

# FORGIVENESS

4

## DIVE DEEPER

- ◇ What do you do that makes people angry?  
√ Do you realize it whenever it happens?

### READ Matthew 5:23 & 24(NIV)

23 "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, 24 leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.

- ◇ What jumps out at you as you read these two verses?

≈ Do you think Jesus is using exaggeration here, or is he actually asking us to leave worship and seek forgiveness from others before seeking forgiveness from God?

§ "Worship is merely a pretense if we have offended others in such a way that they are holding grudges against us. It is so natural to try to make up for our integrity with ceremony...

Ceremony, regular attendance at worship, and giving will never produce a clear conscience. If we are at odds with others because of our actions and are unwilling to do anything about it, attendance at a worship service is an exercise in hypocritical futility. We need to first attempt to make things right. Similarly, sometimes the reason our prayers are hollow is because we have offended another brother or sister and are not willing to do anything about it.

Psalm 66:18 touches on this: "If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened.'" - Hughes, R. K. (2001). The sermon on the mount: the message of the kingdom (pp. 102-104).

- ◇ What are our greatest challenges and what rational thoughts come to mind as we seriously try to implement this?

- ◇ Will God truly not forgive us if we do not seek forgiveness of other humans we have offended?

YES • NO • MAYBE

1. I am an irritating person.
2. There is not a single person in the world who dislikes me.
3. There are some relationships that can never be mended.
4. God wants me to get right with Him, so that I can then get right with others.
5. I typically avoid people who dislike me.



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# DIVE DEEPER (CONTINUED...)

√ What might this say about the character of God?

◇ *"When one who professes to serve God wrongs or injures a brother, he misrepresents the character of God to that brother, and the wrong must be confessed, he must acknowledge it to be sin, in order to be in harmony with God. Our brother may have done us a greater wrong than we have done him, but this does not lessen our responsibility. If when we come before God we remember that another has aught against us, we are to leave our gift of prayer, of thanksgiving, of freewill offering, and go to the brother with whom we are at variance, and in humility confess our own sin and ask to be forgiven."*

- White, E. G. (1896). **Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing** (pp. 58-59).

√ How does this address the realities of those who have started the fight, done more harm or choose to hold a grudge against us regardless?

◇ What does it say about God's character that He would make this such a serious step in His forgiveness process?

NOTES

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## MY PRAYER

1. Whom have I offended and am in need of forgiveness?
2. How can I overlook how much they have offended me too?
3. How does this enhance my perspective of God's character even more?

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