



**WELCOME
TO
BIBLE HOUSE
OF
GRACE**

If you think items presented on this site to be in error, please let me know and I will gladly reconsider the content.

**Forgiveness
in the
Old and New
Testament.**

(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 in the Old and New Testament.

Topics.

- Joseph and his brothers and Solomon and Israel.
- Turn from evil that the LORD may forgive.
- Lament you priests before the altar and call a sacred assembly.
- Forgiveness and the Lord's Prayer.
- Forgive up to seventy times seven.
- The parable of ten thousand talents.
- If you do not forgive, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you.
- Forgiveness and repentance and forgiveness and trust.
- If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him.
- Repentance and the Gospel and snippets of forgiveness.

INTRODUCTION

This study sets about to answer the following questions concerning forgiveness, should people who do not repent be forgiven? How do we respond toward someone who has offended or hurt us in some way, but has no repentance? Since forgiveness is one of the pillars of God's throne it begins with forgiveness in Genesis and God's forgiveness toward the nation of Israel then travels through the New Testament and looks at forgiveness and the Lord Jesus Christ.

1

THE NEW TESTAMENT

JOSEPH AND HIS BROTHERS

- **Genesis 50:15-17:** When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "It may be that Joseph will hate us and pay us back for all the evil that we did to him." ¹⁶So they sent a message to Joseph, saying, "Your father gave this command before he died, ¹⁷'Say to Joseph, Please forgive the transgression of your brothers and their sin, because they did evil to you.' And now, please forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of your father." Joseph wept when they spoke to him.

Forgive: comes from the Hebrew word (nasa') and means to lift, in this context it carries the idea of pardoning, exalting, receiving back and setting up.

NOTE: this is the first mention of forgive in Old Testament.

After Jacob had finished prophetically blessing his twelve sons (the heads of the twelve tribes of Israel) he breathed his last and died (Gen. 49:1-33). Joseph and his brothers buried Jacob in the land of Canaan and then Joseph with his brothers returned to Egypt. Joseph was Pharaoh's right hand man he had all the authority and power of Egypt at his disposal. Once Jacob had died Joseph's brothers feared that Joseph would seek revenge because of the cruel way that they had treated him. So, they plot a deceptive plan to protect themselves from the revenge they believed Joseph might unleash on them. Out of misguided fear they planned to tell Joseph, that their father Jacob, before he died, had said Joseph should forgive them. The brothers sent messengers to give Joseph their

message, the brothers, knowing Josephs love for his father were probably hoping that Joseph would forgive them for their father sake. Joseph brothers are fully aware that they had grossly sinned and done evil to their brother. When Joseph heard this message, he wept (clearly showing that he had a compassionate heart) toward his brothers.

- **Genesis 50:18-21:** Then his brothers also went and fell down before his face, and they said, “Behold, we are your servants.” ¹⁹Joseph said to them, “Do not be afraid, for am I in the place of God? ²⁰“But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive. ²¹“Now therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones.” And he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.

After the massagers had given the Joseph the message his brothers fall to the ground (an act of total submission) and humble themselves before Joseph and Joseph forgives them and their relationship is restored. Even though Joseph had forgiveness in his heart and was ready and willing to forgive and loved his brothers remained indifferent to how they had treated him and not humbled themselves before Joseph as they did the actual outworking or act of forgiveness could not have taken place.

NOTE: the words, “The act of forgiveness” carry the following idea:

- For a broken relationship to be healed.
- For a ruined relation to be united in harmony.
- For an offender and the offended to fellowship together in unity.

It is certainly true our hearts must always be flowing with forgiveness, but the realization of that forgiveness (i.e., the healing of the relationship) does not come about without the offending party repenting of the hurt and harm they have caused.

SOLOMON AND ISRAEL

When Solomon had finished building the House of the LORD and the ark of the covenant was brought into the sanctuary in the Most Holy Place and God’s glory filled the House of the LORD King Solomon prayed:

- **1 Kings 8:46-50:** "If they sin against you— for there is no one who does not sin, ⁴⁷yet if they turn their heart and repent and plead with you, saying, 'We have sinned and have acted perversely and wickedly,' ⁴⁸if they repent with all their mind and with all their heart, and pray to you ⁴⁹then hear in heaven your dwelling place their prayer and their plea, and maintain their cause ⁵⁰and forgive your people who have sinned against you, and all their transgressions that they have committed against you, and grant them compassion.

NOTE: I have deliberately deleted much of what Solomon says in these verses since the focus of this study is upon forgiveness and repentance and not the glorious future prophetic insight and message that is contained within this prayer of Solomon.

Repentance: comes from the Hebrew word (shuwb) in this context it carries the following ideas to turn back and away from something that is wrong, to call to mind and retreat from wrongdoing, to withdraw from things that are offensive to God and against His will and His character. This prayer of Solomon shines a spotlight on the truth that he very clearly understood the principal of repentance and forgiveness. The king who had all wisdom (he wrote the book of Proverbs) knew without any doubt that if Israel sin against God He would lift His hand of blessing and adversity would fall upon them, but if they turned their heart toward Him and repented and confessed that they had sinned before the LORD and repented with all their mind and with all their heart God would forgive them and show them compassion.

NOTICE THE WORDS IN VERSE FORTY-SEVEN:

- There is no one who does not sin (1 Kings 8:47).

God understands that everyone sins this is why Christ died on the cross of Calvary if anyone of us could attain to that glorious state of sinlessness Christ died for no reason. Israel didn't just sin they entered into deliberate gross sin, even to sacrificing their own children and turned from God to worship pagan gods. God was very longsuffering with the people of Israel, but when their rebellion against Him became so great and their hearts were so hardened that they would not listen to the prophets God sent to warn them of His coming judgment God was forced to move His hand against them.

TURN FROM EVIL THAT THE LORD MAY FORGIVE

- **Jeremiah 36:3:** "It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the adversities which I purpose to bring upon them, that everyone may turn from his evil way, that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin."

This verse shines a brilliant light on God's dealing with the nation Israel, if the people of Israel did not turn from their evil ways God would bring all sorts of adversity upon them, but if they forsook their wickedness God would forgive them. This principal of forgiveness and repentance (turning from unfaithfulness toward God and wickedness) applies throughout the entire Old Testament.

LAMENT YOU PRIESTS BEFORE THE ALTAR AND CALL A SACRED ASSEMBLY

- **Joel 1:13-14:** Gird yourselves and lament, you priests; Wail, you who minister before the altar; Come, lie all night in sackcloth, You who minister to my God; For the grain offering and the drink offering Are withheld from the house of your God. ¹⁴Consecrate a fast, Call a sacred assembly; Gather the elders And all the inhabitants of the land Into the house of the LORD your God, And cry out to the LORD --- NOW GO TO Joel TWO VERSE TWELVE -- ¹²"Now, therefore," says the LORD, "Turn to Me with all your heart, With fasting, with weeping, and with mourning." ¹³So rend your heart, and not your garments; Return to the LORD your God, For He is gracious and merciful, Slow to anger, and of great kindness; And He relents from doing harm.

At this time the nation of Israel was in gross sin and had turned away from God. The prophet Joel deeply grieved at the state of Israel sees Gods judgement coming upon them and calls the nation to repentance. This was the principal of forgiveness and repentance between Israel and God. When Israel turned from God to worship pagan gods and the nation was filled with all sorts of wickedness God would always send prophets to call them to repentance.

Though God's heart is not only a heart of forgiveness and ready to forgive, He also desires to forgive, but before Israel's relationship with God could be healed, they had to repent. Thus the reason Joel in these verses is calling the entire nation to adorn sackcloth (an act of humbleness) and call a solemn assembly of fasting and repenting so the actual act of forgiveness could take place, meaning so the relation between God and Israel could be healed and flowing in harmony and peace as it once used to in contrast to God bringing judgment upon them.

CONCLUSION FORGIVENESS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Throughout the Old Testament the principal concerning forgiveness is consistently the same. When Israel grossly sinned and turned from God to worship pagan gods the LORD would send them faithful prophets to call them to repent and turn from their wicked ways. If Israel repented and turned from their wickedness God forgave them and withheld His judgment and wrath, but if they did not repent and turn from their rebellion God's judgment would fall upon them. For forgiveness to take place between God and rebellious and corrupt Israel the people of Israel had to repent of the offence they were before God and of the hurt they were causing Him. Should anyone doubt God's heart was not deeply wounded by the corrupt behaviour of Israel consider the following:

ISRAEL HAS ALWAYS BEEN GOD'S SPECIAL AND UNIQUE PEOPLE

God said:

- Israel was his son who he called out of Egypt and he loved them when they were a child. (Hosea 11:1).
- He gave birth to Israel and carried them from the womb even to their old age. (Isaiah 46:3-4).
- Israel is his allotted heritage (Deut. 32:9) and the apple of his eye. (Deut. 32:10).
- Israel is a people holy to him (Deut. 7:6) and his treasured possession. (Deut. 14:2).

The LORD has not spoken this way with any other nation, but God has not only spoken of Israel differently, but always dealt with them differently to any other nation:

- To Israel God gave the Ten Commandments and showed his great power.
- To Israel God declared his word, statues and his rules.
- To Israel God gave the prophets, the worship and the promises.
- To Israel belonged the covenant, the adoption, the patriarchs and the glory.
- To Israel the oracles of God were entrusted.
- The people of Israel are the offspring of Abraham the father of faith.
- From Israel's race came the Christ the Saviour of the World.

The LORD has not given any other nations such great privileges. God like any Father is deeply grieved when His children go astray. But like in any family when children act in rebellion against their parents and there is no repentance the parent is forced to discipline that child for their own good and future well-being. By extension this means that for forgiveness to take place between the one being offended and hurt and the one doing the offending or causing the hurt, the offending one has to repent of the hurt and harm they have caused the victim of their actions, before the outward act of forgiveness can take place, meaning before the broken relationship can be healed.

THE NEW TESTAMENT

FORGIVENESS AND REPENTANCE

The following verses show that the entire Gospel message of eternal salvation is based on repentance:

- John the Baptist came saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" (Matthew 3:2).

- Jesus sent out the twelve and they went out and preached that people should repent (Mark 6:7-12).
- Jesus said, “I tell you unless you repent you will all likewise perish (Luke 13:3).
- Peter said, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38).
- Peter told the Jewish religious leaders to repent and be converted, that their sins may be blotted out (Acts 3:19).
- Paul wrote, “Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent” (Acts 17:30).
- Paul told those in Damascus and in Jerusalem, and throughout all the region of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance (Acts 26:20).

Jesus said:

- Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent (Rev. 2:5).
- Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth (Rev. 2:16).
- I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent (Rev. 2:21).
- Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent (Rev. 3:3).
- As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent (Rev. 3:19).

Repentance: comes from the Greek word (meta) and (noieo); in this context it carries the idea of thinking differently or afterwards (i.e. to reconsider), to feel a moral regret and shame, to perceive and understand that a certain action and behaviour is wrong.

Jesus said:

- 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).

Biblical repentance is not just the reversal of wrong behaviour, but also carries the idea of turning from disbelief in God to faith in God. It involves a change of mind toward God and the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus clearly states, “God so loved the world,” and it is true that no matter what evil a person has done, God will forgive them, but to receive this forgiveness sinners must come to God through repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

FORGIVENESS AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

Jesus told us to pray:

- **Matthew 6:12-15:** Father forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

This means forgive us our weakness and our failures as we forgive those who have offended us, notice the language, “As we have forgiven,” meaning forgive us in the same way that we forgive others. The following verses shine a brilliant spotlight on the truth that God’s forgiveness toward us is in accordance with how we forgive others.

- **Matthew 6:14-15:** For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, ¹⁵but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

God's forgiveness toward us can be limited by our lack of forgiveness to others this is why a person harbouring bitterness, resentment and is craving for revenge lacks real emotional freedom peace and joy. Forgiveness sets the human spirit free from emotional hurt and tension.

NOTE: forgiveness does not mean that a person has to become a close friend (unless they choose to), or even see those that have hurt them (especially if it may put them in more danger).

Forgiveness is about attitude, it is about not allowing others who have offended or harmed us in some way to continually destroy us by our hatred toward them, until we forgive that person still has power over us. This is why God wants us to forgive, not only does it have the potential to change a life and heal a relationship, but it sets us free from our own emotional pain. Next to Love, forgiveness is the most powerful of all actions, without forgiveness relationships will be destroyed and love will die. Love cannot survive unless forgiveness is constantly flowing. For greater detail of the Lord's Prayer see:

- Matthew 6:9-15 in Commentary NT (ON WEBSITE MENU).

FORGIVE UP TO SEVENTY TIMES SEVEN

- **Matthew 18:21-22:** Peter came to Him and said, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" ²²Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.

Seventy times seven equals four-hundred and ninety, in In Daniel chapter nine Daniel gives a seventy-week prophecy (Dan 9:24). In this prophecy an angel tells Daniel seventy weeks (of years) are determined for: -

- God's holy people and the Holy City (Jerusalem).
- To finish the transgression and make an end of sins.
- To make reconciliation for iniquity.
- To bring in everlasting righteousness.
- To seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the Most Holy (Resurrection and return of Christ).

Peter clearly understood that Jesus in (Matt 18:15-20) was talking about forgiving a brother or sister who has offended another; so, he naturally asks the Lord how many times he expects us to forgive. Jesus tells him seventy times seven (four-hundred and ninety) which in Daniel's seventy-week prophecy takes us to the end of this age and the return of the Lord Jesus Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords to establish God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace on earth. Jesus is telling Peter (and by extension all of us) we must forgive until the end of the age. For detail of Daniels seventy-week prophecy, see:

- Daniel 9 in, Commentary OT (ON WEBSITE MENU).

THE PARABLE OF TEN THOUSAND TALENTS

- **Matthew 18:23-26:** the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴"And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. ²⁵"But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made. ²⁶"The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, 'Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.' ²⁷"Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt.

NOTE: One denarius was a day's wages (Matt 20:2, 10).

The king wants to collect the people's debts, but one of his servants could not pay the ten thousand talents (thirty-million denarius), that's thirty million day's work to pay the debt he owed the king (clearly impossible for him to pay) so the king's chief servant orders the man and his family to be sold. The servant pleads and begs for mercy and says he will pay all that he owes, but needs some time to do so. The king's chief servant moved with compassion forgave him the debt and released him. Because this servant repented, asked forgiveness, and was prepared to follow that repentance up with actions by saying "I will pay all" his master was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt.

- **Matthew 18:28-29:** "But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying, 'Pay me what you owe!' ²⁹"So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.' ²⁷"And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt.

After the king's servant had been given his freedom he finds one of his servants who owed him a hundred denarii (one-hundred days wages) (approximately three months) and begins to choke him demanding he, "Pay what he owes" but he was also unable to pay his debt, so he fell down and begged for some time to pay the debt telling the king's servant he would pay the money back, but needed some time to do so, but his master instead of forgiving him put him in prison.

- **Matthew 18:31-35:** When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place. ³²Then his master summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?' ³⁴And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. ³⁵So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart."

When the other servants heard that their friend had been put in prison, they told the king's chief servant who had forgiven this man of an impossible debt that he could never repay. Naturally he was horrified that this man he had forgiven of such an enormous debt had treated his own servant so cruelly rather than forgiving him. This parable is contrasting the two attitudes of the king's servant and the servant who was forgiven of a debt he could never pay. The king's servant showed compassion and forgave he was prepared to forgive when his servant repented, but, the servant who had been forgiven had an evil heart, because he did not show the same compassion to his servant who owed him money

WORLDLY SORROW AND GODLY SORROW

Some people weep and are enormously sorry, but they are only sorry because they have been caught and know they are going to suffer some form of penalty or punishment, this kind of sorrow is called worldly sorrow and does not have the power to change a person's life. Other people are sorry and weep because of the hurt they have caused to others or even God Himself this kind of sorrow is called godly sorrow and has the potential to turn a person's life around and even lead them to Christ.

THE MESSAGE OF THE STORY

Jesus uses the story to teach us that God has forgiven us a tremendous debt, one we could never pay therefore when a brother or sister hurts or offends us but afterward is open and prepared to listen when we explain what they have done and how it hurt us and they in turn respond in

repentance asking forgiveness and we do not forgive (perhaps because of the great hurt) God will not forgive us. This is what Jesus means when he says what you bind on earth will be bound in heaven and what you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. In this context binding and loosening means, God will not forgive us in heaven when we do not forgive someone who has offended or hurt us on earth when they ask for our forgiveness. God's forgiveness to us freely flows when our hearts are always open and ready to forgive those who come seeking and asking for our forgiveness (Matthew 18:18).

IF YOU DO NOT FORGIVE, NEITHER WILL YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER FORGIVE YOU

- **Mark 11:25-26:** When you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. ²⁶But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.

Jesus is saying that it is absolutely 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 even murder.
3. As long as 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 etc.), 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 such is its tremendous healing power.

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 enter the family of God. The following verses show that it is a Bible principle, that before forgiveness can be received a person must acknowledge (confess) their wrongdoing.

God in the Old Testament said:

- 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) (Lev 26:40-42).

David when speaking of himself in Psalms says:

- 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 (Psalm 32:5).

In the New Testament the apostle John says:

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

God's forgiveness though permanently available to everyone through Jesus is only realised when a sinner comes to Christ in 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 don't acknowledge is wrong, thus God's forgiveness is always available, forever flowing, but confessing ones wrong actions is required before it can be received and experienced in the heart. In some cases (i.e., 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.

FORGIVENESS AND TRUST

Trust is different to forgiveness, trust must be rebuilt over time it requires a track record if someone has hurt you repeatedly you are commanded by God to forgive them when they come in repentance, but you are not expected to trust them immediately they must prove they have changed over time. 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, i.e. a girl who has been raped will need to forgive to set her own heart free from the deep hurt and bitterness and everything else that stems from such a horrific experience it, but she would be foolish to have immediate contact with the man who raped her until that man had truly proven he had honestly repented, was deeply sorry and could be trusted. Forgiveness is never easy because it always involves forgiving some 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 God and forgive and the Lord will free you from the inner mental torment.

IF YOUR BROTHER SINS, REBUKE HIM, AND IF HE REPENTS, FORGIVE HIM

- Luke 17:3-4: Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him, ⁴and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' you must forgive him."

In these verses Jesus is saying 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 who belong to Christ should always have a forgiving heart and always be inwardly ready to forgive, but the outward action of forgiveness toward the other person, cannot not take place until they repent. No relationship will survive unless repentance and forgiveness is flowing, eventually the hurt will become too great and the resentment and bitterness will become like a concrete wall surrounding and trapping the heart that will destroy any joy and love there once was. Jesus forgiveness is always available to everyone, but a sinner does not experience it until they repent toward God. Forgiveness is not something God turns off and on He is always ready to forgive likewise forgiveness should not be something a believer turns off and on there should always be a constant

attitude and willingness to always 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, nevertheless though the heart is full of forgiveness and the readiness to forgive is forever present without repentance a broken relationship cannot be healed.

REPENTANCE AND THE GOSPEL

There is a Gospel today that says a sinner is saved just by believing in Jesus they are told to have faith in Jesus and they will have eternal life. This is a Gospel that will rob people from experiencing the life changing power of God. Salvation is linked into a person acknowledging they are a sinner before God, repenting and then receiving and knowing that God's forgiveness comes to them through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Salvation without repentance and forgiveness of sin is not taught in the Bible to just believe intellectually in God is not enough; there must be a change of heart and a change of life and this change only comes about through honest heartfelt repentance and acknowledging (confessing) that we are sinners before God. James said:

- You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe (James 2:19).

Obviously, demons are not saved, James is saying to the people who say they believe, but there has been no change in their life to evidence that belief, big deal even the demons believe in Jesus. Unless there has been real repentance before God the Father, conversion to salvation cannot take place, simply because salvation is a change that takes place in the depths of a person's being, it will change their entire life, they see things in a different light, their desires change, because they have a new passion to know God and His Son.

A person who repents has a desire to:

- Know God, not for what they can get from Him, but for who He is.
- Tell people about Christ and desire to know him and his word.
- Forsake the sinful joys they once had in the world.
- Avoid anything that degrades or demeans God and the name of Christ.
- Do the best they can to live a life that honours God and brings a good testimony to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Christian faith.

To know God a person must be totally righteous in God's sight, but this is something that is totally impossible for any human to attain to since we are all descendants of our earthly father Adam and as such have inherited certain sinful dysfunctions and aberrations (i.e., selfishness, pride, ego, greed, lustful thoughts, anger, jealousies, coveting etc.) that limited us from attaining to the perfect standard the Law demands and the perfect Holiness of God. Because of this not one of us can stand righteous before God no matter how strictly we might adhere to ceremonial rites and holy days or keep religious customs and tradition none of these things have any power to make us righteous. The righteousness that God requires only comes through faith in God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Every faithful brother and sister in Christ is saved by Christ's righteousness not their own. If we could attain to God's perfect standard of Holiness Christ died for no purpose. Jesus died not so that we could attain to the perfect standard the Law demands, but because we couldn't. Jesus said:

- 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).

God forgiveness comes to a sinner when they come to the Father, in repentance because of their offences to God and the hurts, they have caused other humans. "For God so loved the world" these are not empty words God actually loves the sinner even though the sinner grieves and hurts the heart of God everyday through their unbelief. To find God a sinner needs to acknowledge (confess) their sin of unbelief before God, because unbelief in God and denying His existence is a direct sin against Him, it is a slap in His face, a kick in His teeth and an act of dethroning Him. Unbelief is a sin that directly affects God, as it would any human father whose child rejects him.

The primary sin to be repented of should be the inward sin of unbelief in the one true God the creator of all things and source of all life. Repentance that leads to God and eternal life involves acknowledging (confessing) disobedience and offences before God and not just the ungodly lifestyle a person has lived.

SNIPPETS OF FORGIVENESS

- We ask God for forgiveness, but He is not always the one that has been injured, where possible we need to ask people we have hurt for their forgiveness.
- To live a life in the Spirit and a life of joy we have to be ready and willing to forgive if we are going to live free of emotional and mental turmoil.
- If we do not forgive, we are not living in the Spirit of the Lord.
- When we are willing to forgive, we give up control of the thing over us.
- Forgiveness empowers because it cuts the past off and sets us free to embrace life with a healed heart and move forward.
- Sometimes it is important to forgive others not because they deserve forgiveness, but because you deserve peace.
- Forgiveness does not always lead to a healed relationship. Some people are not capable of love, and it might be wise to let them go along with your anger. Just wish them well and take care of yourself.
- Keep yourself in God's love as you wait for the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life all the time being merciful and forgiving to those who doubt.
- Forgiveness is not only something we do for other people, but is also something we do it for ourselves to get well and move on.
- Holding a grudge is letting someone live rent-free in your heart and your mind.

FORGIVENESS AND TRUST

The human heart must always be ready and willing to forgive, whether or not a person asks for it, but trust must be rebuilt over time, trust requires a track record. If someone has hurt you repeatedly, you are commanded by God to be willing and ready to forgive them instantly if they repent and ask for forgiveness, but you are not expected to trust them immediately and you are not expected to continue allowing them to hurt you, they must prove they have changed over time.

THE HEALING POWER OF FORGIVENESS

A sixty-year old man had been treated badly by his father when he was a child and he carried that hurt all his life. The father and the son were brought together and the father said sorry to his sixty-year old son. Tears spontaneously flooded down the son's wrinkled face, and the relationship was instantly healed. Love will not survive without repentance and forgiveness. When a Christian genuinely repents and forgives, God will restore their peace and deliver them from their mental torment. But when a believer in Christ approaches another in repentance and asks for forgiveness and that believer does not forgive, then God will not forgive them either.

Bible House of Grace