

Love and Marriage

Lesson 9: Forgiveness

Questions & Objectives

- What is one of the primary separators between Christianity and other major world religions?
- What does it mean to forgive?
- Why is it imperative that we forgive, as Christians?
- What methods of forgiveness exist? Which are most effective and why?

Lesson

Forgiveness

²¹Then Peter came to Him and said, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?"

²²Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.

Matthew 18:21-22 (NKJV)

REFLECTION What does it mean to forgive "seventy time seven"?

Clinical Research

Studies have shown that forgiveness improves both _____ and _____ system functioning – including lowered heart rate, blood pressure, and lowered stress.^{1,2}

_____ unforgiveness may actually erode health responses; and those who were less forgiving reported a greater number of health issues.

An encouraging finding from Stanford University was that forgiveness can be _____, with practice.³



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Quick Religious Survey

Islam

Judaism

Buddhism

Hinduism

Christianity & Forgiveness

How is Christianity different than all of these?

1. _____ can and does forgive all sins – even those committed against others.



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2. Christianity leaves no room for _____ vengeance:

3. Forgiveness is not just a strategy for personal _____ – _____.

4. Forgiveness is not _____.

Forgiveness Defined

What does it mean to forgive someone?

- Clinical –

- Legal –

Forgiveness doesn't mean _____ or excusing their action.

- Theological – choosing to relinquish your _____ to _____.

REFLECTION How can this look like “forgetting”? What causes me to want to “remember” rather than to choose to “forget”?



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I'M NOT GOING TO HOLD THIS AGAINST YOU, BECAUSE
I'M NOT GOING TO HOLD ONTO IT ANYMORE.

It's Not Optional

As a Christian, forgiveness is NOT optional – it's _____!

- A talent was approximately _____ years' wages for an average worker.
- A denarius was approximately _____ day's wage.

REFLECTION What stands out about the Parable of the Unforgiving Servant? Why is it so poignant?

What does Jesus re-emphasize in the Lord's Prayer? Why?

As Christians, why is forgiveness not optional, but commanded?



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The temper that does not forgive cannot be forgiven, because it is "ipso facto" a proof that we do not realise the amount of the debt we owe. We forget the ten thousand talents as we exact the hundred pence, and in the act of exacting we bring back that burden of the greater debt upon ourselves.

- George Ellicott

Methods of Forgiveness

Researchers found five primary forgiveness strategies:

1. _____ Forgiveness
2. _____ Forgiveness
3. _____ Forgiveness
4. _____
5. _____

Conditional Forgiveness

Pros: _____

Cons: _____



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Nonverbal Forgiveness

Pros: _____

Cons: _____

Explicit Forgiveness

Pros: _____

Cons: _____

What two main types of forgiveness have psychologists identified and what's the difference?



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Full Forgiveness

Biblical forgiveness frees not only the other person, but also _____.

THE CAGE OF EMOTIONAL UNFORGIVENESS IS BUILT BIG ENOUGH FOR JUST ONE.

Nowhere is forgiveness more necessary or more impactful than with our spouse and our family. And as Christians, God commands it.

Final Warning

Do not sin against your partner on the _____ that they must forgive you.



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Wrap-Up

- Forgiveness is foundational to Christianity and differentiates it from all other religion.
- Forgiveness is difficult, but not optional – it's foundational.
- Marriage in particular benefits from open discussion and forgiveness of each other.
- Do not presume on forgiveness in order to sin against your partner.

Follow-Through

Meditate

Matthew 18:21-35

Consider

Why is it so important for me to forgive? Am I holding any bitterness or resentment toward my spouse or loved ones? What actions would the Lord have me take in forgiving them?

Act

- Set quiet time alone with God. Ask Him to search your heart and reveal any lingering bitterness, contempt, and unforgiveness. Ask Him to reveal any sins you've not repented of or sought forgiveness for.
- Inquire of the Lord how He would have you address the above. Then do it!

Research

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3. *The Nature of Forgiveness*, Dr. Fred Luskin,
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4. *Forgiveness in Marriage: Current Status and Future Directions*, Fincham, Hall, Beach, 2006: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1741-3729.2005.callf.x-i1>

