

Mark 11:25 – Notice the words “anything” and “anyone,” AND why Jesus calls us to forgive others: “**And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins**” (NIV).

Matthew 18:23-35 – Jesus told this parable to teach us about the vital importance of forgiving as we have been forgiven: ²³ “**Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴ As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. ²⁵ Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.**”

Note: “A talent was a monetary unit worth about twenty years’ wages for a laborer” (ESV Bible note). \$40,000/year x 20 years = 800,000 x 10,000 = 8 billion dollars!

²⁶ “**The servant fell on his knees before him. ‘Be patient with me,’ he begged, ‘and I will pay back everything.’ ²⁷ The servant’s master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.**”

²⁸ “**But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii. He grabbed him and began to choke him. ‘Pay back what you owe me!’ he demanded.**”

Note: “A denarius was a day’s wage for a laborer” (ESV Bible note). \$160/day x 100 days = \$16,000. The debt owed by the first servant was **500,000 times greater** than the debt owed by the second! The first represents **us to God**, while the second **us to others!**

²⁹ “**His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.’”**

³⁰ “**But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. ³¹ When the other servants saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed and went and told their master everything that had happened.**”

³² “**Then the master called the servant in. ‘You wicked servant,’ he said, ‘I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to.**

³³ **Shouldn’t you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?’ ³⁴ In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.”**

³⁵ “**This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart**” (NIV).

Ephesians 4:32 – As God has freely forgiven us, we (*His forgiven children*) are called to freely forgive all others: “**Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you**” (NIV).

Conclusion

May God enable us to **keep receiving His forgiveness through Jesus** and **keep extending our forgiveness to all others!**

For more on forgiveness, see these brochures: “Forgiveness through Jesus” and “Forgiveness – Understand, Enjoy, Extend”

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Forgiveness

➔ Vital

➔ Essential

➔ Necessary



Between God and Us!
Between Us and Others!

Introduction

In the beginning God’s perfect creation was wonderful☺; then sin ruined everything☹ – Including the relationship between **God and people**, and **people and people!**

“...your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you...” (NIV Isaiah 59:2).

- **WITHOUT forgiveness** – we are separated *from God and from all whom we have sinned against!*
- **WITH forgiveness** – we are *restored, reconciled, reunited, and at peace!*

Six Realities of Forgiveness

1: It Is a Promise!

This is true for us *through Jesus*: God said: **“I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more”** (NIV Jeremiah 31:34). Even though we struggle to forget, our statement of **“I forgive you”** should include these promises:

1. I will not use this sin against you!
2. I will not mention this sin to others!
3. I will not dwell on this sin!
4. I will not allow this sin to hurt our relationship with each other!

2: It Is a Gift!

Forgiveness is a gift given by *the one who was wronged!* We wronged God, so He gave us the gift of forgiveness! Now, as others wrong us, God calls us to give them the gift of forgiveness! *Though undeserving, God gave to us; so God calls us to do the same – whether people deserve it or not!* The Bible says: **Forgive “each other, just as in Christ God forgave you”** (NIV Ephesians 4:32).

3: It Stops the Cycle of Revenge!

Instead of saying: **“You hurt me, so I’m going to hurt you!”** We should say: **“You hurt me, but I forgive you!”** Jesus may have had that in mind when He said: **“Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you”** (NIV Matt. 5:44).



4: It Restarts Broken Relationships!

With forgiveness, all past sins are forgiven and *the slate has been wiped clean!* The Bible says: **“If we confess our sins, [God] is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”** (NAS 1 John 1:9).

5: It Encourages Confession!

When approached by God, Adam blamed Eve, then Eve blamed the serpent (Genesis 3:11-13). Nevertheless, *God promised the Savior*, which led them to confess their sins and trust in the future descendant of Eve who would eventually live and die to take away the sins of the world!

6: It Focuses on the Present and Future!

Since the past is forgiven, we should try to forget it and move on – *seeking to glorify God and love our neighbor!* The Bible has this instruction:

“Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things. The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things; and the God of peace shall be with you” (NAS Philippians 4:8-9).

How to Confess Our Sins

We are to confess our sins *to God* and *to all whom we have sinned against*.

- **A format:** Identify what you are sorry for; then *use this format to ask for forgiveness:* **“I am sorry for _____ . Will you please forgive me?”**
- **Take the First Step:** Is there ANYONE who needs to hear you ask: **“Will you please forgive me?”** If someone is hurting because

of your sinful words or actions, take the first step! Keep your relationships healthy by wiping the slate clean each day. **“If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone”** (NIV Romans 12:18).

Bible Passages on Forgiveness

Matthew 6:14-15 – The full version of the Lord’s Prayer is recorded in Matthew 6:9-13; then, *immediately after*, Jesus said these words: **“For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins”** (NIV).

- **Jesus** – *rephrased and emphasized* the fifth petition of the Lord’s Prayer!
- **Martin Luther** – wrote these words in the Large Catechism in regard to the fifth petition: **“[God] has promised us assurance that everything is forgiven and pardoned, yet on the condition that we also forgive our neighbor. For just as we sin greatly against God every day and yet he forgives it all through grace, so we also must always forgive our neighbor who does us harm, violence, and injustice, bears malice toward us, etc. If you do not forgive, do not think God forgives you”** (The Book of Concord, 2000, 453:93-95).
- **Diagram** – on the *flow* of forgiveness. God offers forgiveness because of who He is, *not because of any good we have done*. Then, *having received His gift of forgiveness through Jesus*, it is vital, essential, and necessary for us to fully forgive all others!

