# FORGIVENESS

*Matthew* 18:21-22 *Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?* [22] *Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.* 

#### "Forgiveness is the valve, which makes the free flow of the agape love possible".

**Col.** 3:12-13 Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; [13] Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.

## Our God is a forgiving God.

*Psalm* 78:38;86:5 *For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee. (Ps* 103:3; 130:4).

Exodus 34:6-7 And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, [7] Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.

## Word Study

#### FORGIVE, FORGAVE, FORGIVENESS

Meaning: Compassionate feelings that support a willingness to forgive

The act of excusing a mistake or offense

#### A. Verbs

**1. aphiemi**. "to send forth, send away" (apo = from, hiemi = to send) "to remit or forgive"
(a) debts, *Matt 6:12; 18:27,32*, these being completely cancelled;

(b) sins, Matt 9:2,5,6; 12:31,32; Acts 8:22; Rom 4:7; James 5:15; 1 John 1:9; 2:12.

In this latter respect the verb firstly signifies the remission of the punishment for sinful conduct, the deliverance of the sinner from the penalty divinely and therefore righteously, imposed;

**Secondly,** it involves the complete removal of the cause of offense. Such remission is based upon the vicarious and propitiatory sacrifice of Christ.

In the OT atoning sacrifice and "forgiveness" are often associated, e. g., Lev 4:20,26.

The verb is used in the NT with reference to trespasses (paraptoma), e. g., *Matt 6:14,15*; sins (hamartia), e. g., *Luke 5:20;* debts (see above) (opheilema), *Matt 6:12*; (opheile), *18:32;* (daneion), 18:27; the thought (dianoia) of the heart, Acts 8:22. (Cf. Kalupto), "to cover," 1 *Peter 4:8; James 5:20;* and (epikalupto), "to cover over," *Rom 4:7,* representing the Hebrew words for "atonement."

Human "forgiveness" is to be strictly analogous / corresponding to divine "forgiveness," e. g., *Matt 6:12.* If certain conditions are fulfilled, there is no limitation to Christ's law of "forgiveness," *Matt 18:21,22.* The conditions are repentance and confession, *Matt 18:15-17; Luke 17:3.* 

#### Limits to the possibility of divine "forgiveness;

1. Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost (Matt 12:32).

2. Sin unto death (1 John 5:16).

#### 2. charizomai

"to bestow a favor unconditionally," is used of the act of "forgiveness," whether divine, *Eph* 4:32; Col 2:13; 3:13; or human, Luke 7:42,43 (debt); 2 Cor 2:7,10; 12:13; Eph 4:32.

**B. Noun : Aphesis;** denotes "a dismissal, release"; it is used of the remission of sins, and translated "forgiveness" in *Mark 3:29; Eph 1:7; Col 1:14,* and in the KJV of *Acts 5:31; 13:38; 26:18,* in each of which the RV has "remission." Eleven times it is followed by "of sins," and once by "of trespasses."

## The teaching of Jesus on the subject of Forgiveness. Math 18:21-35

Matthew 18:21-22 Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? [22] Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.

Seventy times seven is 490 times, but it doesn't mean that after 490 times you don't have to forgive. What Jesus said was an impossible number of offenses that would happen to an individual in a day. He was saying forgiveness should be continual, that it should go on and on. Forgiveness should be the real attitude of a Christian. Not all people will receive forgiveness, but the attitude in the heart of a Christian should be to offer it always.

#### Jesus tells a parable about forgiveness:

"Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of [make a reckoning with] his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all" [The Living Bible says that is like ten million dollars.] (brackets mine). Now, here's the situation: There is a man who actually owes ten million dollars to his master. There is no way he can pay it—he knows he can't and the master knows he can't. In those days, you couldn't claim bankruptcy like you can now. Those days they'd sell you, your wife, your children, and everything you had, and you'd go into slavery. You would be sent to prison until everything was paid, and if it never was, you'd stay in prison all your life. This man did the only thing he knew to do: He got down on his knees and cried for mercy, "O master, please be patient with me! Please, I beg you. I'll repay you everything. Just be patient!" Notice what happened in verse 27. It says the master was moved with compassion for him, and he forgave him his debt.

We had a debt we could not pay (Rom 4:4). The Bible says that the wages of sin was death (Rom. 6:23)—separation from God for eternity—all the silver and gold in the world couldn't redeem us. Then God in His compassion and in His grace sent His Son Jesus Christ to earth to pay the debt we couldn't pay. God looked upon us in His compassion and mercy and said, "I forgive you that debt."

This man who had just been forgiven ten million dollars had lent something like twenty dollars to a fellow servant. He found him and said, "I've just been forgiven ten million dollars, and what is twenty dollars to me? I want you to be as free as I am! Just let it go. It's okay, for I've been forgiven ten million dollars!" That is what should have happened, but it didn't. Let's read what really happened in *verses 28-31. "But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me what thou owest. And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done." He threw that man into prison for twenty dollars after he'd just been forgiven ten million dollars! Can you imagine that?* 

Verses 32-34 say, "Then his lord, after he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth and

delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him." This man was then thrown into prison because of the way he treated his fellow servant, and thus he forfeited his original forgiveness. Jesus said in verse 35, "So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses." Isn't it foolish, having been forgiven all our sins— the wages of which are death and separation from God for eternity—to refuse to forgive? We beseech God, saying "Forgive me and have mercy on me through Jesus Christ," receive forgiveness, and then turn and refuse to forgive someone else for a little thing we think is so big—after having received forgiveness for all the things we've done. God says that's wickedness.

Just like Jesus said in the parable in *Matthew 18*, **if we do not forgive from our hearts** after we've been forgiven such a great debt by our heavenly Father, **we will be delivered into the hands of the tormenters.** What are the tormenters? They can be all kinds of things— demonic strongholds, oppression, sickness, depression, disease, and many other things. The root is unforgiveness. Not forgiving after we have been forgiven allows Satan a foothold in our lives. The Bible says we have to make the decision to forgive.

*Matthew* 18:35 (The Message Bible) – "And that's exactly what my Father in heaven is going to do to each one of you who doesn't forgive unconditionally anyone who asks for mercy."

#### Forgive as you are forgiven

In the Lord's Prayer which He taught, Jesus said to forgive as we've been forgiven.

Matthew 6:12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

Luke 6:37 Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven:

Matthew 6:14-15 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: [15] But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

God forgave our sins when Jesus took them to the cross 2000 years ago.

We receive that forgiveness when we are born again, That could even be any time in the past.

We can experience that forgiveness and the blessings associated with it only if we continually forgive others ."

# Love in proportionate to your forgiveness.

#### One who is forgiven more loves more.

Luke 7:41-47 There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. [42] And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most? [43] Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged. [44] And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. [45] Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. [46] My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. [47] Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. [48] And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven.

In the Bible the word "forgiveness" and "love" are closely related. In fact one of this does not have any credible meaning without the other. Both are interconnected. Neither of these can exist without the other. Love is the basis of forgiveness. It is like a circle. You can love only if can forgive; and you can forgive only if you can love.

Anyone who truly understands their forgiveness will love God more. Anyone who loves God more will love others more.

1 John 4:20 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? John 13:34 ;Romans 13:8 ;1 Cor. 8:3 ;Ephes. 5:2 ; 1 John 4.

If you have truly understood and received the forgiveness from God, you will love God more. If you really love God, you will really love others. If you really love others, you will really forgive them from your heart.

Understanding the grace of God – how much God forgave us even though we are not worthy of it (*Rom 5:8; Titus 3:5*) - will help us to live a victorious Christian life (*Titus 2:11-14*).

## How much are we forgiven?

*Mark* 3:28 Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme:

Psalm 103:3 Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases;

**Psalm 103:12 ; As far as the east is from the west**, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.

John 1:29; The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

**1 Peter 2:24 ;** Who his **own self bare our sins** in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

**1** John 1:7; But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. ]

1 John 2:2 ;And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

1 John 4:10; Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. (Heb; 1;3, 1 john; 3;5, 1 pet; 3; 18. Ephes. 4:32; Galatians 1:4)

Titus; 2;14. Romans 3:25.

**Col. 2:13**; And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;

*Hebrews 10:10-14*; By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

[14] For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

Romans 4:8 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.

## When we pray, we're to forgive

Mark 11:25-26 And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. [26] But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.

This same truth is presented in Matthew 6:12, 14-15, 18:23-35; and Luke 6:37.

*Mark 11:25-26* says that when we pray, if we have anything against anyone, we're to forgive. What does that mean? How long can unforgiveness stay in our hearts? Only as long as it takes us to go to the Lord and pray. And if we have the slightest bit of unforgiveness against anyone, we should release them and say, "God, I'm letting them go today. I'm forgiving them. I'm making a choice because you forgave me such a great debt."

Asking and receiving, which are included in prayer, must have some qualifications.

- 1. We must ask in faith (Matthew 21:22 and Mark 11:24).
- **2.** We must ask without wavering (*James 1:5-7*).
- **3.** We must ask according to God's will (*1 John 5:14-15*).
- **4.** We must not ask to consume it upon our own lusts (*James 4:2-3*).
- 5. We must not seek something more than we seek God (*Math 6:33*).

Un-forgiveness in our hearts will keep our prayers from being answered. Unforgiveness is a great hindrance to the answers to prayer. We should forgive others as quickly as it takes to make the decision to pray. The Greek word for "when" in this verse is "HOTAN," and it means "whenever" (Strong's Concordance). When we stand praying, we must forgive if we have "ought" (Greek - "EI TIS," which means "if any" [Strong's Concordance]) against anyone.

When we are offended or hurt, we often feel justified in holding a grudge. The Old Testament Law expressed this when it stated, "Eye for eye, tooth for tooth" (*Exodus 21:23-25*). Until the offense was paid, those offended did not feel free to forgive. However, God dealt with everyone's offenses by placing sin upon the perfect Savior who was judged in place of every sinner of all time. To demand that others now earn our forgiveness is not Christ like. Jesus died for every person's sins (*1 John 2:2*), extending forgiveness to us while we were yet sinners (*Romans 5:8*), and we should do the same (*Ephesians 4:32*).

It is doubtful that those who refuse to forgive have ever experienced forgiveness themselves. The forgiveness that we have received from the Lord is infinitely greater than any forgiveness we could ever be asked to extend toward others.

Jesus asks the Father to forgive those who were crucifying Him. This is the most supreme example of love that the world has ever seen, and we are commanded to follow Jesus' example (*Ephesians 4:32*). Stephen exhibited this same love *Acts 7:60*. Lay not this sin to their charge. So we can also do the same.

*Ephes.* 4:32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

The basis of our ability to forgive others is the fact that we have been forgiven ourselves. We can't give what we don't possess. If we aren't walking in the forgiveness of God, we won't minister it to others. Since we have been forgiven, we can forgive others in the same way that God, for Christ's sake, forgave us.

He forgave us before we repented or asked for forgiveness. The offense against Him was infinitely greater than any offense we have ever suffered. So, since He forgave us, we can forgive anyone for anything.

One translation says, "And be becoming kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other even as and just as also God in Christ forgave you."

## The world's worst prison is the prison of an unforgiving heart.

There is a vast difference between receiving forgiveness and experiencing forgiveness. A person who forgives others whole heartedly is the one who is experiencing true forgiveness actually.

## **Offending others**

**Offence:** A lack of politeness; a failure to show regard for others; wounding the feelings or others. *snare* (figurative *cause* of displeasure or sin) :- occasion to fall

Luke 17:1-4 Then said he unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come! [2] It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones. [3] Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. [4] And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.

It is a serious thing to sin against a fellow believer and tempt him or her to *sin (Rom 14:13; 1 Cor 10:32; 1 John 2:10)*. As believers we should never do that. It will bring very serious consequences and punishments upon us. The consequences will be worse than being drowned by tying a millstone around the neck. That is so severe.

When we are offended by a fellow believer, and we don't forgive them, but hold a grudge against that person, it hurts not only the person we are unwilling to forgive, but also us. That is why Jesus told us to take care of ourselves (verse 3). We are hurting ourselves more than we will ever hurt those we are angry with. Living lives of forgiveness is good for us.

The golden rule Jesus teaches us is "Do not offend others. If someone offends you, forgive them."

# **Delivered to the tormentors**

Matthew 18:34 And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.

35 So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

This is a terrible warning from the mouth of Jesus Christ. We have to forgive from our hearts; otherwise we will be handed over to the tormentors. What are "tormentors"? Anything which can torment us: sickness, pain, poverty, depression, sadness, jealousy, pain, loss, anger, death, etc.

Many of these have to come through our bodies. The principle behind this is 'sowing and reaping'.

Unforgiveness is a silent killer. It is the reason for many of our problems.

Now we will look at the process of being handed over to the tormentors. It can help us be more careful and know exactly what is happening and stop the process at the beginning.

The mind is programmed to deal with stress which arises due to various pressures of life. Whenever our mind reasons that there is a pressure in life, our body tries to adapt accordingly. Our brain commands the adrenaline glands to secrete hormones into the bloodstream. This release of extra adrenaline into our blood stream enables the body to be prepared to face the situation which caused the stress. But if the pressure too much, too long, frequent and persistent, then the stress becomes distress and our body maximizes its effort to cope with it and ultimately breaks down and becomes sick.

The same pressures of life may create different degrees of stress in different individuals. The reason for this is not the "properly or improperly working adrenaline glands" but "the properly or improperly working mind".

## Let us study this with an example.

Person A is preaching, "God will not tempt anyone". Person B raises his hand and quotes a verse from Genesis saying "God tempted Abraham". A is unable to explain the apparent contradiction. His mind feels that he was humiliated in front of the whole congregation. It assesses the situation and reasons that he should be angry with B.

His mind creates thoughts and feelings in the left cerebral cortex which, as a result, sends a signal to the hypothalamic nerve cells of the brain.

This activates the hypothalamic emergency system which then stimulates the sympathetic nerves to constrict the arteries carrying blood to his skin, kidneys and intestines.

In this same time the brain has sent a signal to the adrenal glands which starts pumping large doses of adrenaline and cortisol into the blood stream.

Then comes a telephone call from a fellow 'believer' who gives some additional dose saying person B has already been talking against A, trying to become the best preacher and thinks he is a superior, etc.

This additional dose tightens A's muscles, makes his heart beat faster and increases his blood pressure. If he is injured at this time his blood can clot more rapidly.

Muscles in his stomach area tighten and squeeze. Because of this his digestive tract becomes spastic. This results in abdominal pains.

The blood is directed away from the skin and toward the muscles. So the muscles become energized and are prepared for action – fight. Less blood supply to the skin makes it cool and

When he reaches home, some more believers visit him and add to his angry thoughts. Now more adrenaline is released into his blood stream.

This increased adrenaline stimulates his fat cells to empty their contents into the bloodstream. (This is to provide additional energy to the body to spring into action).

But the believer's body is now not doing any action.

So there is unused fat now. And that fat is converted into cholesterol by the liver.

This cholesterol in the blood stream starts to accumulate and turns into plaque in the arteries. The blood flow is blocked.

Now this believer is an eligible candidate for various diseases. He is actually presented in the hands of various problems such as mental and physical diseases..... the tormentors.

## The normal brain – mind action.

The external events are picked by our 5 senses. Someone talks, our ear hears. When something happens, our eye sees. Then they send a signal to the brain. This data from all the signals is analysed and interpreted by the mind. Then the mind chooses a path that determines the signal that is sent from the brain to the peripheral nervous system.

The mind's choice is based upon how it is programmed. It cannot make choices in any other way than how it is programmed. All the functions of the mind are determined by how it is programmed.

How our mind has been programmed is revealed by what we believe and what we do. In other words, our belief system and our actions reveal how our mind is programmed.

Now let's take the preacher A1. He preaches that God never tempts anyone. The person A2 stands up in the congregation and quotes from Genesis proving God tempted Abraham. A1 realizes he can't give a proper explanation. His ears and eyes, after hearing and seeing whatever happened in the situation, send a signal to the brain. Then the brain asks the mind what to do. The mind then analyses the situation and chooses a path according to its programming. His mind was originally programmed to fight back whenever confronted. But after his Born-again experience, A2 reprogrammed his mind with the language of the Bible.

According to the Bible language we must, Confess our fault to one another (*James 5:16*). Agree with our adversary (*Math 5:25*). Take counsel (*Pro 11:14*). When you do a mistake apologise / ask for forgiveness When you commit a sin confess (*1 John 1:9*).

So, now according to the reprogramming of the mind, he acknowledges his mistake, says he is sorry, appreciates A2, says he will refer to the Bible and give a proper explanation. At the end of the meeting, he meets A2, appreciates him, makes an appointment for a discussion, and blesses him. Then he goes back to his house, on the way buys some sandwiches for his wife and children. He reaches home a happy person. Another believer calls and appreciates him. The pastor calls and appreciates him. The Holy Spirit calls and appreciates him. His heart is functioning normally; there is no extra energy, sugar. He sleeps with good dreams and gets up in the morning for a sweet prayer time with the Holy Spirit. .....

## In the Bible this programming is called 'renewing of the mind' Rom 12:2.

Romans 12:2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

To live in all the blessings of the Bible and as a good testimony, the most important thing a believer has to do after being born-again is to "change his/her beliefs and thoughts in accordance with the Word of God".

*Proverbs* 23:7 *For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee.* 

Many people do try to change their behaviour or feelings. But they are not going to succeed. This will be a futile exercise. Instead we should change our beliefs and thoughts. Our behaviour or feelings will change automatically. This is a change in the mind. This is what repentance means "a change in the mind".

2 Cor. 10:3-6 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: [4] (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) [5] Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

#### Our minds can be programmed with two language systems

- 1. The World language system
- 2. The Word language system

Actually there is a battle going on for our minds (1 Tim 4:1; 2 Cor 11:3). Right from the beginning the devil tries to programme our mind through his world view system and people. Most of our minds are programmed according to the pagan worldview. Changing from one worldview to another is not going to help us spiritually. It is like changing strokes in the water where one is drowning and doesn't know how to swim.

The brain is not the reason for

1. How our autonomic nervous system responds to a situation or

2. How we feel in a situation – angry, depressed, irritated, withdrawn, happy, satisfied, unsatisfied, doubtful, etc.

#### The mind and the way it is programmed is the reason.

Other people or the circumstances of life do not make us angry, depressed, happy...etc.. But it is our perception of those people and events and how we interpret them. This interpretation is the function of our mind. The mind interprets them according to the way it is programmed.

Reprogram your mind and you will be able to forgive 490 times a day. You shall not be angry, irritated, doubtful, jealous etc... and you shall never be handed over to the tormentors - sickness, poverty, depression, bitterness, and satanic bondages.....demonic strongholds.

Lord, I pray that I have Unforgiveness in my life; I make a decision right now to let that person go, to forgive them whether they are living or dead. I pray that every hurt be healed by your power and your grace today, Lord. I thank you in Jesus' name. Amen **Amen. Be blessed. You are a blessing.** 

## **Bro.D.Vergin kumar.**

If you need any clarifications kindly contact me in <u>deeveekumar@yahoo.com</u> Ph; 25572195, 99663557. Your comments are welcome.

**Resources;** Dakes bible commentary, Andrew Wommack bible commentary, Wuest's New Testament Greek word studies, commentary, Vine's expository Dictionary of the New Testament, Strong's Bible concordance, Vincent's New Testament Word Studies, Don Krow's Discipleship Evangelism Lessons, The Biblical guide to alternative medicine by Dr.Neil T.Anderson and Dr Michael D.Jacobson. All bible quotes are from King James Version bible, unless quoted otherwise.