

## FORGIVENESS

### Reconcile...Showing Mercy Through Forgiveness Luke 15:11-32

One of the strongest messages presented in Scripture is *forgiveness*. The Bible is the story of how God *forgives*. It begins in **Genesis** and continues through **Revelation**. If *forgiveness* is one of the central themes...where do you suppose the *enemy might attack* you as God's children? Through *forgiveness!* When *unforgiveness* and *bitterness* rule our hearts, we are moving backwards in our relationships with people and God...and we are opening ourselves up to Satan's attack.

Christian's don't like to admit that they are *bitter*. We would rather say...*"I've been hurt"* or *"I have resentment"* or *"I have a caution or concern"*.

*Forgiveness* is a *choice*...not a *feeling*. It is an act of the *will!* When it comes to *forgiving* someone who has *offended* us, we must act in obedience, even when the feelings aren't there. It's forgiving *again...and again...and again*...whenever the enemy tries to bring it up...you *forgive again!*

#### THREE ASPECTS OF FORGIVENESS:

- **GETTING** Forgiveness.
- **GIVING** Forgiveness.
- Forgiving **YOURSELF**.

#### I. GETTING FORGIVENESS: 3 Step Process

##### 1. ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR ACTION:

- **REPENT**...Confess the sin.
- Seek **RECONCILIATION**...Make a decision to get it right.

- **ACKNOWLEDGE** that your sin was ultimately against God...but also against the person.
- Make it right at your own **EXPENSE**...*restitution*.

#### 2. CONFESS WITHIN THE CIRCLE OF THE OFFENDED:

- **CONFRONT** the one you offended. It is better to do it face-to-face.
- **PLAN** what to say.
- Don't expect or demand a **CERTAIN RESPONSE**.
- Don't **PREACH** to them (don't try and witness to them).
- Take **PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY** for the sin.
- Find the right **TIME** and **PLACE** (God's timing).

#### 3. DON'T USE THE WORD "IF" OR "BUT"!!!

In our culture today, when someone begins to respond to others, they typically will say...*"If I have offended you"* or when confronted they will say...*"But..."* and then begin to justify their actions.

Either way, what is being said is...*"You say that I offended you, but I don't think that I offended you (or I don't care if I offended you)...but I'll take the 'High road' and apologize."* In reality, that isn't an apology... it's justifying yourself.

Failure to seek forgiveness is the result of...

- **Lack of repentance.**
- **Pride** (*Lack of humility*).

## II. RESULTS OF GETTING FORGIVENESS:

- A CLEAR CONSCIENCE.

If someone you know was making a list of people who had hurt or offended them and never asked their forgiveness...would you be on that list?

*“...Fight the good fight, keeping faith and a good conscience, which come have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith.”*

~I Timothy 1:18-19

- A LIFESTYLE Change. (**Ephesians 4:26-32**)

If a change in your lifestyle doesn't take place...then getting forgiveness is just a cover for doing something you are always going to do any way. It results in a lifestyle of sin. (*Alcoholic...abuser...adultery...stealing...lying...etc.*).

- Restored WORSHIP.

- Restored PHYSICALLY.

*“When I kept silent about my sin, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long.”*

~Psalm 32:3

*“For my iniquities are gone over my head; as a heavy burden they weigh too much for me. My wounds grow foul and fester because of my folly. I am bent over and greatly bowed down; I go mourning all day long. For my loins are filled with burning, and there is no soundness in my flesh. I am benumbed and badly crushed; I groan because of the agitation of my heart.”*

~Psalm 38:4-8

*“Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation and sustain me with a willing spirit. Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners will be converted to You. Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, the God of my salvation; then my tongue will joyfully sing of Your righteousness.”*

~Psalm 51:10-14

- Ability to LOVE.

*“The goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.”*

~I Timothy 1:5

- PRAYER LIFE unhindered.

*“Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father who is in heaven will also for give you your transgressions.”*

~Mark 11:25