

## PART SIX HANDOUT: DRESSED TO SERVE “FORGIVENESS!”

This Week we’re Looking at what Paul says about, "Forgiving One Another" **READ VS 13**

- To Have the Character of Christ Demands that We Forgive!

Forgiveness Requires We Do THREE Things:

- First, We are Not to Bring Up to the person whom we have Forgiven the thing We Forgave...We are to Treat that Person as though it Did Not Happen.
- Secondly, We don't Tell Anybody Else about the Matter that was Forgiven. Do Not Gossip to Others.
- Thirdly, You do Not remind yourself of what has been forgiven!
- *Forgiveness Means Instead of Meditating On the Offense, You “Intentionally” Put it Aside even to Yourself Because that is what Christ Has Done for Us.*

**READ Colossians 3:12-13** Because of Our Errors, We Desperately Need Divine Forgiveness. However, *Accepting God’s Forgiveness is a Lot Easier than Forgiving Others who have Hurt and Offended Us.*

### Six Important Principles about Forgiveness.

1. FORGIVENESS IS NOT A FEELING—IT’S A DECISION...A CHOICE!

- A Mature Christian Does Not Live by Feelings, But by Faith and Obedience.

2. FORGIVENESS IS NOT FORGETTING—IT’S AN INTENTIONAL “RELEASE”

- Forgetting is Passive, But FORGIVING is An ACTIVE Process in which You Make a Conscious Choice Not to Remember...YOU RELEASE THAT PERSON!
- Read Isaiah 43:25 *When God Forgives Us, He Chooses Not to Remember Our Sins Anymore.*

3. FORGIVENESS IS NOT CHEAP—BUT IT’S BETTER THAN REVENGE

- Jesus taught we should Not be A person who Seeks to Get Even. **READ Matt 5:38-39**

4. FORGIVENESS IS NOT EASY, *IN FACT*: IT’S IMPOSSIBLE WITHOUT GODS’ POWER

- *Forgiving someone who hurt you is one of the hardest things you’ll ever do.* To Forgive You Choose Not to Think about this Incident. Remember, it’s Impossible to Forget it, But You Can Choose NOT to Think About it. *You Choose to Release them from Your Desire to Take Revenge on Them.*
- When God Forgives Our Sin, He Buries them in the Depths of the Sea and He Never Goes Fishing for them. And For Us to Forgive Someone...We Must Do the Same!

5. FORGIVENESS IS NOT THE SAME AS RECONCILIATION Here’s the Difference...

- Forgiveness Requires One who Offers Grace...Reconciliation Requires Two to Offer Grace!
- *However...God Unilaterally Offers Grace and Forgiveness to Everyone on this Planet Because He Wants to be Reconciled with Every Sinner.*
- *But that Does Not Mean that Everyone on the Planet Will Accept His Grace!!*
- **Reconciliation with God Occurs when We Repent of Our Sin and Accept His Graceful Offer of Salvation...His invitation is Not Based on Works “We Come Just As We Are.”**  
*Grace is Unmerited Favor. Grace is Giving Someone what They Need...Not What They Deserve. If Someone has Wounded You...Grace Forgives Them Anyway.*
- You don’t wait for them to come Crawling Begging You for Forgiveness. You Choose to Unilaterally Forgive Them. If they will Accept Your Forgiveness and Your Relationship Will be Reconciled.
- But there is the Possibility They’ll Reject Your Offer of Forgiveness. If They Do, there will be NO Reconciliation...*BUT You Have Done All God Has Required of You.*

**READ Romans 12:18-19** The Bible doesn’t say you can Live at Peace with All People—that’s why it says, “IF” It Is Possible, as far as it Depends on YOU, Live at Peace with Everyone.”

- When People Reject Your Willingness to Make Peace...Forgive Them, and Move On.

KEY: God Offers Forgiveness to Everyone, But Reconciliation IS Dependent on Acceptance of His Grace.

## 6. FORGIVENESS IS NOT ONLY GOOD FOR THE OFFENDER—IT HEALS THE ONE WHO FORGIVES!

There are Basically 3 Reasons Why You Should Forgive Others: (1) Because God Commands it; (2) Because God has Forgiven You. (3) Because Forgiveness is Good for You.

People who Refuse to Forgive, Hurt Themselves...Bitter People Can't Sleep...Ulcers line their Stomach and Their Blood Pressure Rises. They see the Negative in Every Situation because their Life is Polluted with these Feelings of Resentment and Anger.

- *People who are Unwilling to Forgive may Feel they are Punishing the Other Person but the Only Person Paying the Price is Themselves.*

**ILLUS: Corrie Ten Boom** was imprisoned by the Nazis during World War II because her family provided a hiding place for Jews when they were being arrested. Corrie miraculously survived and became an effective Christian author and speaker. In 1947 she was invited to speak in Munich, Germany.

**That evening, she spoke on the topic of forgiveness—how God buries our sins in the depths of the sea. After her talk she was approached by a man who looked familiar to her. With horror she recognized him as one of the cruelest guards at the concentration camp.** Suddenly all the fear and hatred returned in a flash. He said to her, “In your talk you mentioned Ravensbrück. I was a guard there. But since that time, I have become a Christian. I know that God has forgiven me for the cruel things I did there, but I would like to hear it from you as well, Fraulein.” **He held out his hand to Corrie and said, “Will you forgive me?”**

Corrie wrote “It could not have been many seconds that he stood there, hand held out, but to me it seemed hours as I wrestled with the most difficult thing I had ever had to do. I stood there with the coldness clutching my heart. But forgiveness is an act of the will, and the will can function regardless of the temperature of the heart. **‘Jesus, help me!’ I prayed silently. ‘I can lift my hand. I can do that much. You supply the feeling.’** And so woodenly, mechanically, I thrust my hand into the one stretched out to me. And as I did, an incredible thing took place. The current started in my shoulder, raced down my arm, sprang into our joined hands. And then this healing warmth seemed to flood my whole being, bringing tears to my eyes.

**‘I forgive you, brother!’ I cried. ‘With all my heart!’ For a long moment we grasped each other’s hands. I had NEVER KNOWN GOD’S LOVE SO INTENSELY As I Did Then.**

Like Corrie Ten Boom, We have Been Offered Forgiveness by God, So We Should be Willing to Forgive Others. However...We Can’t Do It Alone, But with God’s Power, We Can Forgive Those Who Have Hurt Us.

### EXPERIMENT ON THE PAIN OF BITTERNESS AND THE PLEASURE OF FORGIVENESS:

- Take your Right Hand and Make a Tight Fist. Squeeze as Hard as You Can. After only a few seconds it will become painful. KEEP THE TIGHT FIST...Imagine what it Would Feel Like to Maintain that Tight Grip for Days, Weeks, Months, or Years. That’s What Unforgiveness Does To Your Heart.

You may Not feel it Physically, but When you Hold Onto the Sins and Shortcomings of Others, it Hurts You.

The Word Forgiveness means “TO RELEASE.” Go ahead, Release Your Fist, Doesn’t it Feel Better? **That’s what Forgiveness Can Do for You.**

**POINT: FORGIVENESS IS NOT A FEELING—IT’S A CHOICE OF OBEDIENCE!**