

# Source night

## Topic- Forgiveness

Forgiveness begins with an acceptance that right and wrong exist. When we sin, we need to repent 1 Jn 1:9  
 The major theme of the whole Bible is God restoring a fallen people. Genesis 3:15,

### What is forgiveness?

1. Cancelling a debt owed. Luke 11:4, Colossians 2:14
2. A gift, unearned. Total grace. Ephesians 1:7
3. Turning from revenge Romans 12:19
4. An going process, cannot forgive then go back and dig up what is forgiven! Isaiah 43:25 Psalm 103:12
5. Wanting good for offender Luke 6:27-31



### Forgiveness from God

God is a forgiving God. Part of his character. Exodus 34:6-7, Psalm 86:5 Daniel 9:9, Micah 7:18-19  
 Jesus showed forgiveness Luke 23:34

### In Old Testament times

The word Forgive is not a Hebrew word. There are several words used;

1. *Salach* Pardon Exodus 34:8-9 Psalm 103:3
2. *Kipper* Atonement Leviticus 4:20 19:22
3. *Nasa* To lift up, to carry, to take Genesis 32:20 Exodus 34:7 Sin is seen as a burden to be lifted  
 Leviticus 16:22 In forgiveness the weight is removed

In OT times, sacrifices were part of the forgiveness process (Leviticus ch 4-6).

But God couldn't easily be 'bought off' Amos 4:4 Psalm 51:16-17 God required a heart repentance  
 Abraham found forgiveness through faith before the Law was given Galatians 3:6-9

### Post Jesus

The death of Jesus is the sacrifice for our sins, and the source of our forgiveness. Matthew 26:28  
 Repentance comes before forgiveness Acts 3:19 1 John 1:9

### The totality of our forgiveness

When God forgives, he does a proper job! Isaiah 43:25, Psalm 103:12, Romans 8:1

### After Forgiveness

We are called to be agents of forgiveness. Col 3:13 Matthew 18:23-35 - Parable of Unforgiving Servant  
 We are called upon to be messengers of God's forgiveness Luke 24:47

What is the unforgivable sin? Mark 3:28-30, Matthew 12:30-33, It is the Spirit prompts us to repent  
 Blaspheming the Holy Spirit is a total rejection of God. When person rejects God they will never repent.  
 Revelation 16:9 Pharaoh hardened his heart, then God hardened it.

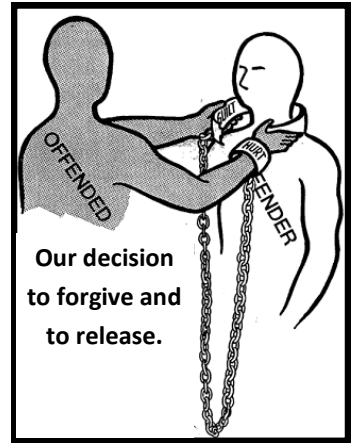
## Forgiving others

### Why Forgive?

- If we don't forgive, anger and bitterness get a hold of us. Ephesians 4 :26-27, 31 Hebrews 12 :15
- We are commanded to forgive. Mark 11 :25
- It is good for your health! Studies show numerous health benefits with less stress, lower blood pressure etc.
- It begins our healing process.

### Practical Points

- It's the people closest to us that are the hardest to forgive.  
*"To live above, with saints we love, that will be glory.  
To live below, with the saints we know, that's quite a different story!"*
- As people can hurt & offend us, we hold them guilty before us.
- We are called to forgive. Ephesians 4 :32 Colossians 3 :13
- It's not easy! Luke 17 :3-4 but notice v5 comes next!  
*"Everyone says forgiveness is a lovely idea, until they have something to forgive." - C.S.Lewis*
- There is no limit to our forgiveness Matthew 18 ;21-22
- We should try and take the initiative with the issue Matthew 5 :23-24  
However some people will never accept our forgiveness.  
The person who does wrong might feel guilty,  
The victim however is likely to feel bitter and wear the victim badge.  
Forgiveness is not reconciliation, that takes two. However, forgiveness opens door to reconciliation  
Sometimes we have to leave it with God Romans 12 :19
- We need to even want to bless those who have hurt us Matthew 5 :44, 1 Peter 3 :9
- The person you are forgiving may never accept they did wrong.
- Forgiveness does not condone wrong. A crime needs to be addressed by the state.  
Forgiveness does not require a person to remain in an abusive or dangerous situation.
- We need to keep remembering how much we constantly need forgiveness. John 8 :7  
It's not about what people deserve, none of us deserves forgiveness.



### How do we know if we have fully forgiven? Story of Joseph (From RT Kendall's Proofs of Total Forgiveness)

- You don't tell others of what someone has done to you Genesis 45 :1-2 (unless crime)
- Don't be afraid of the person, or instil fear in them. Genesis 45 :4
- Don't let them feel guilty. Genesis 45 :5 You want them set free! Jesus on cross Luke 23 :34  
1 Corinthians 13 :5 (NIV inc in most translations) Keep no list of wrongs
- You let them save face. Genesis 45 :5 - 'God did it' Don't rub their noses in it, not self righteous
- Protect them. Genesis 45 :9-13 He told his brothers what to say, no mention of their secret deeds.
- It's for life. Genesis 50 :15
- You can bless the person Genesis 50 :19-21

### Forgiving ourselves

- God wants you to forgive yourselves. The Devil doesn't want you to. Revelation 12 :10 - accuser
- If we don't forgive ourselves, we are not then accepting the forgiveness God offers.
- We need to leave what lies behind Philipians 3 :12-14  
*"When we confess our sins, God casts them into the deepest ocean, gone forever--  
Then God places a sign out there that says 'No Fishing Allowed'" - Corrie Ten Boom*
- When you have forgiven yourself, you will be better with other people.



### Discussion questions for Life Groups



- Why do you think it is difficult to forgive?
- Is it harder to forgive yourself, than others?
- What things are the hardest to forgive? Why?
- What are the benefits of forgiveness?
- How is God's forgiveness different from ours?
- If we forgive, are we a doormat for people? Can we be firm and forgiving?
- How does the Christian see people, compared with unbelievers?