationship.
- Not Denying: Forgiveness is not asserting that something is false.
- Not Forgetting: Forgiveness is not putting something out of one's mind.

UNDERSTAND WHAT FORGIVENESS IS.

- Forgiving Anyway (Luke 23:34a)
- Recording Nothing
- Refusing Vengeance (1 John 4:18)
- Keeping Quiet (Ephesians 4:29)
- Showing Mercy (Luke 6:36)
- Acting Graciously (Philippians 4:5)
- Being Peaceable (Hebrews 12:14)
- Releasing Bitterness (Ephesians 4:30-32)

Understanding forgiveness is a lot to take in, but how liberating this understanding can be if we follow it. Talking about it and studying it is far easier than taking it home and living it.

Forgiveness is not an option, although we do have a choice in the matter. May each of us agree with the Holy Spirit working within us to “forgive one another, even as God for Christ’s sake has forgiven you.”