



WELCOME TO BIBLE HOUSE OF GRACE

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Forgiveness

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Forgiveness.

Topics.

- God and the world.
- An amazing testimony, forgiveness, and trust.
- Malice, the heart of Jesus, and love.
- Jesus and forgiveness.
- Forgiveness sets a person free.
- Forgiveness and repentance.
- Israel, Paul and the greatest of all sinners.

THE MEANING OF REPENTANCE AND FORGIVENESS

Repent: means to think differently, or afterwards, to reconsider and morally to feel compunction of remorse, guilt, shame, and contrition.

Forgive: means to go, or to send forth, to cry, forgive, forsake, lay aside, leave, let alone, suffer, or yield up. It usually denotes separation, departure, cessation, completion, and reversal, etc.

1

GOD AND THE WORLD

Consider for a moment how the world treats God, yet Jesus tells us:

- God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16).

This shines a brilliant spotlight on the truth that the forgiveness of Christ and his heavenly Father is forever flowing, it is always readily available to those who seek it. Despite the world's blatant denial of God and total lack of any care toward what God values, His forgiveness is ever flowing toward them, but for them to be united in fellowship with God, they must humble themselves and come to him in honest heartfelt repentance.

Applying this principal to men and woman forgiving each other, it means, our hearts should always be filled with forgiveness, and always be ready to forgive, but the relationship cannot be mended until the offending party has come with an honest heart of repentance to the one, they have injured, and done everything they can to heal the hurt (in most cases this might just be saying sorry). Forgiveness is always difficult because it is about forgiving someone who has hurt us, it does help, and makes it easier, if the person who has hurt us comes to us and says "Look I'm so terribly sorry that I hurt you". But if that does not happen, and the hurt is great, some might wonder, "Why must I forgive?" Simply this, if we do not, we remain mentally and emotionally controlled by the one who has injured us, by our craving for revenge and by our anger, resentment, bitterness, and hatred toward them, if these attitudes have power in our

hearts and minds, they will rob us of mental peace and heartfelt joy. Even worse than this if the hatred and lust for revenge grows strong enough it can lead to violence and even murder. This, is why we must forgive, it is the power that sets our minds and inner most being free to put the hurt behind us and begin living a new life afresh. Some may think, "It is just too hard," yes no one would ever say forgiveness is easy in fact the greater the hurt the harder it will be, but if we do not forgive then we are choosing to give the one who has injured us the power to continue to injure us mentally, emotionally, and spiritually.

AN AMAZING TESTIMONY, FORGIVENESS AND TRUST

Perhaps the following testimony might help: I remember watching and listening to the testimony of a middle-aged woman (one of Doctor Phil's family members) sharing how a man had thrown a bucket of hydrochloric acid into her face, her entire face was grossly scared and deformed (it still is). She told Doctor Phil, "I made the choice to forgive, because I was not going to allow my grandchildren to grow up knowing a grandmother full of bitterness, hurt and resentment. What a tremendous influence of good and strength this grandmother would have imparted to her grandchildren. To make such a choice clearly takes enormous fortitude and strength of character, but there is no personal value or benefit in holding onto resentment and anger?"

Trust is a totally different thing to forgiveness, a person may forgive another, but that does not always mean that they will become a bosom friend, or even have contact with the person who is forgiven, in many cases that would be foolishness. The woman who had the acid thrown in her face, or a girl who has been raped will have to forgive to set their own heart free from the hurt and bitterness, and everything that stems from it, but they would be foolish to have immediate contact with the men who had so cruelly abused them until they had proven their honest heartfelt remorse, and done whatever is needed to heal the deep wound they have inflicted on their innocent victims and proven they can be trusted.

Forgiveness is never easy, because it always involves forgiving someone who has hurt or offended us, to overcome the reluctance to forgive it is helpful to look at Jesus who though we were sinners against God was prepared to be cruelly nailed to the cross, and even more while in tremendous suffering he prayed:

- Father forgive them for they know not what they do (Luke 23:32-34).

There is no malice in the heart of Christ only love and if we are to have a deeper relationship with God, we cannot do it with malice in our hearts. Take the hurt and pain to the throne of God and before the bloodstained cross and forgive and embrace the eternal love and grace of God who showed his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us (Rom. 5:8).

MALICE, THE HEART OF JESUS AND LOVE

To overcome the reluctance to forgive because of the deep hurt, it is helpful to look at Jesus who, while we were sinners, the Scriptures tell us:

- **John 3:16:** "God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

Jesus was prepared to be brutally, and cruelly nailed to the cross, and while in tremendous suffering prayed:

- Father forgive them for they know not what they do. (Luke 23:32-34).

There is no malice in the heart of Christ, only love, if we are to have a deeper relationship with God, we cannot do it with malice in our hearts. Take the hurt and pain to the throne of God, and before the bloodstained cross, and forgive as Christ forgave us, and embrace the eternal love and grace of Christ who showed his love for us in that while we were still sinners, he died for us (Rom. 5:8).

JESUS AND FORGIVENESS

Jesus says "if a brother or sister repents," meaning if they feel guilt, remorse, shame, and contrition, forgive them, and lay aside any sense of anger, revenge, or bitterness that you may have toward them. Those that belong to Christ are to always be inwardly ready to forgive, but the healing of a broken relationship cannot take place until the guilty repents.

Jesus' forgiveness is always available to everyone, but a sinner does not experience it until they repent toward God. Forgiveness is not something a believer turns off and on, it is having a constant attitude and willingness that is always ready to forgive. Having a heart that is in a constant mode of forgiveness is enormously powerful, it is what stops people harbouring the destructive attitudes of resentment and bitterness.

Added to this God's Spirit abundantly dwells in a heart that is full of forgiveness, compassion, and mercy, but flees from one the is engulfed in hatred, bitterness, and resentment.

FORGIVENESS SETS A PERSON FREE

- **Mark 11:25–26:** And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses."

Jesus told the twelve, if they do not forgive, neither will their Father which is in heaven forgive them their trespasses, it is imperative to forgive.

NOTICE: Jesus does not add, 'providing they repent,' this forgiveness is independent of the other person's response, for the following three reasons:

1. God freely grants to everyone in Christ forgiveness, and righteousness every-day. Everyone who has eternal life is totally indebted to God, simply because without the righteousness that God grants to them because of their faith in Christ, none of us would be counted worthy, added to this there is nothing we can do to repay God for the life of His Son, or repay Christ for his suffering.
2. God wants to set us free from the mental torment that comes with unforgiveness, but He can only do it when we forgive. If we do not forgive whoever offends us bitterness, hatred, and a craving for revenge (i.e., to see the other person suffer) will take hold of our hearts and fill it with every other destructive attitude, and in extreme cases lead to violence and even murder.

3. If we remain in unforgiveness we continue to allow the person we are not forgiving to have control over our thoughts, and our hearts, and that will hurt us mentally and emotionally and rob us spiritually. The Spirit of God (i.e., joy, peace, and contentment) cannot dwell in a human heart that is filled with bitterness, the lust for revenge and hatred. Forgiveness keeps our hearts free from all these destructive attitudes, this is the tremendous healing power of forgiveness.

FORGIVENESS AND REPENTANCE

Jesus' heart is always open and ready to forgive whoever comes to him in repentance, his heart is continually overflowing with forgiveness, but only those who come to him in repentance, receive forgiveness and enter the family of God. Before forgiveness can be received a person must acknowledge and confess their wrongdoing, the following verses show that this is a standard Bible principle:

God in the Old Testament said:

- **Lev 26:40-42:** If Israel confesses their iniquity that they committed against me and if their uncircumcised heart is humbled and they make amends for their iniquity then I will remember my covenant with Jacob, with Isaac and with Abraham, and I will remember the land (meaning bless it).

David when speaking of himself in Psalms says:

- **Psalm 32:5:** I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," and you forgave the iniquity of my sin

And in the New Testament the apostle John says:

4

- **1 John 1:9:** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Added to what God, David and John say, God's forgiveness, though permanently available to everyone through Jesus, is only realised and experienced when a sinner comes to Christ in honest repentance and sorrow. If a person does not acknowledge their wrong doing, how can they possibly be sorry for the hurt they have caused? Even more how can they put right something they do not acknowledge is wrong? God's forgiveness is always available, forever flowing, but confessing one's wrong actions is required before it can be received and experienced in the heart, and before we can be reconciled to God. In some cases, when possible, restitution may be required to help repair the hurt caused to others. True repentance would automatically bring about this desire in the heart. Restitution in most cases may simply be saying sorry to the person offended or to God.

ISRAEL, PAUL AND THE GREATEST OF ALL SINNERS

Some people believe they have been such gross sinners they cannot be forgiven, when that happens, we can do the following two things:

1. Remind them that God forgave Israel not just once, but every time they humbled themselves, repented and turned from their wicked ways, and from their worship of other gods, and remind them, neither God, nor Christ will ever deny anyone of forgiveness, who comes to them in honest heartfelt repentance.

2. Point out to them, unrestrained Israel's sins eventually became like a contagious virus running rampant throughout the land of Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem. They defiled God's Holy name, the city of Jerusalem, and their own land by their lifestyle, deeds, and actions, yet He forgave them when they bowed before Him in repentance. To comprehend the enormity of God's forgiveness following is a list of sins that permeated the land of Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem throughout Israel's generations:

They worshipped:

- The goddess of love and fertility (her worship was sexually indecent).
- Molech and sacrificed their sons to him in the Hinnom valley.
- A golden calf at a religious centre at Dan and at a religious centre at Bethel.
- Idols at altars that had been built under shady trees on their hills throughout their land.
- The host of heaven (i.e., the sun, moon, and stars) at altars set up in the temple court for planetary worship.

Added to their extremely sinful worship:

- Gross idolatry and Baal altars were set up throughout their land.
- Innocent people were killed and cheated out of justice.
- Leaders oppressed others for their own selfish gain.
- Drunkenness, violence, robbery, and gross sensuality was rampant.
- The rich cheated the innocent out of justice, and showed no sense of responsibility towards the poor.
- Instead of relieving their economic distress of the helpless and poor they devised new means of depriving them of their property.

Is it any wonder the LORD compares Israel's ways to the uncleanness of a woman in her menstrual impurity? (Ezek. 36:17). and poured His wrath out upon Judah, Israel, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

The lesson for today: Israel's wicked behaviour defiled the name of God, which gave the surrounding nations reasons to mock and despise Israel's God. This shines a light on the following truth: the behaviour of everyone who confesses to believe in God and in Christ His Son will determine to some extent whether outsiders are drawn to God or to despise Him. We are not witnesses to the Lord only when we share our faith with another, our entire life is a witness to our faith and of God, it can be a good witness, or a bad witness.

3. Give them a brief insight into the Apostle Paul's life prior to his conversion. Show them that he aggressively ravaged the church dragging faithful men and women out of it and out of their homes and committed them to prison (Acts 8:3). Breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord (both men and women) he bound them in chains and took them to Jerusalem. (Acts 9:1-2) to be punished and even agreed to have them put to death (Acts 22:5) (Acts 26:10). Then ask them, "Have you broken up Christian families, and put innocent and faithful men and women into prison and agreed as Paul did, to

have them put to death solely because they were devoted to Christ?" Then tell them to look at what God was able to do with Paul's life. Truly the apostle Paul is evidence, no one is beyond God's forgiveness. There is another great lesson we can learn from Paul's life which is this: it is certain Paul would have been fully conscious of the terrible hurt and harm he had caused faithful brothers and sisters in Christ prior to his conversion, but he did not allow the horrors of his past to rob his mind from the peace and love of Christ, nor hinder him in any way from proclaiming the Good News of the Gospel. The following encouraging words of Paul show us all how he, and by extension how we all should overcome the mental revulsions and shame of our past life, Paul wrote:

- **Philip. 3:12-14:** I do not consider that I am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own, the one thing I do is to forget what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.

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