

FORGIVE?

I Can't, I Won't, I Don't Want To! And You Can't Make Me!

*Offering **FORGIVENESS** is a defining feature of God's personality.
Ex 34:6-7, Ps 103:1-3, Isa 43:25, Eph 1:7

*The main consequence of Sin:

Adam's sin = **BROKEN RELATIONSHIP**. Gen 3:7, 23

Jonah's sin = **BROKEN RELATIONSHIP**. Jonah 1:3

Jesus taking on our sin = **BROKEN RELATIONSHIP**. Matt 27:46

*The main feature of forgiveness/salvation is **RELATIONSHIP**.

Eph 2:5-19 John 17:3

*God intensely desires to be in **RELATIONSHIP** with us. Rev 3:20

WHEN GOD OFFERS FORGIVENESS, HE IS OFFERING RELATIONSHIP/FELLOWSHIP.

God **REQUIRES** that Christians offer forgiveness (RELATIONSHIP).
Lk 17:3, Eph 4:32

Divine Forgiveness: God's *commitment to repentant* sinners to not hold them *personally* liable for the *eternal consequences* of sin. He opens a *relationship* with them and *never* uses that offense *against* them.

- 1) This does not necessarily mean **ALL** consequences are eliminated.
It may be **BETTER** for us to have to live with the consequences.
- 2) Does God literally **FORGET** our sins? Isa 43:25
He will never again **CONDEMN** us for those sins.

5 Principles for Practicing Forgiveness:

- 1) Never say, "I can't forgive..." Instead say, "I don't want to forgive. God I confess my sin of unforgiveness. Thank you for forgiving me even for this sin and I teach me how to forgive (name the offender) like you do."
- 2) The type of relationship we should maintain with a "serial repentant offender" is a matter to be using **GRACE** and **WISDOM**. *Jms 1:5*
- 3) If you have the ability to absorb any or all of the earthly consequences for the offense (financial loss) do so. It may be **LOVING** to allow them to suffer the consequences for their actions. Ask for God to reveal and remove any desire for **REVENGE**. *Ps 139*. We might minimize consequences because it hurts us to see them suffer.
- 4) Consider your **TESTIMONY** (representation of Christ) when you are willing to extend the possibility of establishing/reestablishing a relationship even when someone is unrepentant.
- 5) Be careful not to demand **PERFECT** repentance. Look expectantly for it.

Life Group Questions – March 1, 2020

Exodus 34:6-7 'Then the LORD passed by in front of him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations.'"

QUICK REVIEW

1. Pastor Phil shared that there are three ways that a nation crosses God's boundary line for evil which compels Him to intervene. They were: Calling good bad and bad good; violence against innocent humanity; prohibiting people from seeking God. Can you give examples from today's headlines where you see comparable tendencies?
2. Re-read Jonah 3. How did Nineveh respond to the word of the Lord through Jonah? Did each Ninevite earnestly call on God and turn from their own sinful ways? How can we know? How did they each arrive in such a deeply repentant place?

MY STORY

1. In your words, define "forgiveness." Define "mercy." What is the relationship between the two? (see Psalm 103:10-14)
2. Why do you think forgiveness doesn't always lead to restoration? Why do some people think forgiveness requires fully reinstated trust and restoration? Have you ever felt like it did? What happened?
3. Recognizing a person is broken like you, letting go of the idea of "Payment Required" (not settling the account) and wishing goodwill over them are all measures towards forgiveness. Which is the hardest for you right now? Is there anyone you struggle to forgive? How can your Life Group be praying for your heart to change toward that person?

GOING DEEP

1. Read Genesis 3:8, 23. What was the principal consequence of Adam's sin? How was God's subsequent response merciful and just? Was the death that Adam and Eve received both physical and spiritual? Explain.
2. Read 1 John 1:9. Though sin is always present, it need not remain a hindrance in our relationship with God. What does "confession" mean? Why does it "cleanse us from all of our unrighteousness?" (see Luke 18:10-14)
3. When God offers forgiveness what is He really seeking? Is this the same thing you seek when you offer forgiveness? Why or why not? What's the difference between God's forgiveness and ours?

PUTTING IT TOGETHER:

1. What do you think are some of the challenges to living out each point?
2. Which of the above teaching points are most important for **you** to remember?