

Pursuing & Granting Forgiveness

Introduction

Reconciliation is the end goal of conflict resolution, and forgiveness is the means. God is reconciling His people to Himself by forgiving them of their sins, which is being accomplished through the redemptive works of Christ (2 Cor. 5:18-19). When we forgive in the way God has forgiven us, there will be peace in relationships, and He is glorified in His Church as His forgiving character is put on display to the world.

Forgiveness

God's Example

- Forgiveness is truly _____ and exemplified in how God forgave sinners through Christ (Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:12-13).
 - What is forgiveness? Forgiveness is a decision to release (pardon) a person from the guilt of sin while moving forward with grace, mercy, and love.
 - The _____ to forgiveness is condemnation, vengeance, anger, and bitterness.
- **Four _____ of Forgiveness¹:**
1. I will not _____ on this incident. (Ps. 103:12; Mrk. 11:25; Heb. 8:12)
 2. I will not bring this incident up and use it _____ you. (Ps 103:12, 130:3-4)
 3. I will not _____ to others about this incident. (Prov. 17:9; Heb. 8:12)
 4. I will not allow this incident to stand between us or _____ our personal relationship. (Lam. 3:22).

Pursuing Forgiveness

- If you have sinned against someone, you need to _____ forgiveness.
- Forgiveness should be pursued first and foremost with God, and then with men.
- Pursuing forgiveness will involve _____ and _____ of sin (Prov. 28:13; Lk. 17:3-5).

Confession of Sin

- Confession of sin is acknowledging known sin before God and men that you have sinned against. It is the opposite of concealing (Prov. 28:13; Ps. 32:5).

¹ Ken Sande, *The Peacemaker: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict*, 3rd ed. (Baker Books, 2004), 209.

- If you struggle with confession and forgiveness, there will be _____ in your relationships.
- Christians should be quick to confess and quick to forgive sin, keeping short accounts (Eph. 4:26-27).

➤ **Seven _____ of a Confession²**

1. _____ ADDRESS Everyone Involved
2. _____ VOID if, but, and maybe
3. _____ DMIT specifically
4. _____ CKNOWLEDGE the hurt
5. _____ CCEPT the consequences
6. _____ LTER your behavior
7. _____ SK for forgiveness

Granting Forgiveness

➤ _____ of Forgiveness

- Forgiveness is first a matter of the heart. Before forgiveness can truly and successfully granted, one's heart must be in the right place.
- When forgiveness cannot be granted, there can still be a heart attitude of forgiveness (Lk. 23:33; Acts 7:58).
- A person who has a heart of forgiveness desires for a person to receive forgiveness _____ than vengeance (Psalm 78:38, 86:5).
- The first coming of Christ was a display of mercy and grace to sinners, while the second coming will be a display of vengeance.
- An attitude of forgiveness is _____ by understanding and living in light of the forgiveness you have received from God.

➤ **Granting Forgiveness**

- When a person repents and seeks forgiveness, it must be granted (Lk. 17:3-5; 1 Jn. 1:9).
- "There are times when someone asks for forgiveness, the offended party does not grant forgiveness. This is a form of vengeance. You are punishing them by withholding forgiveness. There is no good and godly reason to withhold forgiveness

² Ken Sande, *The Peacemaker: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict*, 3rd ed. (Baker Books, 2004), 126-134.

when a person asks for it.”—Ken Sande³

- If you withhold forgiveness, this _____ something about yourself, and you need to examine your heart. You’re not living as one who has been forgiven.
- Christ gave stern warnings for those who are unforgiving. If you do not forgive, God will not forgive you. (Matt. 6:14-15; Matt. 18:22-35; Mrk. 11:25)
- “It is certain, then, that Jesus does not condition the granting of forgiveness upon the behavior of the offender after forgiveness, but rather hangs the granting of forgiveness upon the brother’s verbal testimony *alone*: ‘and seven times in a day should return to you saying, ‘I repent.’” It is the *saying*, not the subsequent *doing* on his part, that should activate the offended one to grant forgiveness.”⁴ —Jay Adams

➤ Anti-Gospels

- He sinned against me first, so I’m not taking the first step.
 - God loved _____. (1 Jn. 4:19; Rom. 5:8)
- He is the one who is offended, so he needs to come to me. I’m not going to him.
 - God _____ towards hostile sinners in sacrificial love for the sake of the relationship (Rom. 5:28; Matt. 5:23-24).
- If I approach her, she may respond to me in a hurtful way, so I should avoid any confrontation (Rom. 5:8; 1 Pet. 2:20-25; Heb. 12:2-3).
 - If God took this approach, your relationship with Him would have never been reconciled.
 - The message of the gospel is about the offended sacrificing for the offender to restore the relationship (Rom. 5:8).
 - There are times when you should avoid danger or harm (Prov. 22:3; Matt. 10:23; Acts 9:23-25; Acts 14:5-7). However, before you put up barriers, always consider what God sacrificed for His relationship with you (Phil. 2:3-8).
 - Gospel ministry involves dangerous risks. If emotional and physical safety is your number one _____ then you will pass on many gospel opportunities (Acts. 7:58-60; 2 Cor. 11:23-28; 1 Pet. 2:18-25).
- He doesn’t care, so what’s the point?

³ Ken Sande, *The Peacemaker: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict*, 3rd ed. (Baker Books, 2004).

⁴ Jay Adams, *The Christian Counselor’s Manual: The Practice of Nouthetic Counseling* (Zondervan, 1986), 68-

- If God took this approach, your relationship with Him never would have been reconciled.
- This perspective puts limitations on the power of the Holy Spirit to change hearts.
- You didn't care! An act of _____ love is what was used to bring about your reconciliation with God (Jn. 15:3; Rom. 5:8).
- God is glorified regardless of how others respond. Faithfulness finds favor with God in the face of rejection (1 Pet. 2:18-25). There is eternal value in gospel centered ministry, no matter the outcome of our efforts!!