

George Ross

God's forgiveness of us
means forgiving others
and forgiving yourself.



the forgiven

fORGIVENESS OF US!
fORGIVING OTHERS!
fORGIVING YOURSELF!

"For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins." Matthew 6:14-15

the forgiven

**FORGIVENESS OF US!
FORGIVING OTHERS!
FORGIVING YOURSELF!**

George Ross

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Introduction

Before embarking on this project, which I've titled *The Forgiven*, a close friend asked me to clarify the core message I hoped to convey. My initial response was a straight-forward: "The message is in the book!"

I felt the introduction was too brief a space to capture the full weight of what I wanted to share. Yet, in many ways, this is not a conventional book. Its spark was ignited by a sermon I heard in Klerksdorp, South Africa, early in 2025 – a sermon that profoundly reshaped my understanding of forgiveness. It opened my eyes to the broader Biblical picture I had missed, having been too focused on the finer details. As the saying goes, I had failed to see the wood for the trees.

This book is my attempt to highlight what truly matters, and my hope is that you will pause, reflect, and diligently apply the Biblical message of forgiveness in your daily walk.

Eventually, I yielded to the request for clarity, because I believe it is fundamentally necessary, as far as we are humanly able, to grasp what forgiveness truly means from a Christian perspective.

One of my earliest memories is kneeling beside my bed while my mother recited the words Christ taught His disciples.

"In this manner therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name." (Matthew 6:9)

We are commanded to honour and revere our Father in heaven, for

Introduction

He is worthy of all honour. **He is the ultimate measure of spiritual maturity.** If we, as forgiven people, can grow into examples of Godly maturity in how we forgive, we will become instruments of peace and harmony in the corner of God's vineyard where He has placed us.

These truths, though impressed on my young heart, only truly dawned on me much later. Did I receive forgiveness when I raised my hand at a gospel service? Yes. But did I mistakenly assume that moment guaranteed permanent forgiveness, simply through confession and a lifelong commitment to sanctification? I wasn't sure. I had believed "once saved, always saved."

Yet Scripture teaches that our forgiveness is inseparably linked to how we forgive others. It is not a one-time transaction, but a lifelong journey of sanctification and grace.

"And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors."
(Matthew 6:12)

"But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." (Matthew 6:15)

Enjoy the book! I trust that a deeper understanding of Biblical forgiveness will bless you as it has blessed me.

George Ross

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "George Ross". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above a single horizontal line that serves as a baseline.

Forgiving Others

“For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.”

This text from Matthew 6:14-15 highlights that our forgiveness of others is linked to our heavenly Father’s forgiveness of us.

God’s Forgiveness of Us

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness”.1 John 1:9

“As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.”Psalm 103:12

Forgiving yourself

Self-forgiveness cannot be considered as a separate act; however certain scriptures can be applied to the process of moving past mistakes and embracing God’s grace.

“Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and Sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead,”

Philippians 3:12-13 speaks of pressing on and forgetting what lies behind.



*Going to Heaven
stands on two pillars:*

*Love and
Forgiveness.*

1

*Are
you
forgiven?*

#1 *Before we start*

Dear Reader

I do not write this book with the approach of 'assumed knowledge'. By that I mean that I know who you are, and what you need!

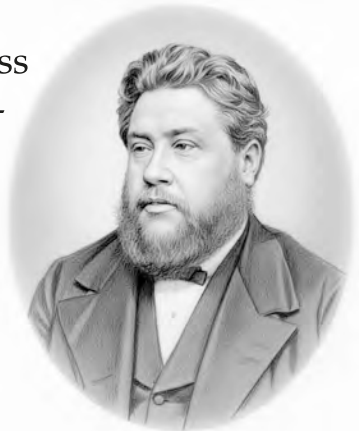


Perhaps you are one of those dear folk who raised your hand in an evangelistic campaign crusade and received Jesus as your personal Saviour; or maybe you have been an established church goer your whole life, and somewhere in the past Jesus came into your heart and He is your Saviour. These matters I cannot know.

■ What life has truly shown me is that forgiving others isn't just about them – it's vital for your own peace and well-being, too! At its heart, that's what forgiveness is all about. And that's really what this book is all about.

Are you forgiven?

To be forgiven is such sweetness that honey is tasteless in comparison with it. But yet there is one thing sweeter still, and that is to forgive. As it is more blessed to give than receive, so **to forgive** rises a stage higher in experience than **to be forgiven**.



C H Spurgeon



Artist impression of The Metropolitan Tabernacle in London. It was designed to hold thousands of worshippers, and was the site of Spurgeon's ministry until his death in 1892.

#2 *How do I forgive*

The Question:
How I forgive myself?

The Answer:
You can't.

The Reason:
**God is the One who
forgives.**

How do I forgive myself?

Well, that's a well-known question that I've heard many times! How do I forgive myself?

Think carefully on that one, my dear reader! Because you know what? You can't. You cannot forgive yourself.

Why is that?

Because you're not the One who forgives!

myself?

“Let the wicked forsake their ways and the unrighteous their thoughts. Let them turn to the Lord, and He will freely pardon.”

Isaiah 55:7

“Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other.”

Isaiah 45:22

Why do I quote from Isaiah?

Because he is the first and greatest of the four major prophets from the Old Testament respected by Jew and Christian alike.

- **Isaiah lived and ministered in Jerusalem in the 8th century BCE.**



Jean Louis Ernest Meissonier (1815-91) - Isaiah

#3 *I repeat: How do I forgive myself?*

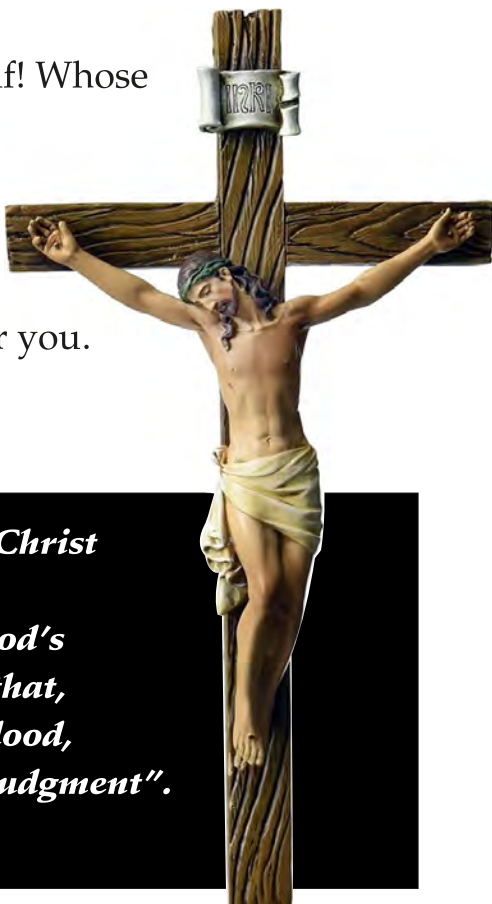
“In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.”

Hebrews 9:22

You can't forgive yourself! Whose blood can *you* shed?

You don't need to.

It's already been done for you.



*Only the Blood of Christ
can save.*

*We cry out for God's
mercy, knowing that,
because of His blood,
"mercy triumphs over judgment".*

James 2:13

You can't.

God is the One who forgives.

How do I forgive myself? Think about this one:

If I can forgive myself, then I need to be God. Then I must assume His place and His authority.

That's not possible. To assume that is by default a sin!

I'm not here to debate the existence of the Creator God – that you can see for yourself.

Then I must give my life over to the One who forgives sin.

Let us accept this fundamental truth and come to peace over this matter!

#4 *Salvation...*

Imagine that you were walking in what you thought were shallow waters at the seaside. You are far from the shore. Suddenly the water becomes deep, and your feet can't find the sand to walk on, and you can't swim!

Panic kicks in as you find yourself drowning in deep waters – in that awful moment you realise you are unable to save yourself .

I'm sure you would appreciate someone throwing you a lifebuoy to escape!



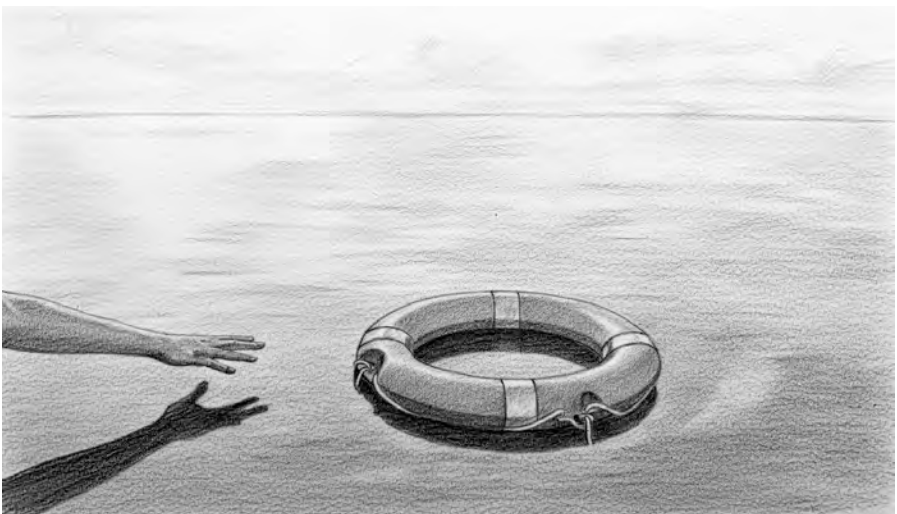
A short definition 1

We were drowning in sin, we couldn't save ourselves, our relationship with God was lost; we were totally helpless and dependent on the Lifesaver.

Salvation is God's deliverance from our state of helplessness – the moment our cry for help is answered by the voice of Jesus.

"Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

Matthew 11:28-29 KJV



#5 *Salvation...*

**Is
forgiveness
related to
salvation
in the Bible?**

That question was burning in me when I began this book – and while the Bible speaks volumes on it, far more than these few pages can reflect, the real challenge isn't lack of information... it's whether we're willing to confront what it actually says.

A short definition 2

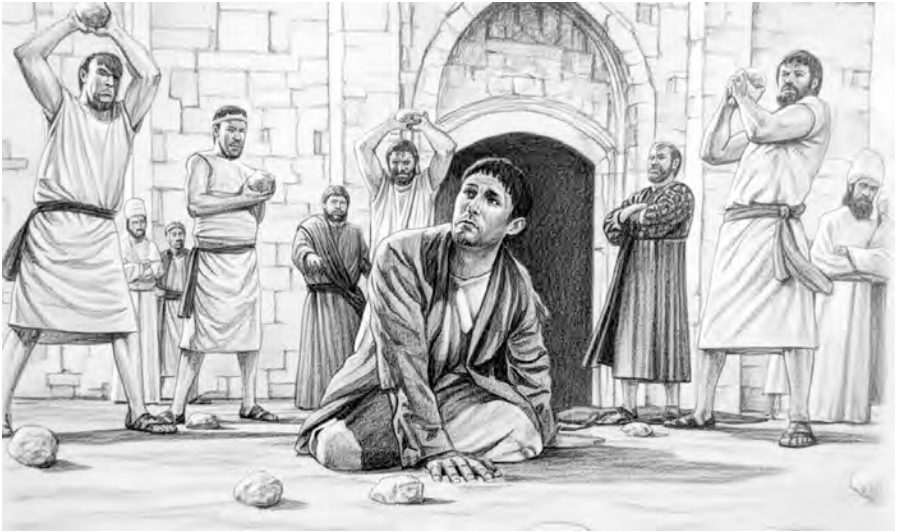
But salvation is impossible without forgiveness.

Salvation is God's way to rescue us from the consequences of sin, and in Christ we see the ultimate expression of that mercy. His forgiveness is freely offered, but must be received through repentance and faith. It's so basic, this is what we learn at a young age from our Christian parents.

God's forgiveness and our forgiveness to others are integrated.



#Salvation...



This picture depicts the stoning of Stephen, recorded in Acts 7:59-60: “While they were stoning him, then he fell on his knees and cried out, ‘Lord, do not hold this sin against them.’ When he had said this, he fell asleep.”

- **Stephen’s words of forgiveness revealed the depth of his salvation – a humble heart fully aligned with Christ, even in death.**

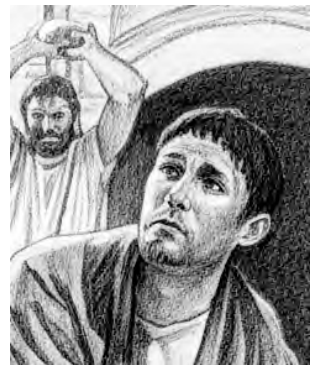
A short definition 3

What stands out from the story of Stephen is this: **the completion of the 490-year prophecy, marking Israel's rejection of both the Messiah and His message of forgiveness.**

At this pivotal moment, Saul appears – a young man present at Stephen's execution, not as a passive bystander, but as one who approved of the act and guarded the garments of those casting the stones. Acts 7:58 paints the scene: "The witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul."

This detail reflects Saul's alignment with the violence and his silent endorsement of it. Yet in the midst of this brutality, Stephen lifts his voice in grace: "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." (Acts 7:60, NIV). His final words echo the mercy of Jesus on the cross: "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." (Luke 23:34)

- **Stephen's prayer reveals a heart fully surrendered – forgiving his enemies even as they take his life.**



#7 *Salvation...*

So I thought: let's define salvation – a word I believed I understood the moment I raised my hand in that gospel service. At its core, salvation means deliverance, rescue, preservation from harm, ruin, or loss. It's a lifeline. A way out. A means of escape.



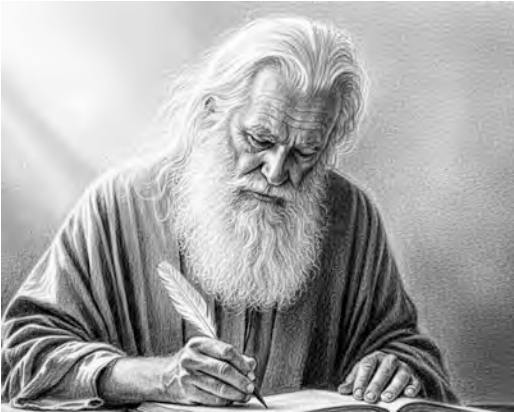
Yes, that is definitely true.

But then comes the question that stirs me as I write this book: Does salvation mean “once saved, always saved?”

- **It's a question that doesn't just challenge doctrine – it challenges the heart. What does it mean to be truly saved? Is it a moment, or a journey? A decision, or a daily surrender?**

~~ONCE SAVED, ALWAYS SAVED~~ *False*

A short definition 4



Yes, there's more to the matter. Curiously, the words *salvation* and *forgiveness* appear together only once in the entire Bible – a rare pairing that speaks volumes. **Their connection is**

not accidental; it's essential: You cannot have salvation without forgiveness. Salvation is God's rescue from sin's consequences, and forgiveness is the doorway through which that rescue comes.

Read below what Paul had to say. He was certainly qualified! Being an ex-Pharisee, his knowledge of God's word was second to none:

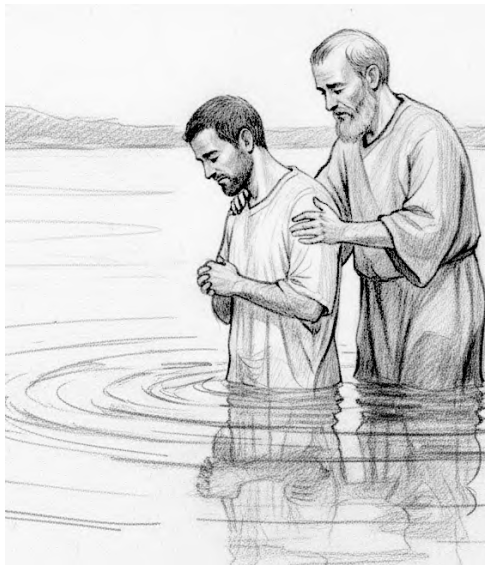
“What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don't you know that all of us who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into His death? We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.”

#Salvation...

When Jesus forgives us, our sins are erased, they are wiped off the record.

Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool. Isaiah 1:18

Baptism is a public declaration of faith, symbolising the death of an old life and the beginning of a new life in Christ. It represents the forgiveness of sins, a commitment to follow Jesus, and union with Him in His death and resurrection.



Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 2:38

A short definition 5



When Christians participate in communion, they obediently remember Jesus' sacrifice by eating bread and drinking wine, symbolising His body and blood.

**It's a spiritual act of remembrance,
personal repentance and renewed unity
with fellow believers.**

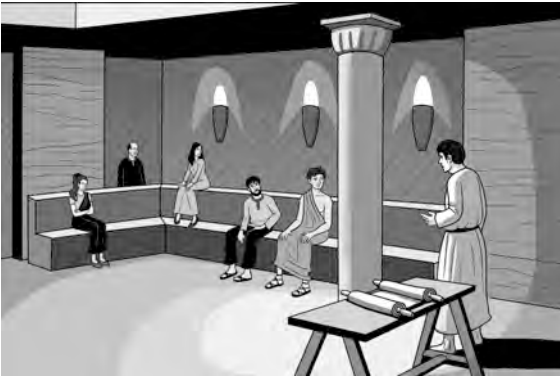
Just a reminder concerning the Holy Communion:
*"Everyone ought to examine themselves before they
eat of the bread and drink from the cup. For those
who eat and drink without discerning the body of
Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves."*

1 Corinthians 11:28-29

#9 Paul never exhausted his theme...

In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of God's grace.

Ephesians 1:7



Paul is clearly speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ, the central theme of his preaching and of the Pauline epistles – thirteen New Testament

letters attributed to him, though some authorship is debated. These writings, among the earliest Christian documents, reveal the faith and struggles of the first believers.

Note: Paul was a Pharisee who studied under the respected rabbi Gamaliel and was thoroughly trained in the law of Moses. He had a deep and exceptional knowledge of the Old Testament from his youth, which he used to connect Old Testament prophecy with the life of Jesus.

as he found such infinite riches in Christ

*With Paul it was Christ first, Christ last, Christ
midst, Christ everywhere* – and so he could not have
his pens to hand without writing the praises of his
glorious Lord and Saviour!

*Portrait of the Apostle Paul
by Rembrandt Harmensz.
van Rijn 31 December 1632.*

*This painting exhibits Paul
affected by the content of a
revelation; the apostle Paul
pauses in writing. Before
the day of the Lord comes,
the Antichrist will rule the
world. Representing all
believers, the Thessalonians
are to endure for the sake of
salvation.*



**GREAT FORGIVENESS
FOR GREAT SIN!**

#10 A Damascus road...

Paul had strong reasons for proclaiming the Gospel: Christ had stopped him on the road to Damascus, turned him from the wrong path, and revealed Himself as Paul's new Master. That moment is forever remembered in history as the 'Damascus moment'.



Caravaggio (1571-1610) - Conversion on the Way to Damascus c.1600

Have you had such a moment, when truth awakened you in a dramatic way? From then on, Paul was a different man – his life's direction forever changed.

EXPERIENCE

Now Paul breathes only Christ and His Gospel, caring for nothing else in life – though once he had issued threats and promised punishment for all who proclaimed Christ's name.

Great Sin – Why so great?

When we look at the results of sin across the world, we see its devastating reach:

- The poverty of a mother with no food for her children, born of drunkenness.
- The diseases that arise from sexual misconduct.
- The dreadful pain of conscience that follows every evil act.

And when you gaze upon the misery that fills this earth, you begin to see why sin is no small thing.

If you still question whether sin is truly a GREAT SIN, remember this: it must be great, for it takes such great Grace to pardon it!

Sin is no small thing – it is responsible for all the evil and misery upon the earth.



#1 *David sees Bathsheba...*



One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful, and David sent someone to find out about her. The man said, “She is Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite.”

Then David sent messengers to get her. She came to him, and he slept with her. (Now she was purifying herself from her monthly uncleanness.)

Then she went back home. The woman conceived and sent word to David, saying, “I am pregnant.” 2 Samuel 11: 2-6

*and she is
beautiful.*

The account of David and Bathsheba offers several profound lessons.

First, no sin remains hidden forever – what is done in secret, will eventually come to light.

Second, God’s mercy is available to anyone who truly repents.

Third, even when forgiveness is granted, the consequences of sin often remain.

Fourth, God can still bring beauty out of brokenness. Despite the pain, David and Bathsheba’s next son, Solomon, became heir to the throne – proof that God’s sovereign plan continues, even in difficult circumstances.

These timeless truths from the Old Testament still speak powerfully to every Christian today, reminding us of the seriousness of sin, the depth of God’s grace and the hope we have in His redemptive purpose.

- **The consequences David faced were part of God’s divine judgement, revealing the destructive nature of sin. Yet, in the midst of discipline, God also revealed the path of repentance, forgiveness and restoration. David’s journey stands as a powerful example for every believer today, reminding us that while sin has weight, grace has the final word.**

#1 *David and Bathsheba*



For over fifty years I wrestled with the story of David and Bathsheba. How could David still be called righteous after committing adultery with Bathsheba and arranging the death of her husband, Uriah the Hittite? I had listened to many sermons on this passage, yet the question continued to trouble me.

Only recently when researching for this book it finally occurred to me how awesome God's forgiving nature is.

David is called "a man after God's own heart" not because he was flawless, but because he kept turning back to God, even after the darkest failures. That's the paradox of grace – it magnifies God's holiness while also magnifying His mercy.

“A man after God’s heart”

- 1 You could ask: What has this story of David and Bathsheba got to do with forgiveness?
- 2 Think about the following texts! Did David follow God’s commands as much as God kept telling Solomon?
NO!
- 3 When God spoke to Solomon in 1 Kings 3:14, He mentioned David, so let’s go to the Scriptures. "And if you walk in obedience to me and keep my decrees and commands as David your father did, I will give you a long life." Then 1 Kings 9:4-5a: "As for you, if you walk before me faithfully with integrity of heart and uprightness, as David your father did, and do all I command and observe my decrees and laws, I will establish your royal throne over Israel forever."
- 4 No – David was not obeying the Lord’s decrees and commands when he committed adultery with Bathsheba and arranged the death of her husband, Uriah.
- 5 *The Punch Line:* Because of my own human, judgmental attitude, it took me a long time to grasp this truth: in God’s eyes, David never did those things – for he had been forgiven. God had wiped them away, forgotten them completely.

#1 *God has forgiven you...*

The enemy seeks to keep us blind to God's forgiving nature.

That is his strategy – using accusations against believers to distract us from the truth of God's grace.

Yes, I have heard Christians speak harshly about David and Bathsheba, clearly struggling to understand how David could be forgiven, as Scripture declares. Yet God Himself called David righteous.

Even today, there are people who have committed far worse sins, and still God has extended His forgiveness to them. For us as humans, this remains a difficult truth to grasp – but it reveals the depth of God's mercy.

GOD HAS FORGIVEN YOU?

just as He forgave King David



Prophet Nathan confronts David about his adultery with Bathsheba

There is a lesson here for every one of us: never let the enemy trap you in guilt over the past.

If you have confessed your sins before God – just as David truly repented of his adultery with Bathsheba and the murder of Uriah – then God has already forgiven you. Even more astonishing, He has chosen to forget it.

Behind David’s confession lies a powerful lesson: when the prophet Nathan confronted him, David did not defend himself or make excuses. He immediately admitted, “I have sinned against the LORD.” (2 Samuel 12:13)

- **Out of that sincere and broken heart – captured so vividly in Psalm 51 – God extended forgiveness and spared his life, even though under Mosaic law both adultery and murder carried the penalty of death.**

#1 Forgiveness, **YES!**

Implications of David's Adultery with Bathsheba

Yes, we have affirmed that David's forgiveness was absolute. **Yet David's sin carried devastating consequences.** The adultery with Bathsheba led to the death of their infant son, unleashed ongoing violence within his household, brought public disgrace upon his family, and stirred lasting emotional and political turmoil through Absalom's rebellion against his father.

- **These tragic outcomes are recorded in 2 Samuel 13–19, reminding us that while God's forgiveness is complete, sin often leaves deep scars in its wake.**

Absalom's Rebellion: A Sad Consequence of David's Sin

Absalom, King David's third son, carried deep resentment toward his father, rooted in personal grievances. The immediate spark was the rape of his sister Tamar by their half-brother Amnon, David's firstborn. When David failed to act decisively against Amnon, Absalom's anger grew. Two years later, he avenged Tamar by killing Amnon during a feast, then fled to Geshur, where he lived in exile for three years.

Severe implications, also!

Though God forgives sin and chooses to forget iniquity, the consequences often remain.

David's sin with Bathsheba brought deep sorrow into his life: the betrayal of his own son, the harsh insults of Shimei, and the physical abuse and death threats from Absalom. These painful experiences remind us that forgiveness removes guilt, but not always the earthly results of sin.

- **But the best news of all is that, by the grace of God, David faced every one of these consequences supported by the promises of God. His responses, as recorded in the Psalms, include some of the most hope-filled pages of Scriptures.**



What happened to Absalom?

Absalom, the son of King David, attempted to overthrow his father, leading to a civil war. He was ultimately defeated and killed by Joab during the Battle of the Wood of Ephraim. Absalom was caught by his hair in an oak tree, which led to his death.

- **His rebellion and death illustrate themes of pride, ambition and familial conflict within the Biblical narrative.**

Absalom caught by his long hair in an oak tree

Severe implications of David's sin: Conclusion

***My son Absalom, my son, my
son Absalom! Would God I had
died for thee, o, Absalom, my
son, my son!***

2 Samuel 18:33

Absalom's Rebellion: A Cautionary Tale

Absalom's rebellion stands as a sobering warning against the dangers of unchecked ambition and the neglect of justice and accountability within families, communities and churches. It highlights the complexities of leadership and reveals how unresolved grievances can ripple outward with devastating consequences. This story continues to mirror our human condition, reminding us of the enduring challenges of governance and the need for integrity in every sphere of life.



Consequences of David's Sin

Absalom's rebellion culminated in a heartbreaking confrontation between father and son, exposing themes of family discord, unchecked ambition and the lingering effects of unresolved sin. David's anguish – caught between his role as king and his love as a father – stands at the centre of this narrative. In the end, Absalom's ambition and the fractured relationships within David's household led to a violent and tragic outcome, with Absalom killed in battle.

- **This account still echoes today. Sin, though forgiven, often leaves consequences that ripple through families, communities and generations.**

*To err is human
To forgive divine.*

Alexander Pope

This famous quote was related to me by a friend of mine.

It is not a Bible verse, but it made me think! Can I forgive without the power of The Holy Spirit?

It's a line from the 1711 poem, "An Essay on Criticism," by Alexander Pope, an English poet, translator (of Homer) and caustic satirist. However, the sentiment is supported by biblical themes, such as human fallibility and God's command for humans to forgive each other as a reflection of His own divine nature.

Alexander Pope (1688-1744)
Portrait by Thomas Hudson
c 1739



2

*Am I waiting
for an Offender
to apologise to me
before I can
forgive them?*

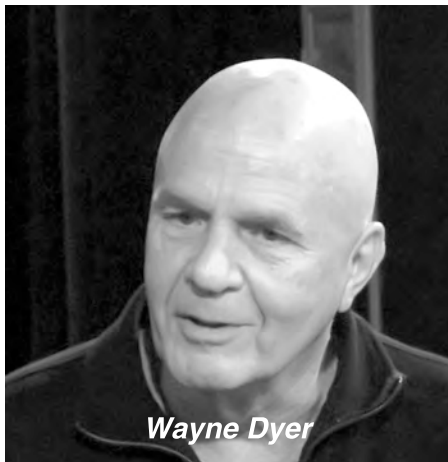
#16 *The* EGO

From a Christian perspective I like Wayne Dyer's acronym for EGO. Ego, he said, stands for **E**ase **G**od **O**ut.

That is exactly what happens when the "I" takes over, leaving no room for the Holy Spirit.

Somewhere in our life we must get to the point where we have to forgive! Or are you like the old lady who lies on her deathbed

and eighty years had passed and still she was not at the point where she could forgive someone for an incident that took place in her childhood!



Be Kind Instead of Right

There is a Chinese proverb: "If you're going to pursue revenge, you'd better dig two graves."

Which, for me, is saying: Your unforgiveness will destroy you.

I'm right, everyone else is **wrong**

Understand that forgiveness is for you, not the offender. Holding grudges is heavy. Have boundaries and respect your boundaries.

For me, forgiveness doesn't mean I'm 'good'. It means I've let it go. It's not taking up space in my head or in my life. It's not stealing my joy. Is it easy? No – it's a **process**.

Forgiveness is for *your* freedom, not *theirs*. Grudges are heavy – let them go.

Set boundaries. Honour them.

Forgiving doesn't mean *I am good* – it means *I've released it*. It no longer owns space in my mind or steals my joy.

Is it easy?

No. But it's worth the trouble.

Another quote from Wayne Dyer: *Don't Live In the Past – Be Present*.

When we find it difficult to forgive, often it is because we are not living in the present. Instead, we assign more importance to the past.

We assign a good portion of our energy and attention lamenting the good old days that are gone forever as the reason why we can't be happy and fulfilled today.

"Everything has changed," we say.

"No one respects anyone else like they used to," we say.

This is assigning responsibility to the past and avoiding the issue of why you can't be happy today.

**#1 Preparation
is needed...**



**Decide right now that you are going
to do it. Make the decision, right now.**

Do it.

Set your heart today.

Don't delay.

Choose now to obey.

Don't wait.

to forgive a person



Forgiveness is a process – and it must have a closing.

It doesn't:

- require a personal visit.
- mean you'll be friends tomorrow.

It still matters – even if they've passed away.

What's your process?

Go to a quiet place. Make it right with the Lord.

Open your heart to Him.

#1 *Forgiveness:*

Let's reflect on the Process of Forgiveness

- ✓ Name the person (or people) you will forgive.
- ✓ Who hurt you the most?
- ✓ What exactly did they do?
- ✓ How did it affect you emotionally and spiritually?

Remember: You are forgiving the offence – not excusing the person. You release the wrong to God, and let Him heal the wound.

But if you do not forgive others their sins,
your Father will not forgive your sins.

Matthew 6:15

Do you truly grasp what that means?
Do you realise what's at stake?

The Process

Start with the one who hurt you most.

- ✓ What did they do?
- ✓ How do you feel about it?

Remember: You forgive the offence, you're not excusing the person.

I used to think I had to forgive the person, but that's not what the Word says. The call is to release the wrong – before God.

Corrie did not forgive the man, she took the offence that he did and gave it to the Lord.

Corrie ten Boom
"The Power of Forgiveness."



#1 *There is a process...*

Start by opening your heart to forgive. Then, with empathy, step into their shoes. This will enable you to have restful sleep tonight, without nightmares of hate and ugly things.

Forgiveness includes all folk that hurt you, including:

Your partner, your parents, your boss, your church; yes, even the church pastor! Or your neighbour, your aunty, your brother, your sister. Or the businessman that crooked you!



in forgiving

Release that person out of the prison of your heart!

In other words, you stand before your own heart, and you have the key, and here inside that heart of yours is that person you need to forgive.

The one that may have hurt you!

They have not been released from your unforgiveness, you are thinking about that person every day and the grudge remains with you.



It's all this ugly stuff that you've picked up, and you haven't got there yet, won't you come with the key in your hand and open that gate, that person, those persons, and release them from the gate of your heart?

#20 *Revenge is not for us!*

Is

REVENGE

a sin?

Friend, it's not worth the effort!

“Esau held a grudge against Jacob because of the blessing his father had given him. He said to himself, “The days of mourning for my father are near; then I will kill my brother Jacob.”

Genesis 27:41



It blocks healing and forgiveness

“God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you.” 2 Thessalonians 1:6

When Paul says, “He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you,” he’s pointing to the fact that justice belongs to God. He’s the one who will deal with those who hurt His people. God will set things right in His perfect time.

Revenge? No, you don’t have to have sleepless nights over that one!

As one famous preacher said, “Refer the matter to God!”

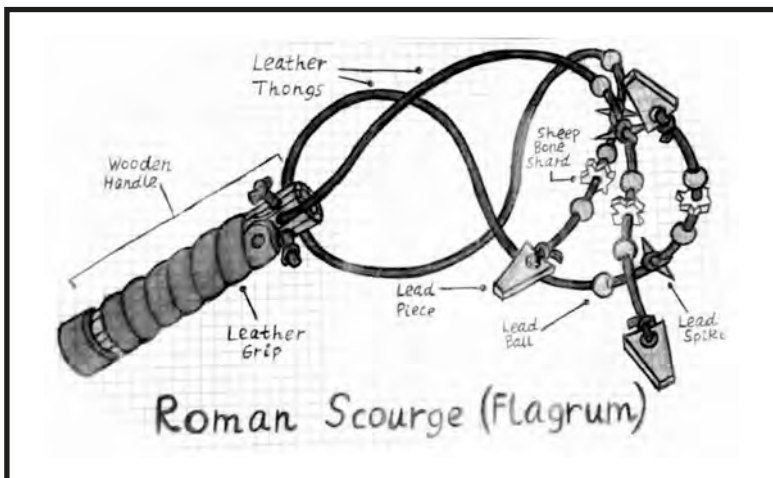
So, what does the Lord say about revenge? Firstly, the Bible explicitly forbids revenge for us as humans. A key verse from the apostle Paul (Romans 12:19) says: “Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God’s wrath. For it is written: ‘Vengeance is Mine; I will repay,’ says the Lord.”

#21 Therefore, sin is no small thing

If you would truly grasp how great a thing sin is, remember the cost – it was so great that Christ Himself became its Forgiver.

As we remember what it cost Christ to be the Forgiver of Sin, we follow Him to Pilate's hall, and hear the cruel whip falling on His blessed shoulders.

"But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed." Isaiah 53:5



*So, I continue with
the Great Grace*



***The Flagellation of Our Lord Jesus Christ
William-Adolphe Bouguereau (1825-1905)***

Sin is a dreadful disease that demands the sharpest medicine. And if sin is so great, then only a sacrifice equally great could bring about its forgiveness.

Now if you have doubt as to whether sin is so great, remember it must be great, because it takes such Great Grace to forgive it.

#2 Jesus was a master...

I'm sure you remember the parable Jesus told of the prodigal son and his joyous return home.

Bartolomé Esteban Murillo - The Return of the Prodigal Son (detail)



You can read about it in Luke 15 from verse 20 Jesus was saying this: the door is wide open for sinners to come home.

- No matter how far a person has fallen – how empty, how wicked, how broken, how sinful, how futile their life may seem – there is still an open door to salvation, to forgiveness, and to a new beginning.

storyteller of *Forgiveness*

A brief synopsis of the key features of this parable of forgiveness...

The younger son's departure: He asks his father for his share of the inheritance, leaves for a distant land, and wastes it all in reckless living.

The younger son's downfall: When his money is gone, a famine strikes. Left with nothing, he takes the degrading job of feeding pigs.

The return home: Realising even his father's servants live better than he does, he resolves to return as a servant and plead for forgiveness.

The father's welcome: Seeing him from afar, the father runs out to embrace him and commands a feast, clothing him with the best robe and a ring.

The older brother's reaction: The faithful older son grows angry and jealous at this celebration of his wayward brother.

The father's explanation: He reminds the older son that joy is fitting, for the younger "was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found."

#23 *But what about the prodigal son's...*

The true focus of this parable is the father's attitude toward his son. Symbolically, the prodigal's father is God.

We already know the son's story – he failed miserably, was lost, wretched and in despair.

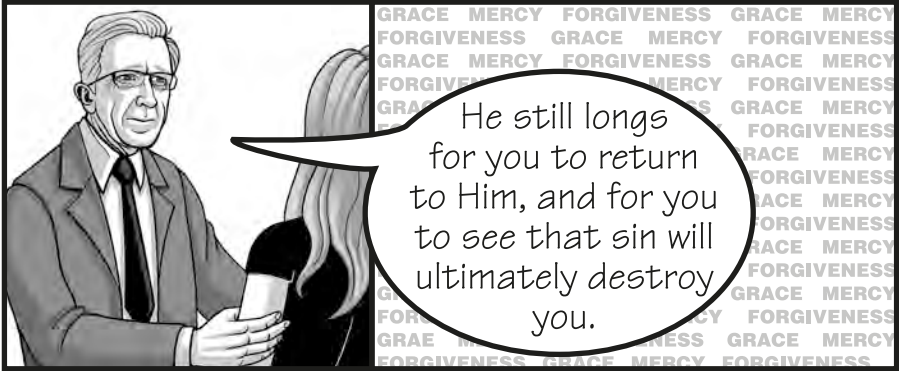
But what about the father? That's the real message!

Jesus is showing us the heart of our Heavenly Father toward you and me. He waits patiently, watching year after year, never giving up. And what is God saying? *I will not give up on you.* He longs for your return so He can embrace and forgive you.

He wants His child back. God is waiting for you to come home, so He can welcome you with His forgiveness.



father?



Will you return to the Father's house while the door of grace is still open to you? And join a joyful gathering?



Or will it be marked by sorrow?

**Either way...
the choice is yours!**

#24 What is forgiveness?



Two quotes from DL Moody:

"Those who say they will forgive but can't forget, simply bury the hatchet but leave the handle out for immediate use."

"I have noticed this, that when a man is full of the Holy Ghost, he is the very last man to be complaining of other people."

Forgiving others means letting go of resentment and giving up any claim to be compensated for the hurt or loss we have suffered.

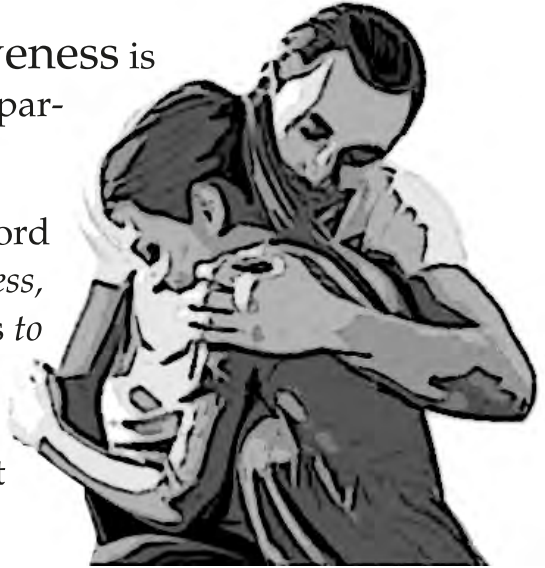
A good basis for this is found in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7:

"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres."

Here's a definition.

In essence forgiveness is defined by the act of pardoning an offender.

The Biblical Greek word translated as *forgiveness*, which literally means *to release*, as typically when a person does not demand payment for a debt.



Jesus used this comparison in his parable of the unmerciful slave (Matthew 18:23-35), as well as when He taught His followers to pray:

“Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us.” Luke 11:4 NIV

“ To err is human,
to forgive divine. ”

Alexander Pope

#25 Forgiveness **is a matter of...**

When Jesus enters your life and forgives your sins, in that very moment you receive a new nature – you are spiritually reborn. Maybe at that moment you didn't fully understand the depth of what has happened, you had been trying to sort out your life through your own efforts.

**Now it all comes as a gift.
This new life is a gift of God.**

If you try to earn God's acceptance by doing good works, you will live under the heavy cloud of His displeasure. No matter how deep you dig or how wide you stretch, you will always be left asking: How much more must I do? How much further must I go?

**The truth is – there is no answer to that.
Why?**

- Because what God offers is not something you can earn. It is a gift: the gift of eternal life, given through the forgiveness of your sins.

Life and Death

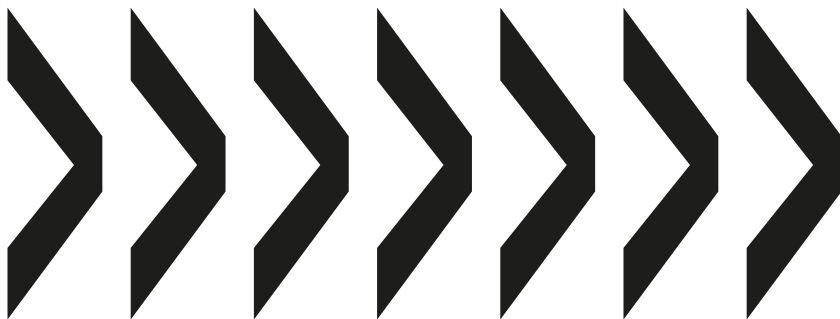
“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.”

Ephesians 4:32

It's possible to tell someone you forgive them yet still hold on to resentment.

We may say everything is fine, but deep inside the spirit of unforgiveness festers. It remains until we truly release the person from the wrong they have done.

- For those of us who believe, there is a way to move forward in freedom, on the next page I outline five points to help guide you through that journey.



#28 *Forgiveness is also connected to...*

- 1 **Take responsibility for your unforgiving spirit** and choose a change of heart toward the other person. (It's not easy!) Healing begins with repentance.
- 2 **Let go of the debt** you believe is owed to you. Release your grip on it.
- 3 **Recognise the weakness** revealed in you by the other person's offence – your resentment and desire for revenge.
- 4 **Remember God's forgiveness.** He is grieved when we cling to unforgiveness, because emotional debt traps us. It paralyzes us with distrust, resentment, and insecurity, building walls that shut out family and friends.
- 5 **Embrace God's goal of freedom.** His desire is to free us from bitterness, to see us reconciled with our offender, and to show tenderhearted love and acceptance. Though it challenges our sense of moral superiority, it is a powerful Christian resolution.

*my own
unforgiving heart*



**Forgiveness is unlocking
the door to set someone
free, then discovering
you
were the prisoner.**

God calls us to forgive, and though it is often difficult, it becomes possible because Christ lives within us.

Living in Christ does not mean our attitudes change instantly; it is a journey of growth, gradual transformation and daily dependence on His grace.

- **Forgiveness requires humility, trust, and patience – and sometimes, in releasing another, we discover that we ourselves were the ones imprisoned.**

#27 *Repentance by the offender is good,*

In essence, what we have said in the preceding pages is that forgiveness is a core Christian practice, focusing on releasing burdens, enabling personal growth and mirroring God's forgiveness, often connecting it to the Lord's Prayer and Jesus' teachings on letting go of anger for inner peace, and not forgetting that forgiveness isn't excusing actions, but liberating oneself, i.e. the forgiver.

Interpretation: In the Lord's Prayer, "debts" should be understood as all forms of wrongs, not merely financial obligations.

Not Excusing or Condoning: Forgiveness does not minimize the offence; it liberates the forgiver from bitterness, opening the way for peace and joy.

Strength, Not Weakness: Choosing to forgive is an act of courage and deep spiritual transformation, not a sign of frailty.

How: Forgiveness is a journey – facing the offender honestly, welcoming apology if offered but not requiring it, and ultimately extending forgiveness regardless of the offender's response.

*but not essential
for the forgiver.*

It's so easy even grown-ups can do it!

“And forgive us our
trespasses as we
forgive them that
trespass against us.”

Matthew 6:12.

Remember:

Forgiveness is not reconciliation: You can forgive someone to release your own pain without necessarily inviting them back into your life, or excusing their behaviour. Boundaries can still be set to protect yourself from future harm.

Here's where many people get stuck: they believe that if they have truly forgiven someone, they must also reconcile and continue the relationship as before. This simply isn't true. You can forgive someone without trusting them or continuing a close relationship with them.

Think about it this way:

Forgiveness is about *your healing*, not about *the other person's worthiness*. It's a gift you give yourself, releasing the burden of anger and resentment.

- Reconciliation, however, is about the future of the relationship, which depends on the actions and attitudes of both parties.



#28 Are you waiting for an apology...



No, you don't have to wait for an apology to forgive!

Forgiveness is primarily a personal choice for your own freedom, not about the other person's actions. Though getting an apology can be part of healing for some, it's not a requirement for internal peace or to release resentment.

- **Waiting for an apology can keep you stuck in bitterness, while choosing to forgive frees you from being controlled by a past hurt, even if the offender never acknowledges their wrongdoing!**

before you forgive?

Forgiveness without apology



So, this may sound strange to you, but I want to propose that forgiveness is an internal decision to let go of anger and resentment for your own peace and healing, freeing you from being a perpetual victim.

Waiting for an apology puts your healing in the hands of the person who hurt you.

Forgiving the person releases that power.

#29 So how do we start with this...

We don't need to wait!

Well, the other person may never change: They might not apologise due to death, separation, lack of awareness or unwillingness to admit fault, leaving you waiting indefinitely.

Bearing in mind that as a believer *you* must make a start, as we understand that we cannot expect God's forgiveness if we can't forgive others.

I remind you this is a Biblical principle!

So what to do?

#1: Acknowledge the hurt: Recognise the pain without letting it define your future.

#2: Let go of the expectation: Release the need for their remorse or justice to be served.

forgiveness?

“For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.”

Matthew 6:14-15

Focus on your freedom: See forgiveness as a gift you give yourself, allowing you to move forward.

This one is super important!

It tells us that forgiving others is a way to show that we understand how much God loves us. If we want to be forgiven, we need to forgive too!



3

490

Seventy times

Seven

#30 Peter asked how many times...



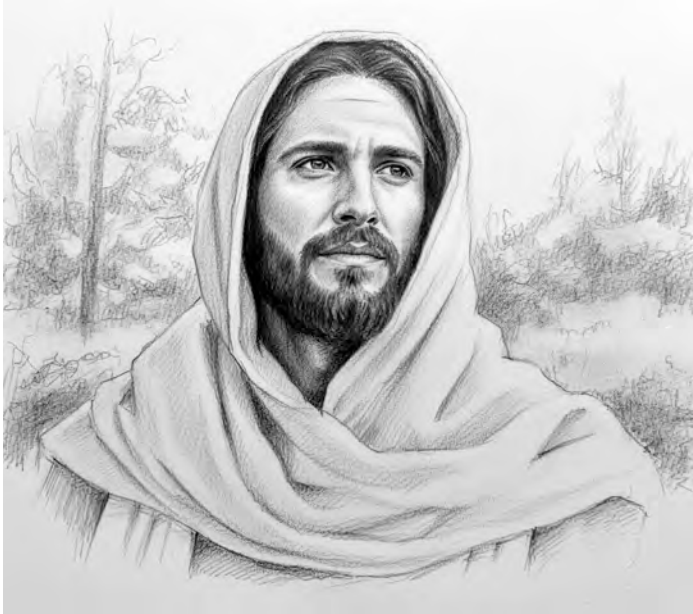
Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?" Matthew 18:21

Must I do it seven times? Why did Peter ask Jesus that?

Simple. It was because the Pharisees had a law. The law said that three times you can forgive him. However, the fourth time it's over. Now Peter comes with a suggestion. He wants to be better than the Pharisees, he will double the three to six and then add one.

I will forgive you seven times. Is that good enough?

Shall I forgive?

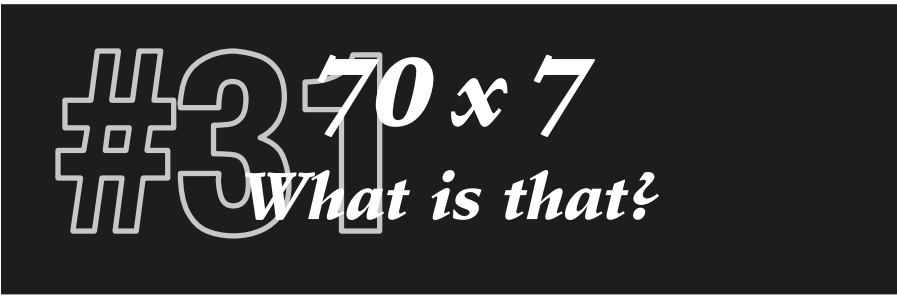


Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but up to seventy times seven" Matthew 18:22

Peter had more than doubled the Jewish practice of pardoning someone three times for an offence. (Amos 2:6)

Yet by Jesus commanding Peter to forgive not just seven times, but up to seventy seven times, He established an example of unlimited forgiveness that reflects God's own boundless mercy towards humanity.

- **The lesson being: that believers are called to forgive others out of gratitude for the forgiveness they have received from God, rather than keeping score of transgressions.**



#370 x 7
What is that?

70 X 7 – Just what is the significance?

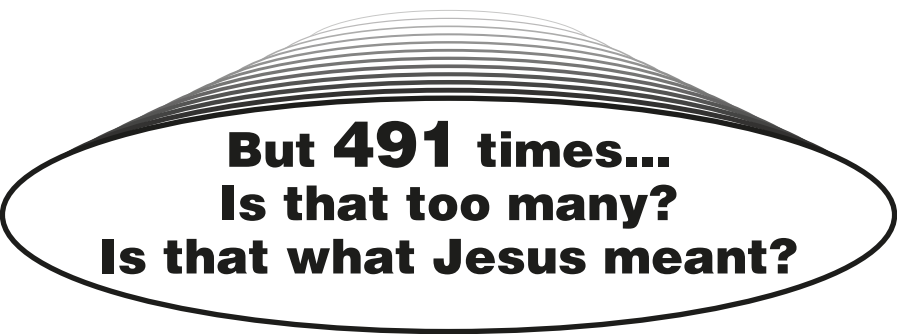
Remember, every Hebrew word has a numerical value. 490, 70 x 7, is the numerical value of the word TAMIYM. TAMIYM means *complete* or *perfect*.

So, what did the Lord say? The answer, *Not 7 times but 70 times 7*, refers to Jesus's command to Peter in Matthew 18:21-22 to forgive someone not just seven times, but seventy times seven times. This number symbolises a limitless, continuous act of forgiveness, rather than a literal numerical count.

This teaching emphasises that forgiveness should be as abundant and unconditional as God's own forgiveness of humanity.

In other words, a reflection of God's Grace.

Jesus intended this teaching to illustrate that, just as God has forgiven humanity abundantly, believers should extend the same boundless forgiveness to others.



**But 491 times...
Is that too many?
Is that what Jesus meant?**



So 490 is the numeric value of the word TAMIYM.

TAMIYM, as we've seen, means complete or perfect.

Hence the Lord is saying to Peter he will never be perfect until he forgives.

Yet all of us need to be careful about thinking we are right. Thinking we are the only ones who are right and everyone else is wrong.



#32 Molodati = Nativity

Intricate Links

Again, every Hebrew word has a numeric value. 490 is the numeric value of the word *molodati*, which means *to be born*.

But it is also the numeric value of the word *Bethlehem* (Beit-Lechem), which as you know is where Jesus was born. (Micah 5:2).

Micah told us in advance the place Jesus would be born – this prophecy was written by Micah approximately 800 years before Christ's birth.

And if that is not enough – forgiveness is also coupled to the word Bread. And Bethlehem means the Bread House!



Nativity = to be born



What does Nativity literally mean?

Nativity comes from the French word *nativité*, which also means "birth." The Latin root word is *nativus*, "born or native."

Definitions of nativity:

Noun: the event of being born

Then in Mathew 6:12: "And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors."

That's how we should pray. Jesus ties the bread of Bethlehem to the grace of forgiveness: 'Give us today our daily bread' is not just about sustenance – it's a cry for strength to forgive our brother and sister.

● **In His kingdom, both are one and the same.**

#33 Another 490

It's one of the prophecies many have either overlooked or misunderstood – and that's exactly what's unfolding in the book of Revelation.

We read in Daniel 9:24: "Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness."

This is one of the most fundamental and remarkable prophecies in the entire Bible. Why is it so important?

Because if you study the dates, it takes you to the year 31 AD!

The Crucifixion!

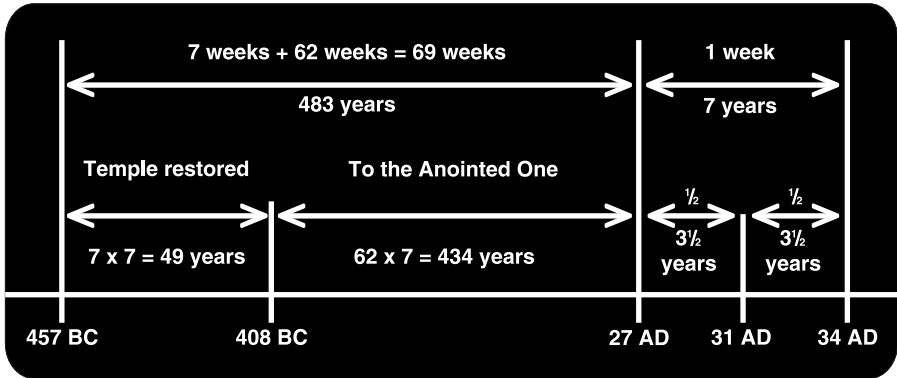
For the sake of forgiveness, that's precisely what happened. Nothing else! Your and my forgiveness. His Blood flowed for your and my sins.

In 457 BC, in the seventh year of his reign, King Artaxerxes issued a decree giving Ezra permission to return to Jerusalem to complete the rebuilding of the city.

(Ezra 7:6-10; 9:9)



in the Bible



Schematic of Daniel's Prophecies

The 70 weeks of Daniel were to begin "from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem." The starting point of 457 BC is irrefutable.

The Commandment: The prophecy in Daniel 9:25 states the period starts "from the going forth of the word to restore and to build Jerusalem."

Gabriel's Revelation: The angel Gabriel appeared to Daniel with the vision of the 70 weeks, a period of 490 years, to be fulfilled.

The Start Date: The most commonly accepted starting point for this prophecy is the year 457 BC, when King Artaxerxes issued his decree to Ezra, allowing the Jews to return and restore Jerusalem.

#34 *Stephen said:*

Remember the 490 years we spoke of? (#6B)

That prophetic window didn't close at Christ's death – it closed three and a half years later, when Israel stoned Stephen.

That moment marked the end of God's covenant period with Israel.

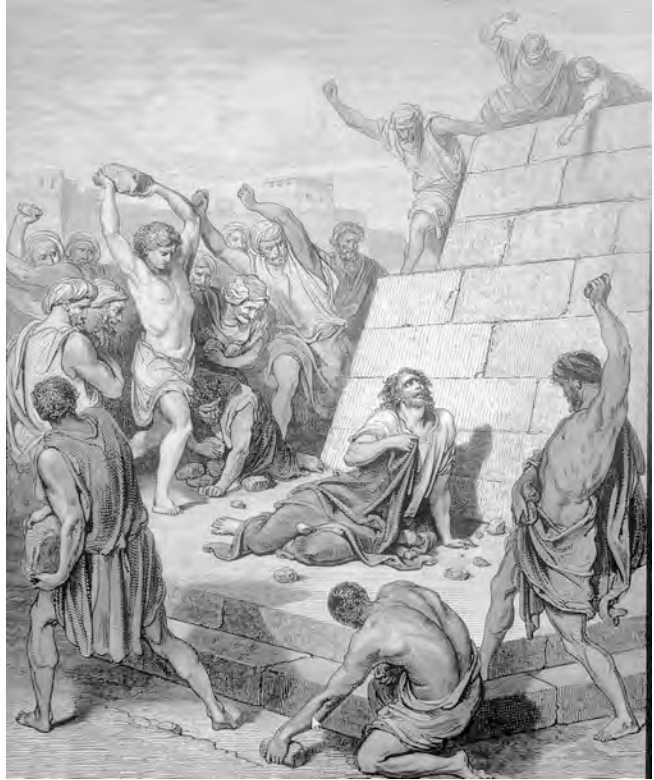
God had given Israel one final chance to repent. He sent His Holy Spirit – not to the nations, but to Israel alone (see Acts 10:47-11:3, 18-19). During that time, the gospel was preached exclusively to the Jews.

- **Stephen's stoning was more than a tragedy – it was a turning point. Israel rejected the Spirit, and the 490-year prophecy reached its end.**

*Lord, do not hold
this sin against them!*

St Stephen
being stoned
to death.

The Martyrdom
of St Stephen,
engraving by
Gustave Doré,
1866.



As stones struck him, Stephen knelt down and prayed: "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." (Acts 7:60) Then he fell asleep.

This echoes Jesus on the Cross – mercy, in the midst of cruelty. Stephen's final breath was forgiveness. His prayer revealed deep faith, compassion, and the power of grace under fire.

#35 Is it really necessary for the Christian to...

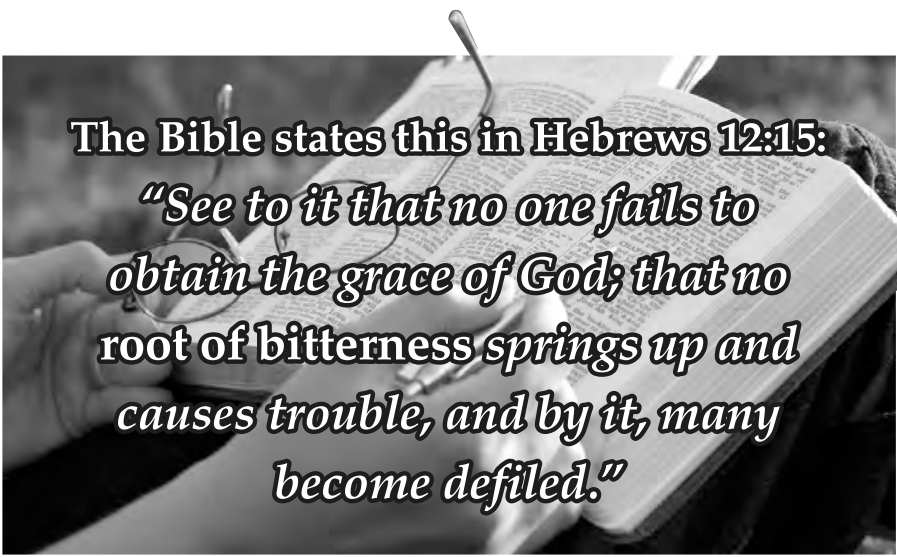
Forgiving others is obedience to the Word.

However, one of the blessings of forgiving others is that we don't grow bitter. Bitterness is an unhealthy character trait; it hurts us far more than the person with whom we have an issue.

Forgiveness is at the very heart of the Gospel.

Colossians 3:13 states: "Bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive."

- We were born sinners against God, but He loved us enough to send Christ, His Son, to die for us.



The Bible states this in Hebrews 12:15:

"See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springs up and causes trouble, and by it, many become defiled."

forgive?

I reiterate Matthew 6:15, which really goes to the core and theme of this book: "But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins."

Put it this way: We are commanded to forgive those who do wrong to us, not just those who are asking for forgiveness, or those who are first-time offenders or whose wrongs seem forgivable. Jesus famously told Peter in Matthew 18 to forgive someone "seventy times seven" times, and He makes the sobering statement that if we do not forgive others, our Father in Heaven will not forgive us

Lord, teach us and help us to forgive!



**"No, not seven times," Jesus replied,
"but seventy times seven."**

*As we release unforgiveness and all the
bitterness and anger that come with it, we are
freed to live and serve with real peace and joy
and to grow in spiritual maturity.*

4

*Will God
forgive me
if I don't
forgive others?*

#3 The Lord's Prayer

Jesus said in Matthew 6:9: "This, then, is how you should pray:", continuing in Matthew 6:12: "And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors."

So, you are not forgiven because you have forgiven someone. You are forgiven as you forgive. **There's a big difference!** Because as you forgive someone their trespasses, then the Heavenly Father will also forgive you.



The Seriousness of Forgiveness:

Forgiveness is not just a moral choice – it's a spiritual necessity. Without it, we risk separation from God and torment within ourselves.

But with it, we find peace, healing and freedom.

Did you know that?

It's so basic, we often overlook it.

“But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” (Matthew 6:15)

Not perhaps. Not maybe . He will not.

Here are three things that might sound extraordinary now, but I believe they'll make more sense as you read on:

- 1 *God desires that every person forgive those who have sinned against them.* Yes, this is absolutely true – and it's central to the gospel Jesus taught in Matthew 6:14–15 (ESV).
- 2 *Refusing to forgive opens the door to evil influence.* An unforgiving heart becomes vulnerable to bitterness, pride, and spiritual darkness. In Ephesians 4:26–27, Paul warns: "Do not let the sun go down on your anger and give no opportunity to the devil." Harboursing resentment gives Satan a foothold in the soul. **Forgiveness is not just emotional – it's spiritual protection.**
- 3 *God hands over the unforgiving to the torturers.* (Matthew 18:21–35). In this parable, Jesus tells of a servant whose master forgave him a massive debt, but he himself refused to forgive someone who owed him a small amount. The master didn't send him to prison – he sent him to the torturers. This symbolises the inner torment of an unforgiving heart: guilt, bitterness, sleeplessness and spiritual unrest. Jesus ends the parable with a warning:

“So also, my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.”

(Matthew 18:35)

#37 *More on the Lord's Prayer and forgiveness*

More from Matthew 18

Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold was brought to him. 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.

At this the servant fell on his knees before him. "Be patient with me," he begged, "and I will pay back everything."

The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go. But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins. He grabbed him and began to choke him. "Pay back what you owe me!" he demanded.

His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, "Be patient with me, and I will pay it back."

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

Then the master called the servant in. "You wicked servant," he said, "I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?"

In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.

This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart.

The Greek word for torture is



This word literally means physical or emotional torture.

However, there are two exceptions to that.

Firstly: There is a window of grace and there is a test period. For example, if your wife leaves you for another man, you surely wouldn't forgive her the following morning, would you? So how long is that window of grace?

Six months, six years, eighty years?

At some point in your life, you must accept that forgiveness has to happen. *The Lord allows that window of grace, and everyone has such a window of grace.*

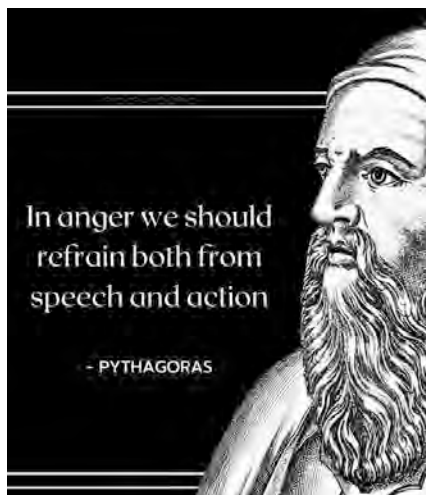
Secondly: There is the season of being a child, and probably 50% of those reading these pages can recall childhood experiences which were maybe not so nice.

- **For some they were bitter and sad, yet we need to be careful about being right, blaming others and thinking we are totally right and everyone else is bad.**

~~#1~~ In anger, refrain from ~~#2~~ speech & action

A neat statement...

But let's be realistic, it's easier said than done! On the very day that I wrote this page, I was approached by a man of 44 years of age who has been married for 23 years. He loves her and their two grown-up sons. She is a clerk at a local church. He has now discovered she is having an affair with a married man from another church.



It's understandable that he's upset with her, and now he's turning to me for guidance on how to handle the situation.

How did I respond to this deeply hurt husband?

The quote from Pythagoras is relevant in such an emotionally charged situation. My advice was that he must forgive, although that will take time, maybe years, and he is not allowed vengeance, although he is ready for that at this time.

- **A real time situation which finds relevance in this book.**

Neither Speech nor Action

**Don't block your blessings
by seeking revenge on
people who wronged you.
Let it go and trust God to
fight all your battles.**

Do not take revenge, my dear friends,
but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "**It is mine to
avenge; I will repay,**" says the Lord. (Romans 12:19)

Charles Spurgeon taught that revenge is incompatible with the Christian spirit and is an act of returning evil for evil, which is described as beast-like and something to be avoided. Instead, he advocated for the opposite: Overcoming evil with good, responding to injuries with kindness and entrusting vengeance to God, as He is the ultimate dispenser of justice.

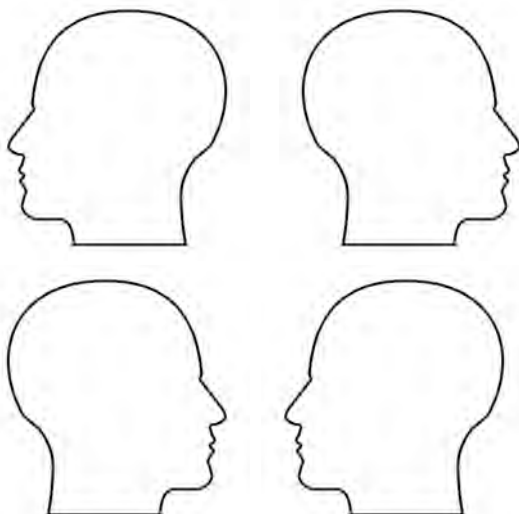
Let God Be the Avenger:

True revenge, in Spurgeon's view, is the work of God, who is just and will ultimately deal with wrongdoing.

- Christians should wait for God's time and not seek personal

Dear Reader
**You would agree that to avenge
yourself is related to having an
unforgiving spirit.**

#39 *What happens if you don't...*



What are the consequences if I refuse to forgive others? Scripture reveals something deeply sobering: if we withhold forgiveness from others, God withholds forgiveness from us.

That truth shook me to the core when I first discovered it.

forgive others?

Have you ever considered how profound this truth really is?

Pause and reflect: what happens when we withhold forgiveness from others?

The consequence is sobering – God withdraws His forgiveness from us.

Yes, truly – He stops forgiving when we refuse to forgive.

This isn't my opinion – it's straight from Jesus Himself. He warns that if we don't forgive, God stops forgiving us.

**Let me remind you again from
Matthew 6:12. You're welcome to read
that verse directly from your Bible – or
simply turn to the next page...**

#4 *A reminder from...*

*And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.*

Now read verse 15: "But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins." (Matthew 6:12-15)

Did you read that?

Do you understand that?

He won't forgive and He can't. He can in HIS MIGHTY POWER, but He won't.

So then – what happens?

If I harden my heart and say, "I will not forgive," what unfolds next?

My sins begin to accumulate in my account, unwashed and unremoved.

And that opens a door!

The enemy gains legal access – permission to enter.

The tormentors are granted the right to invade, to afflict, to torture.

**All because God has stopped forgiveness
and it opens the door for tormentors.**

Matthew 6:12

When we refuse to forgive, we open a legal doorway in the spirit realm.

The tormentors – yes, real spiritual forces – gain rightful access to our lives.

Unforgiveness hands them the key... and they do not hesitate to enter.

Why does torment reach both those who believe and those who do not?

Forgiveness withheld becomes torment unleashed.

What you deny to others, God denies to you.

**Forgiveness withheld
becomes
torment unleashed.**

#4 *What happens if you...*

Pain and problems will affect you:

- | | | |
|---|-------------|---|
| ◆ | Physically | ◆ |
| ◆ | Spiritually | ◆ |
| ◆ | Mentally | ◆ |
| ◆ | Financially | ◆ |
| ◆ | Emotionally | ◆ |

**We don't realise how
powerful this message is!**

The weight of torment deepens as unforgiven sins
silently accumulate, layer upon layer.

The soul's suffering multiplies as unpardoned
transgressions heap one upon another.

don't forgive others?



Your sins stack like a scrap heap – layer upon layer, rusting and rotting, until torment finds its fuel.

So please continue to read carefully what I have to say next, because the words that follow are

**HARD BUT NECESSARY.
HARD BUT NECESSARY.
HARD BUT NECESSARY.
HARD BUT NECESSARY.
HARD BUT NECESSARY.**

#42 The consequences of unforgiveness...

As sins remain unconfessed, the soul's anguish grows, burdened by the weight of mercy refused.

Neither through

- ◆ Prayer
- ◆ Good works
- ◆ Pastoral counseling
- ◆ Medication

can you be relieved.

Only forgiveness can silence the storm—and it must happen in your heart. There is no other refuge.

Because the Lord allowed it and has said it.

Ephesians 4:29

“Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.”

... will not stop

Ephesians 4:30:

“And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”

Ephesians 4:31:

“Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.”

Ephesians 4:32:

“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as Christ God forgave you.”

- * Ignoring these texts develops an attitude of unforgiving, as it develops and grows on itself by injuring the unforgiver.
- * An unforgiving spirit gathers momentum, flowing through stages with a force that feels natural – but leads to destruction.

#43 *A wound that becomes septic...*



An untreated septic wound (representing unforgiveness) harbours infection that spreads and causes great harm to the body.

Similarly, holding onto anger, resentment and bitterness (the emotional infection) can 'poison' a person's mental, emotional and physical well-being. If untreated, the 'infection' of unforgiveness can lead to:

- ♥ Chronic stress and anxiety
- ♥ High blood pressure
- ♥ Depression
- ♥ Impaired immune system function

That is an illustration. In the case of the unforgiving person, they develop negative feelings towards others because of his or her bad attitude and actions.

You get angry, and anger begins to build up in you.

*if not treated,
then...*

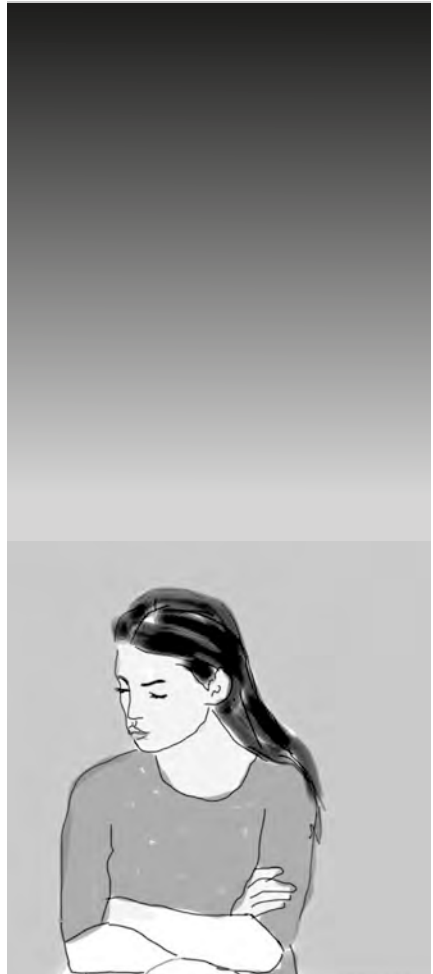
BITTERNESS

We begin to get sharp negative emotions towards the other person. To be hard towards others with a feeling of distrust.

Then slander and defamation is next.

Slander and defamation are harmful acts that involve spreading false statements to damage a person's reputation. Defamation is the overarching legal term.

Slander specifically refers to spoken defamation, the act of spreading these false stories, or the resulting scandal, can cause significant harm. This emanates from the 'septic' example.



5

*Why should I
forgive
the person who
hurt me?*

#44 Dietrich Bonhoeffer's View...



Dietrich Bonhoeffer had the following viewpoints on forgiveness:

Firstly, his understanding of forgiveness is deeply rooted in the life and death of Jesus Christ. **To forgive is to participate in Christ's own suffering and action for others. This is fundamental.**

Then, when an offender refuses to repent, one should release them to God's justice, rather than letting bitterness fester in the heart of those who have been injured.

On Forgiveness

For Bonhoeffer, forgiveness is not merely an action that one performs as a matter of conscience; it accompanies confession in the practice of being-for-others.

Being-for-others is who Christ is, what Christ does and what Christ enables in us.

Bonhoeffer viewed forgiveness as central to Christian life, not as a casual act of *cheap grace*, but as a profound and difficult act of *costly grace* that requires repentance, obedience, and a willingness to suffer for Christ's sake.

Forgiveness, for Bonhoeffer, involves relinquishing one's right to anger and revenge, instead choosing to repay evil with good and thereby sharing in Christ's suffering. He argued that true forgiveness is not self-forgiveness, but a divine gift that must be extended to others, as it is the very heart of true Christian discipleship

**Being-for-others is who Christ is,
what Christ does
and what Christ enables in us.**

A Divine Command and the necessity of forgiving others.



The Christian's Foundation at its core:

Christian forgiveness is a response to the infinite mercy shown by God.

To be a Christian means to embody this same mercy by forgiving others, as God has forgiven us.

A perspective from C S Lewis

C S Lewis stated that for Christians, to forgive the inexcusable in others is to follow God's example of forgiving the inexcusable in us...

a difficult but essential practice for spiritual freedom and a way to reclaim one's life from the past.



Clive Staples Lewis

Born: 29 November 1898, Belfast, United Kingdom

Died: 22 November 1963, Oxford, United Kingdom

#46 Richard Wurmbrand on real life experience...

When I was in jail, I fell very, very ill. At my right hand was a priest by the name of Iscu. He was abbot of a monastery.

This man, perhaps in his forties, had been so tortured he was near to death. But his face was serene. He spoke about his hope of heaven, about his love of Christ, about his faith.

He radiated joy.

On my left side was the Communist torturer who had tortured this priest almost to death. He had been arrested by his own comrades.

I don't believe the newspapers when they say that the Communists only hate Christians or Jews – it's not true. They simply hate. They hate everybody. They hate Jews, they hate Christians, they hate anti-Semites, they hate anti-Christians, they hate everybody. One Communist hates the other Communist. They quarrel among themselves, and when they quarrel one Communist with the other, they put the other one in jail and torture him just like a Christian, and they beat him.

And so it happened that the Communist torturer who had tortured this priest nearly to death had been tortured nearly to death by his comrades. And he was dying near me. His soul was in agony. During the night he would awaken me, saying, "Pastor, please pray for me. I can't die; I have committed such terrible crimes."



Forgiveness, love and death

Then I saw a miracle. I saw the agonised priest calling two other prisoners. And leaning on their shoulders, slowly, slowly he walked past my bed, sat on the bedside of this murderer, and caressed his head – I will never forget this gesture. I watched a murdered man caressing his murderer!

That is love – he found a caress for him.

The priest said to the man, “You are young; you did not know what you were doing. I love you with all my heart.” But he did not just say the words. You can say ‘love’, and it’s just a word of four letters. But he really loved.

“I love you with all my heart.”

Then he went on, “If I, who am a sinner, can love you so much, imagine Christ, who is Love Incarnate, how much He loves you! And all the Christians whom you have tortured, know that they forgive you, they love you, and Christ loves you. He wishes you to be saved much more than you wish to be saved. You wonder if your sins can be forgiven. He wishes to forgive your sins more than you wish your sins to be forgiven. He desires for you to be with Him in heaven much more than you wish to be in heaven with Him. He is Love. You only need to turn to Him and repent.”

The murdered gave forgiveness to his murderer. They prayed together, embraced each other, and the priest went back to his bed. Both men died that same night.

These are things which I have seen with my own eyes.

Richard Wurmbrand

Dietrich Bonhoeffer on #47 Forgiveness

Dietrich Bonhoeffer viewed forgiveness as a costly and suffering act – an expression of costly grace rather than cheap pardon. True forgiveness, for him, requires genuine repentance, confession, and a willingness to face the truth; it is never a superficial absolution that ignores sin or avoids accountability.

Forgiveness is itself a form of suffering, because it means relinquishing one's rightful claims to justice or revenge and entrusting the wound to God.

Yet this costly act opens the way to real reconciliation, rooted in Christ's own reconciling work, where individuals recognise themselves as both justified and sinners who stand equally in need of mercy. In such a community, believers bear one another's burdens, break the cycles of bitterness and practice active, self-giving love.

- **For Bonhoeffer, forgiveness is not merely an inward feeling of relief – it is a transformative, communal restoration that draws people back into truthful, grace-filled fellowship.**



Dietrich Bonhoeffer, born in 1906, was a German Lutheran pastor and an orthodox theologian; known for his writings on Christianity's role in the secular world.

*Bonhoeffer was arrested in April 1943 by the Gestapo and tragically hanged on 9 April 1945 during the collapse of the Nazi regime. His books, particularly **The Cost of Discipleship**, are widely influential in the Christian community.*

Key Aspects of Bonhoeffer's Forgiveness:

- 1 *Suffering and Costly Grace:* Forgiveness isn't easy; it's a painful process of suffering the offence alongside the offender, releasing rightful claims for vengeance in favour of costly, redemptive love.
- 2 *Cheap Grace versus Costly Grace:* He warned against forgiving without requiring repentance, calling it "cheap grace," which justifies sin without the sinner being transformed. True grace leads to discipleship and bearing the cross.
- 3 *Repentance & Reconciliation:* Genuine forgiveness requires confession and repentance from the one who wronged you; without it, reconciliation is blocked, and forgiveness becomes meaningless.
- 4 *Being-for-Others:* Forgiveness is central to Christian life, embodying Christ's presence in us as we become "for others," actively sharing life and suffering with them.

#1 Forgiveness even affects your...

*Holding
a grudge
doesn't make
you stronger.
It makes you
bitter.*



*Forgiving
doesn't make
you weak.
It sets you
free.*

Forgiveness has been shown to offer remarkable benefits for your physical well-being. Research links it to a lower risk of heart attack, healthier cholesterol levels, improved sleep and reduced pain, anxiety, depression and stress.

These health gains become even more pronounced as we grow older. Whether the conflict is a minor disagreement with a partner or a painful situation involving a friend or family member, unresolved tension can run deeper than you realise— sometimes affecting your body just as much as your mind.

**It's Biblical – we need to learn to be
more forgiving!**

Health

The relationship between forgiveness and health is primarily explained by the impact of stress on the body. Chronic anger and hostility put the body into a prolonged 'fight-or-flight' mode, leading to increased cortisol (stress hormone) levels and allostatic load (cumulative physiological wear and tear).

Forgiveness helps to calm these stress levels, allowing the body's systems to return to normal functioning and reducing the associated health risks.

Forgiveness can make you feel and look younger by reducing stress, anger and bitterness, which physically manifest as tension and wrinkles. These milder emotions lead to improved mental health, healthier relationships and a more vital appearance, as holding grudges keeps you stuck in a negative loop.

Letting go frees up energy, promotes emotional healing and allows you to project a more positive, youthful energy.

Forgiveness also eases facial tension. Holding grudges can lead to a tense, drawn facial expression, deep lines, and a 'hard' look; forgiveness promotes softer, more relaxed features. **This makes you look younger and more attractive!**



#49 *Forgiveness from the Lord*

Sinfulness brings pain and suffering, yet the Lord's forgiveness brings relief, comfort, and joy.

We can receive forgiveness for our sins through sincere and complete repentance. Because of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, the promises of the Lord give us this guarantee:

- 1 "Come now, let us settle the matter," says the LORD. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool." Isaiah 1:18
- 2 "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." Matthew 11:29-30



"Whoever conceals his sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy."

Proverbs 28:13 (NIV)

Forgiveness for others

When we seek forgiveness for our own sins, we must be willing to forgive others.

We are to imitate God in this; thus, Jesus gives us an unconditional command in Mark 11:25. In the Bible, forgiveness is also linked to love.

1 Corinthians 13:4-5 reminds us that: "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs."

This text promotes the idea that forgiving is at the heart of genuine Christian love.



"Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father who is in heaven will also forgive you your transgressions." Mark 11:25

#50 *A Stoic perspective on forgiveness...*

**IF SOMEONE BETRAYS OR WRONGS YOU,
REALISE THAT THEY ACTED ACCORDING TO
THEIR PERCEPTION OF WHAT WAS RIGHT.
YOUR ROLE IS TO CHOOSE HOW YOU RESPOND.**

Marcus Aurelius

Forgiveness as a path to inner peace

Forgiveness, according to Stoicism, is not a sign of weakness, but a rational, virtuous response to life's challenges. By letting go of anger and resentment, you free yourself from emotional turmoil, regain control of your inner world and foster personal growth.

Whether you are forgiving others or yourself, Stoic principles provide a clear and actionable guide to finding peace, happiness and resilience. By incorporating these Stoic practices into your life, you can cultivate forgiveness as a regular habit, leading to a calmer, more centered existence.

"You have power over your mind – not outside events. Realise this, and you will find strength." Marcus Aurelius

**Marcus Aurelius (121-180)
Roman Emperor and Philosopher**



from Marcus Aurelius

Let Go of Resentment: Forgiveness in Stoicism is rooted in the belief that we cannot control others' actions, only our own responses. The Stoics taught that holding onto resentment or anger harms our peace of heart and disrupts the rational flow of life. To forgive is to let go of negative emotions that weigh us down and to regain a sense of peace by focusing on what truly matters.

Judgment is subservient to compassion: In Stoicism, forgiveness begins with understanding human nature. The Stoics believed that people are often driven by ignorance, irrationality or misguided beliefs. Rather than judging or condemning others, we should cultivate compassion and recognise that mistakes are part of the human experience.

Forgiveness as a Form of Self-Control: One of the core tenets of Stoicism is the observation of two versions of mental control – the idea that we can control our thoughts, actions and reactions, but not external events or the behaviour of others. In the context of forgiveness, this means choosing to release negative emotions and not allowing someone else's actions to dictate our emotional state.

Forgiveness Releases You from a Burden: The Stoics emphasised the importance of living a tranquil life, free from unnecessary emotional turmoil. Holding onto grudges, anger or a desire for revenge, only creates inner conflict and hinders personal growth. By practicing forgiveness, you release yourself from these burdens and regain emotional freedom.

#How much better #51 to heal...

“Let’s be kind to one another.”

Seneca wrote, “Let’s be kind to one another. We’re just wicked people living among wicked people. Only one thing can give us peace, and that’s a pact of mutual leniency.”

What Seneca understood better than the other Stoics, was forgiveness and tolerance. Seneca highlights the strength found in forgiveness and restoration.

**Revenge consumes energy and perpetuates harm,
while healing fosters peace and growth.**

His insight promotes emotional maturity and the wisdom of choosing resolution over retaliation.



Forgive to Be Forgiven: Seneca connects forgiving others with receiving forgiveness oneself, suggesting a reciprocal need for grace,

***Lucius Annaeus Seneca the Younger,
4 BC – AD 65, Roman statesman,
philosopher and dramatist***

*... than seek revenge
from injury*



Rembrandt van Rijn: *Return of the Prodigal Son* (1661–69)

This painting by Rembrandt, considered one of the great masterpieces of European art, reveals an image of profound forgiveness: the Gospel account of the return of the prodigal son, told by Jesus, the Master Storyteller.

The parable of the Prodigal Son is found in the Bible, specifically in Luke 15:11–32.

*How much better to heal than seek
revenge from injury*

#32 Carnegie viewed forgiveness as...



Dale Carnegie

saw forgiveness as a powerful, mature skill for better human interaction and personal peace, rooted in empathy and self-mastery.

Carnegie viewed forgiveness as a mark of high character, requiring self-control and understanding rather than criticism.

He emphasised that understanding people's motives fosters sympathy and tolerance. Ultimately, letting go of grudges benefits oneself by freeing emotional energy, aligning with his principle that one should focus on human relations, not condemnation.

*a mark of
high character*



"SOMEWHERE
BEYOND RIGHT AND
WRONG, THERE IS A
GARDEN. I WILL MEET
YOU THERE."
– RUMI

Being less critical #53 and...

There are **six principles** laid out by Dale Carnegie for building strong relationships.

These principles include:

- 1 Showing genuine interest in others,
- 2 smiling,
- 3 remembering names,
- 4 being a good listener,
- 5 being sincere, and
- 6 avoiding arguments.

WHENEVER YOU ARE ABOUT TO
FIND FAULT WITH SOMEONE,
ASK YOURSELF THE FOLLOWING
QUESTION: WHAT FAULT OF
MINE MOST NEARLY
RESEMBLES THE ONE
I AM ABOUT TO
CRITICISE?



MARCUS AURELIUS

more forgiving

Dale Carnegie's famous first principle, **Don't Criticize, Condemn or Complain**, from *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, emphasises that these negative actions promote pride, breed resentment and destroy relationships.

Yet by choosing **forgiveness, understanding and empathy**, we build trust and open communication instead. This leads to a positive approach when dealing with people we meet and communicate with.

Rather than resorting to the Blame Game, Carnegie suggests focusing on solving problems, showing appreciation and understanding others' perspectives to create connection, not conflict...



The three **Cs** are simple yet powerful, made popular by Dale Carnegie.

They aren't complicated or unique, but they do require conscious and consistent effort:

Don't Criticise
Don't Condemn
Don't Complain

6

*How to
let things
go*

#54 It is nobler to forgive...

Forgiving and letting go of an offence is the nobler choice. Holding onto hurt and plotting revenge only keeps old wounds fresh and creates new pain. It's far better to forget the wrongs and offer forgiveness – freeing yourself to heal and move forward with peace

As someone who has attended church all my life, I have sadly witnessed many people neglecting to attend the house of the Lord. Some leave for another church they believe is better, while others stop going altogether, often because of personal struggles. Even more heartbreaking, many may never be in a church again until they are carried in by the funeral undertaker.

Often, it's clear that these individuals are struggling with sin and shy away from the necessary confrontations with elders or pastors. In those moments, pride sneaks in, and the ego takes control.

Unfortunately, the church often ends up being blamed for their withdrawal.

This cycle reminds us how important it is to create loving, supportive communities where people feel safe to face their struggles and find restoration rather than judgement.



To err is human, to forgive divine - Alexander Pope

and let the offence pass

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

"Against such, there is no law. And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." Galatians 5:19-25 NKJV



"To be a Christian means to: forgive the inexcusable, because God has forgiven the inexcusable in you."

C S Lewis

**That means
you and I!**

#5 *Peace* *in your life...*



Do you lack Peace in your Heart?

If you're reading this book and you feel restless or unsettled in your heart and life, I encourage you to keep going. There's hope and understanding ahead that might just bring the peace you're searching for

That hope is finding peace in your life by forgiving others – and forgiving yourself, too.

This simple truth can transform your heart and bring the calm and peace of God into your heart.

through forgiving others

Bitterness and an unforgiving heart create a dangerous cycle. When bitterness grows from refusing to forgive, it can trap you in endless pain, making it even harder to forgive. Bitterness kills the kindness in your heart – turning it caustic, sarcastic, condemning and harsh. It haunts you with memories of what you refuse to let go, clouding your perspective and distorting the way you see life.

- **Breaking free from this cycle means choosing forgiveness – not just for others, but to restore your own peace and clarity.**



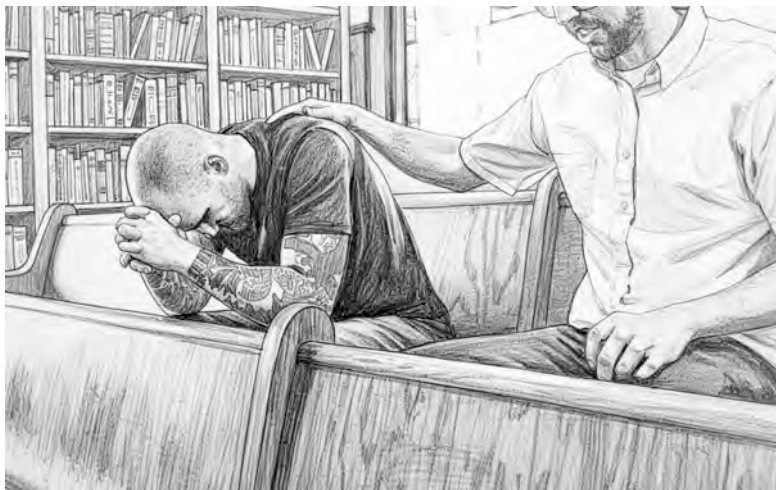
The most valuable math you can learn, is how to calculate the future cost of your current decisions.

Think about that!

#58 *Forgive quickly and...*

- a) **Decide right now to obey God** and resist the Devil's attempts to poison you with his bitter thoughts and suggestions. When you have decided to forgive, God will heal you from all bitterness. (Matthew 6:14)
- b) **As a believer, you need to depend on the power of the Holy Spirit**, go down on your knees and ask for His power, so you can forgive those who have hurt you. When Jesus breathed on the Disciples, He said in John 20:22 "Receive the Holy Spirit."
- c) **Romans 12:14 says: "Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them."** In the Greek *to bless* means: 'to speak well of' and *to curse* means 'to speak evil of'. You can't walk in forgiveness and be a gossip; you must stop talking about the offence and forgive.

take a few steps to forgiveness



Whom do I forgive?

Forgiveness begins with recognising that God loves you deeply, even when there are things you don't fully understand.

Sometimes, people make serious mistakes, because they haven't accepted the help of the Holy Spirit – the true source of healing and strength.

Being unforgiving can be seen as a kind of spiritual impurity, a heaviness that clings to the heart. But when you allow God's Word to cleanse and renew you, it's like being washed with pure water and forgiveness becomes possible. This cleansing not only helps you release those who have hurt you, but also keeps your own heart pure and at peace – with God and with others.

- **Forgiving isn't just an act toward someone else; it's a powerful step toward keeping your own spirit healthy and whole.**

#57 It is God's work to enact revenge



Do you think the Lord will take revenge on people that are deliberately evil?

Of course He will!

"When I sharpen my flashing sword and my hand grasps it in judgment; I will take vengeance on my adversaries and repay those who hate me."

Deuteronomy 32:41

"Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord."

Romans 12:19

Revenge

is not your or my work!

“If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.”

Romans 12:20

What does Romans 12:20 mean?

This verse calls us to do the opposite of revenge: “If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink.”

Why?

Because kindness disarms evil. It heaps burning conviction on the conscience of the wrongdoer. It’s not weakness – it’s spiritual warfare.

Paul’s point: Don’t ignore your enemies. Don’t retaliate. Instead, actively show mercy. Let God handle justice. You handle grace.

Hard? Yes. Holy? Absolutely.

- This is how Christ overcame evil – with love that pierced through hate.

#58 So, what does the next...

Well, let's see what David had to say:

"See, my father, look at this piece of your robe in my hand! I cut off the corner of your robe but did not kill you. See that there is nothing in my hand to indicate that I am guilty of wrongdoing or rebellion. I have not wronged you, but you are hunting me down to take my life."

1 Samuel 24:11

David cuts a corner from Saul's robe when he was hiding at En Gedi.



text verse have to say?



En Gedi – David hid there under a rock

After Saul returned from pursuing the Philistines, he was told, “Look! David is in the Wilderness of En Gedi.” (1 Samuel 24:1)

Though David had the chance to kill Saul, he chose mercy.

As Romans 12:21 reminds us: “Do not be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good.”

David’s restraint was a powerful example of godly character triumphing over vengeance.

#59 We are still talking about...

David stood in the cave with power in his hand – but chose restraint.

May the LORD judge between you and me... but my hand will not touch you. 1 Samuel 24:12

He could have avenged himself, but he didn't. He let God be the Judge. David's heart feared God more than it craved revenge. He refused to repay evil with evil. He chose trust over retaliation – faith over fury.

*"My hand will not touch you...
the LORD will avenge."* 1 Samuel 24:12

How does this apply to us?

Yes, we get hurt – and though we don't strike with fists, we do strike with words, gossip, or slander. That's still revenge.

**Leave it to
the Lord.**

REVENGE

“Lord Almighty, You who examine the righteous and probe the heart and mind, let me see your vengeance on them, for to you I have committed my cause.” Jeremiah 20:12

Here’s Jeremiah, crying out with raw honesty: “Let me see Your vengeance on them, Lord.”

He longed to witness at first hand how God would bring justice to those who wronged him. It was a plea not just for retribution, but for reassurance – that the Lord sees, knows, and acts.

And the same from Samuel (addressing David):

“May the LORD be our judge and decide between us. May he consider my cause and uphold it; may he vindicate me by delivering me from your hand.” 1 Samuel 24:15



When people forgive one another, it may...



Dear reader, before you begin reading this page, remember that God has forgiven you more times than you could ever forgive someone else. His grace reaches farther than our mistakes, His mercy rises higher than our guilt, and His patience endures long after our own wears thin.

Let this truth settle in your heart as you read on – not as a burden, but as a reminder of the love that continually restores, renews and invites us to forgive others with the same compassion we’ve been shown.

- **But if you hold on to the transgression like a trump card and play it every chance you get, you can be sure that unforgiveness is still present. This goes against Jesus’ command to forgive *seventy times seven times*.**



require a time of ✱ *healing* ✱

Obviously, forgiveness is not sweeping things under the carpet and saying what the other person did or said was OK, when it's not OK.

Depending on the situation, forgiveness is not necessarily forgetting what happened, and may require a time of healing.

Coupled with a time of healing is **Trust**, and this is a part of future behaviour. This will also take time!

Trust and forgiveness then are coupled with mercy.

The Christian must forgive others immediately, even though the healing may take time.

**The components then are:
Forgiveness + Trust + Mercy + Healing.**



#61 *So how do we forgive?*

I'm quite sure when writing a book like this one, the whole matter of forgiveness could appear theoretical, and if one is not careful the book can finally end up forgotten on a dusty bookshelf.

So, forget about theory. How do we forgive someone, **in real terms and in a practical sense**, when maybe that person has hurt us deeply?

As Christians we must understand that forgiving others from our own strength, in the same way we have been forgiven by God, is simply impossible.



Yet the Christian faith tells us with God nothing is impossible and having the Holy Spirit in our hearts we can be guided in a holy process that leads to true forgiveness.

So, there are steps we can take that will help us truly forgive and find Godly freedom in our lives, thereby guarding against stagnation and the bitter roots that Hebrews warns us about.

Forgiveness > Trust > Mercy > Healing

It's a process we need to follow

- 1 Remember that God forgave you! In my personal life I remind myself that God forgave me. If I have been forgiven so much, how then can I hold grievances against another soul? I am personally humbled as I write that statement.
- 2 Remember Jesus' words in the Lord's prayer: "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." Those words remind us to force our emotions to catch up with what God commands us to do.
- 3 Perhaps for many of us the process of forgiveness will be uncomfortable, but the peace it will give will be worth the effort in the end.
- 4 Don't allow yourself to keep replaying the offence over and over in your head. The devil is a master at getting a foothold when the pain is still sensitive, even when we have made the choice to forgive.
- 5 Maybe your heart is a bit hardened, and you don't want to do this, yet Jesus said in Matthew 5:44: "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." Not easy! Yet as we ask God to reveal His love to your offender in your heart, and for Him to dissolve any negative emotions you may have; you will be blessed with that peace which passes all understanding.

*"And the peace of God, which surpasses
all understanding, will guard your
hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."*

Philippians 4:7

Steps to forgiveness by being honest with yourself

Forgiveness involves setting aside your right to anger and retribution.

We need to trust God to be the ultimate judge and justice-maker. The Word says in Romans 12:9:
“Vengeance is mine. I will repay, saith the Lord.”

This verse warns against seeking personal revenge and emphasises leaving vengeance to God.

- For further understanding, it is often interpreted as a reminder of God’s justice and authority over retribution.



“Vengeance is Mine.”

Pour out your hurt and anger to God

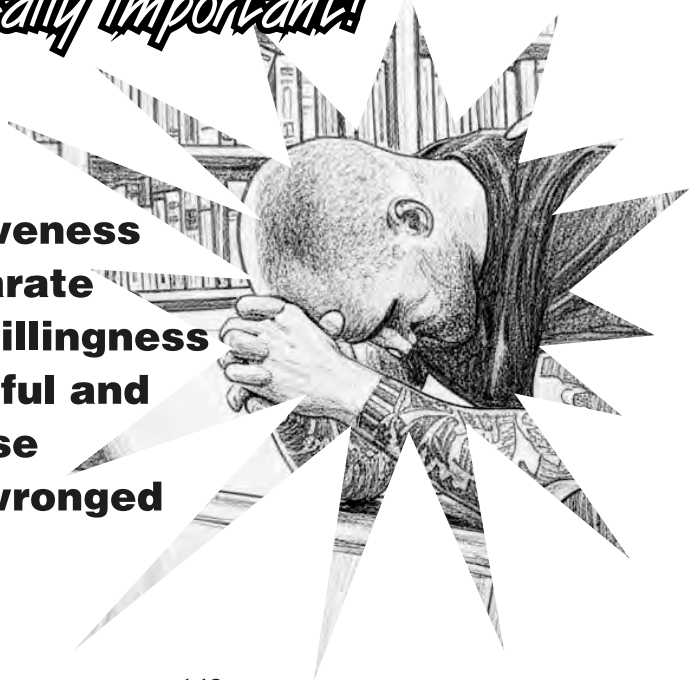
Matthew 6:14-15 suggests that while God's forgiveness is freely given, its full effect is conditional on our own willingness to extend the same forgiveness to others.

A few points:

- ✓ Holding onto bitterness and unforgiveness is seen as a serious sin that can break your fellowship with God.
- ✓ If you are struggling to forgive, the advice is to confess this struggle to God and to ask for His help, as He can work through this to help you move forward.

Fundamentally Important!

**God's forgiveness
is not separate
from our willingness
to be merciful and
forgive those
who have wronged
us.**



7

*What happens
when I don't
forgive?*

#03 *How to find peace in your life...*

*Holding a grudge is like drinking poison
and waiting for the other person to die.*

Although the exact origins of this saying are not definitively documented; the sentiment reflects a popular theme in various psychological, philosophical and spiritual teachings about the detrimental effects of holding onto anger and resentment.



"Grounding yourself in the present moment is key to true forgiveness. Remaining in the *Now* makes the past powerless and allows you to let go of stories and grievances that keep you trapped in a false sense of self."- Eckhart Tolle: *The Power of NOW*

Eckhart Tolle (born: 16 February 1948, Lunen, Germany) is a German-born spiritual teacher and self-help author. His books include The Power of Now: A Guide to Spiritual Enlightenment, A New Earth: Awakening to Your Life's Purpose.

by forgiving others

POISON



Some poisons are poisonous for real, but not toxic enough to kill instantly, like alcohol and cigarettes. But that's not our subject. We are talking about

SPIRITUAL DEATH

#64 Grudges and...

This is where marriages fall apart as a result of resentment and grudges towards the other partner.



How Grudges unravel a Marriage

Unforgiveness builds silent walls – slowly, quietly, almost invisibly.

Grudges choke intimacy, breeding bitterness and fueling a cycle of blame that corrodes even the smallest moments of intimacy. Trust begins to fade, affection dies away and conversations that once felt effortless start to feel heavy and dangerous. Over time, the relationship grows strained, distant and emotionally unsafe. And if resentment is left to grow unchecked, hearts drift so far apart that the bond itself begins to crack... until one day there's nothing left holding the marriage together.

Unforgiveness causes Resentment



Active resentment

Grudges and resentment

Feeling offended

Nourishing a grudge slowly poisons the heart. Resentment grows when we feel offended, overlooked or hurt, and instead of healing, we feed the wound.

Over time, the person who hurt us becomes someone we view almost as an enemy. We begin intensely to despise them – avoiding their presence, refusing to speak their name and feeling a surge of anger the moment someone else mentions them.

- **This quiet, consuming hostility doesn't just distance us from the other person; it corrodes our own peace, shaping our thoughts and reactions in ways we barely notice, until the bitterness has taken root.**

#63 *Vengeance.* *This is where...*

And this is the action part where things happen in life. It's the stories we read on social media or see in the TV news. That desire to avenge and have a day of reckoning and to reduce the standing of the one you resent, to give him or her pain.

You wish in your heart the worst can happen to them. You wish they will die, or that they should kill themselves.

Matthew 6:14 says: "For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you."

Let's look at why this does not happen.

Because your heart has been totally poisoned, it resulted in the following:

unforgiveness morphs
into **Action**

**Negative feelings have developed into
ANGER.**

**Anger has resulted in
BITTERNESS.**

**Bitterness has become
slandering and cherishing of
GRUDGES.**

**Grudges become
HATE.**

**And, in the end, a total
POISONING OF THE HEART.**



*Did you forgive
your wife
this morning?*

*If not, go and
do it now!*



#00 Love is integrated
with a space...

Between stimulus and
response there is a space.
In that space is our power
to choose our response. In
our response lies our
growth and our freedom.

Viktor E. Frankl

That space between stimulus and response gives us an opportunity to choose how to react to a stimulus.

This quotation is attributed to Viktor Frankl, the author of *Man's Search for Meaning*. It means that people have the freedom to choose how they react to external events, and that this choice is where personal growth and liberation are found.

- **The quote's precise origin is not fully known, and I wonder if it inspired Dr Wayne Dyer with his popular expression "You get to choose."**

to respond and forgive

"We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love each other. Anyone who does not love remains in death. Anyone who hates a brother or sister is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life residing in him."

1 John 3:13-15

"One day, after Moses had grown up, he went out to where his own people were and watched them at their hard labor. He saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his own people. Looking this way and that and seeing no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand."

Exodus2:11-12

Moses did not forgive
the Egyptian.
He killed him, despite
the space between
stimulus and response
that is given to all
people.



#67 The Apostle Paul did not...

In 2 Timothy 4:14, Paul writes, “Alexander the metal-worker did me a great deal of harm. The Lord will repay him for what he has done.”

And just two verses later, he shares a moment of deep vulnerability: “At my first defence, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them.” (2 Timothy 4:16)



So, what do we take from this, dear reader?

In this verse lies a profound lesson for every believer and born-again Christian. **It's not easy – but it's essential.** When wronged, abandoned or mistreated, we're called to respond not with retaliation, but with trust in divine justice.

As 1 Peter 2:23 reminds us: “When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to Him who judges justly.”

This is our calling: to entrust our pain to the One who sees all and judges rightly.

find revenge necessary.

Yes, there is hope for the believer!

Take encouragement and strength from these inspired words from the prophet Ezekiel 11:19:

“I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh.”

**This is the answer –
transformation from
within.**

May the Lord strengthen you, dear reader, as we continue into the last part of this profound journey through forgiveness – a path marked by grace, surrender, and healing. Let's press on with open hearts and expectant faith.



Like a seed planted, unforgiveness grows...

When a seed is planted...



When a seed is planted, it takes root and begins to grow. In the same way, unforgiveness does not simply disappear because we start doing pious things. No number of sermons heard, church services attended, offerings given or good deeds performed can purify a heart that clings to bitterness.

True change must happen in our attitude. Like a seed left in the soil, unforgiveness will continue to grow, unless we deal with it. If I choose to hold on to it, that choice is mine – it is a seed I have planted.

- **So, I stand at a crossroads: I can remain unforgiving and resentful, turning away from the person I refuse to forgive. But in the end, the damage falls on me, because unforgiveness always harms the one who carries it.**

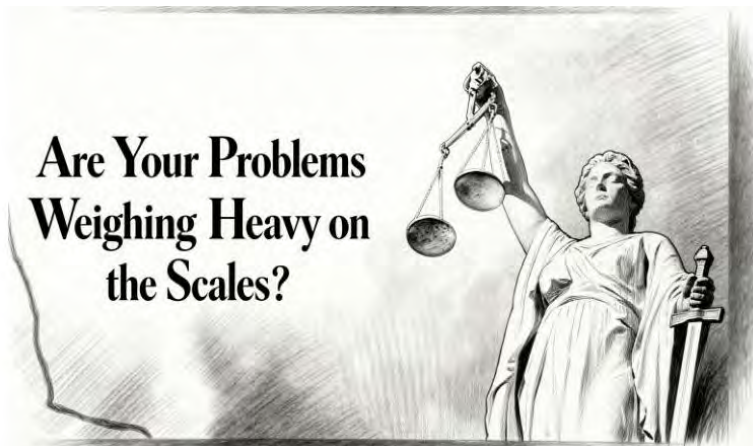
*heavier and
heavier.*

When someone holds on to an unforgiving spirit, it becomes a heavy burden.

Each time we feel wronged, we carry that weight with us – but it is a weight God never meant for us to bear.

But here's some good news: the Word says in Matthew 11:28: "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest."

- **So, if I come to Jesus, He will unshackle my unforgiving spirit and relieve my bitterness and resentful feelings toward that person.**



#69 *The danger of unforgiveness...*



Yes, I have said lots here about Forgiveness, but what about Unforgiveness?

If the option to forgive seems too painful, consider that the alternative – not forgiving – will bring you infinitely more pain.

Unforgiveness creates a barrier in your relationship with others and with God; it can lead to depression, burnout, physical ailments, broken relationships and bitterness.

God commands us to forgive others, because He loves us.

He wants you to experience the immense freedom and joy that come from forgiving, instead of the pain and bitterness that unforgiveness brings.

and its consequences.

One **Unforgiveness poisons the heart with bitterness.** Bitterness springs from the refusal to forgive, and it spreads like an infection that touches every part of your life. Anger begins to rise within, and soon it can spiral out of control.

Two **Unforgiveness chains you to the past.** It keeps the pain alive, replaying the offence and the offender over, and over again. Think carefully, what benefit is there in suffering endlessly? By refusing to forgive, you allow that person or offence to continue hurting you for the rest of your life.

Three **Unforgiveness opens the door for evil influence.** The foothold Satan gains in our lives can often be associated with our unwillingness to forgive.

Four **Jesus made it plain:** “When you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.” (Mark 11:25). If we refuse to forgive others, our heavenly Father will not forgive us.

#7 Is confession necessary for forgiveness?



“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”

1 John 1:9

Confession of sin will help to keep us from the discipline of the Lord. If we fail to confess sin, the discipline of the Lord is sure to come until we do confess it.



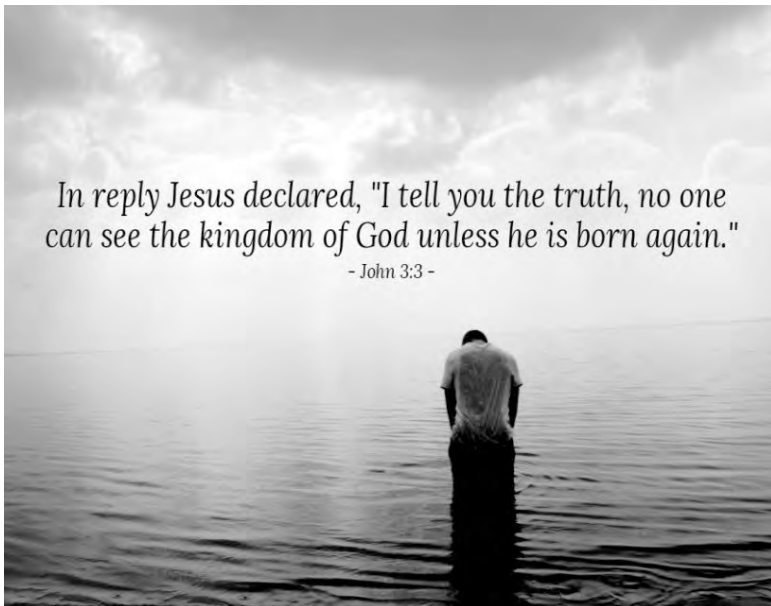
How do you read this text from John?

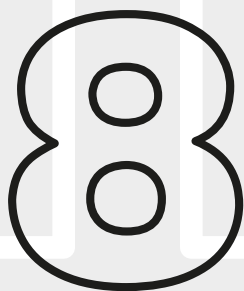
It seems quite clear to me! Our sins are forgiven at salvation when we are born again as children of God. It's about our legal standing before God – we become children of God.

The bottom line of Biblical forgiveness

Then our daily confessions are the ongoing process of confessing sins to maintain a close fellowship with God and His forgiveness. Proper fellowship with God cannot happen with unconfessed sin in our lives.

- **Therefore, we need to confess our sins to God as soon as we are aware that we have sinned, in order to maintain a close fellowship with God.**





*People don't
forgive
easily*

#7 The little matter of False Forgiveness

False forgiveness, or pseudo-forgiveness, is when someone pretends to forgive by mouthing the words, but doesn't genuinely release resentment, often keeping anger, mistrust or a sense of superiority hidden. It can be temporary, conditional or used as a power play, rather than a true emotional release for peace.

It often manifests as superficial 'letting go', passive aggression or 'keeping score', harming relationships by preventing real healing and keeping past hurts alive.



"Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift." (Matthew 5: 23-24)



Best friends can disagree, which can lead to unpleasant results. So even in such cases best friends may need to learn about forgiveness.

- So, what we have been saying so far is what forgiveness is. Real forgiveness in the life of the Christian imitates what God did for us. He took the first step, forgiving us freely and totally, even while we were unforgiven sinners destined to die.

What forgiveness isn't.

So, if you want to understand what forgiveness is, you will also need to know what forgiveness is not.

Forgiveness isn't waiting for the guilty party to come and apologise.

Forgiveness isn't pretending that you didn't get hurt by someone.

Forgiveness isn't a feeling; Forgiveness always starts with a decision.

Forgiveness doesn't erase consequences.

False forgiveness is no forgiveness at all.

So, think deeply what it is and about the implications for your situation, and then what forgiveness is not. Then put it into real life practice.

Speak: Speak to God about that person you need to forgive. If you didn't, it's because you had not realised the importance and implications of forgiveness.

Pray: Ask God to help you make forgiveness a daily habit in your Christian life.

Then: How completely did you forgive? Do you feel the blessing and the peace?

#72 People don't forgive easily 1

As Jesus hung on the Cross, wracked with pain and anguish, He still spoke words of compassion and love:

"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do."

Luke 23:34

In the very agony of the Cross, He asked forgiveness for those who crucified Him. In that moment, His words revealed the very essence of forgiveness – a powerful witness of divine love and humanity shining through unimaginable pain and suffering.

So why don't we forgive readily? Please check the next five justifications.

Justification #1

To reconnect with these people isn't even safe, or feasible! It's unreasonable for me to be expected to engage in a conversation with them. I'm sweating already!



Why not?

Justification #2

That person hasn't shown any remorse, and they haven't even recognised the harm they have caused me and my family. So, I'm sure you understand why I don't intend to forgive.



People are often unreasonable and self-centred. Forgive them anyway. If you are kind, people may accuse you of ulterior motives. Be kind anyway. If you are honest, people may cheat you. Be honest anyway. If you find happiness, people may be jealous. Be happy anyway.

The good you do today, may be forgotten tomorrow. Do good anyway. Give the world the best you have and it may never be enough. Give your best anyway.

For, you see, in the end, it is between you and God. It was never between you and them anyway.

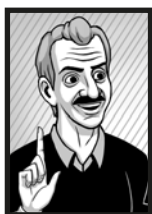
Mother Theresa of Calcutta



#73 People don't forgive easily 2

Justification #3

It feels easier to avoid this person than to build a new way of relating. By staying away, I protect myself from further harm or unnecessary conflict. After all, toxic people often play the victim in problems they themselves created – and it is wiser to keep a distance.



It is wise to avoid toxic people, and we are not obliged to associate with them. Yet for your own peace of mind, you must forgive them in your heart.

Justification #4

I feel that I'm justified in holding onto resentment. That approach gives me a fragile sense of control in the midst of a situation that feels profoundly unjust.



Why not?

Justification #5

What are you saying? I see no positive outcome in this relationship, so forgiveness is not possible right now. Anyway, I'm sure you would understand that I'm afraid the hurtful actions will happen again.



Justification #6

Forgiving feels like it might give some people false hope that I want to rebuild the relationship when I don't.



“Father, forgive them,
for they do not know
what they do.”

#74 People don't forgive easily 3

Justification #7

I'm angry and I find it hard to forgive when I'm still harbouring intense hostility towards the person who hurt me.



A personal testimony

I forgive him now, but I'm so saddened that I can't tell him that.

The person who hurt me has passed on, and I didn't want to forgive him, now I feel pain because it's too late and I can't speak to him anymore.

Justification #8

Forgiving someone who has hurt you requires faith – faith that God will bring healing as you forgive. But then the question arises: how can you strengthen that faith?



By prayerfully studying the Bible!

Why not?

Justification #9

How must I answer this one? I'm still involved in a very difficult and challenging situation that has no possible resolution in the foreseeable future!



My response is to hold on, keep speaking to the Lord, and make sure my conduct remains upright. By being part of a sound Bible-based church, I find counsel and strength. Beyond that, I entrust the matter fully into God's hands.

Justification #10

It is natural to struggle with forgiveness, for we are human and not divine. Yet the more we justify our refusal to forgive, the harder forgiveness becomes.



#75 People don't forgive easily 4

Justification #11

A born-again child of God will forgive, where unbelievers struggle to do so. Do not wish forgiveness to be easier; instead, seek God's help through prayer and rely on the power of the Holy Spirit.

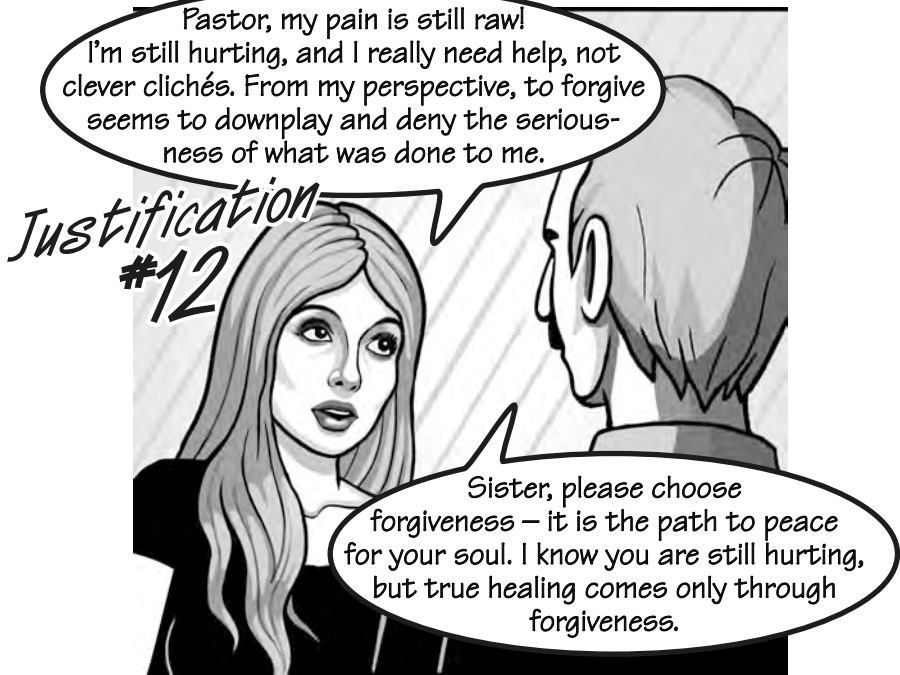


In this section of five pages, I have asked the question *Why don't people forgive easily?* As born-again believers, members of a true Bible-based church, we live under holy orders.

We are not called to follow what feels human, natural, or easy. We are commanded to walk in the footsteps of our Saviour."

**“Father, forgive them,
for they do not know
what they do.”**

Why not?



Forgiveness without apology: Jesus forgives even before His executioners acknowledge their guilt. This shows forgiveness is rooted in divine compassion, not human feelings.

Ignorance and misunderstanding: His words recognise that sin often flows from blindness or lack of understanding – yet He still extends mercy.

Model for believers: This sets the pattern for us – forgiveness does not depend on the offender's repentance, but on our willingness to reflect Christ's love.

#78 People don't forgive easily 5

Justification #13



The pain I have endured has reshaped my life completely. Yet it seems no one truly understands nor acknowledges the injustice I have suffered.

Listening is a vital trait! In times of hurt, true Christian, born-again friends will counsel and support you. You will find the guidance and healing you need to recover in a sound Bible-based church.



Why not?

Justification #14



What my best friend did to me is totally irreversible! Surely you will agree – forgiveness feels pointless when the wrong cannot be undone.

Take a moment to look back over the last five pages. Which of these reasons echo your own life? Can you see yourself in any of these struggles? Have you ever faced a situation where it was hard to admit:

‘I don’t forgive easily’?



#7 *In conclusion: Is forgiveness required for...*



Make no mistake, forgiveness may not always be a quick decision, and it may not always be easy, and it's certainly not a question of a quick way "to get right with God".

Forgiveness is...

It's part of overcoming sin; it's responding to Jesus's death on the cross and the forgiveness He gave us at Calvary. It's about yielding to God and obeying Him in every way; it's about becoming part of the body of Christ, His church. It's about being called by Jesus to respond to His forgiveness.

Yes, it's true that forgiveness is a conscious action by the forgiver. **Yet we must remember that true forgiveness is an act of obedience for the believer, as the power and motivation to genuinely forgive, especially in difficult situations, come from the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.**

As Jesus makes it clear: "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws them, and I will raise them up at the last day."
(John 6:44)

Salvation?

Therefore, in concluding these pages on the Forgiven, I underline the irrefutable truth that God, through Jesus, knows of no other way to forgive and save a sinner than by Jesus's sacrifice at the cross of Calvary.

Sadly, should the lost soul refuse to accept and receive Almighty God's free offer of forgiveness, they are by default choosing everlasting outer darkness.

So, as I conclude this elementary series of messages on forgiveness, I can only say they have barely touched the surface of the deep truths of the forgiveness we have found in Christ.

- **I end this short book then with the prayer that it may stimulate the understanding of the reader to search the unfathomable depths that we find and discover in His Truths and Word.**



Lastly, I trust and pray that after reading these texts, Almighty God will open your eyes to what the Biblical truth about forgiveness can mean for your life and salvation.

March 2026

George Ross

“Father,
forgive them,

for they do not know
what they do.”

"And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins."

Mark 11:25 NIV

"Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven."

Luke 6:37 NIV



These words of Jesus on the Cross are one of the greatest lessons of forgiveness.

In other words: Meet hatred with love.

Use the QR code to
visit our website.

