

# Freedom in Forgiveness

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A couple of weekends ago we spoke of how the acknowledgment and confession of our sins and faults to ourselves, to God, and to one another is part of God's plan of liberty in our lives. Today, I want to share another aspect of God's Law of Repentance. It is the principle of Freedom in Forgiveness. Amazing Grace -- that I once was lost but now am found; I once was blind but now I see; I once was captive but now am free, because He first found me and brought unto me a way of reconciliation through the forgiveness of sins in His Son Jesus Christ, the lamb that was slain and paid my debt which He did not owe.

**Genesis 2:16-17** *And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*

So many justify their sin by pointing to God and saying, "How cruel is a God that judges for my wrong doing." Note here that the love of God for man was proclaimed and demonstrated before the penalty of sin was pronounced. The penalty of sin was pronounced and made clear unto man long before man ever sinned. God said, "***in that day you eat of sin you will surely die.***" God did not say, "I have predestined you to sin." God did not say, "You will surely sin." God did not say, "You have to choose death." God said, "On the very day you decide to choose to live in sin rather than in the love I have provided, our relationship will surely cease to be as it is."

You see, the presence of God has to dwell with clean vessels. It cannot dwell in vessels that are filled with the stains of sin. God had to make a way to restore man unto Himself. Yet it had to be a way that man still had a responsibility to God. Too often we want a salvation that comes at no cost. The purchase came at a cost to God. It cost Him His only begotten Son. At the same time it comes at a cost to you. In order for you to receive the gift of forgiveness, you have to accept the responsibility of confession and repentance. The gift comes free. The price for it has been paid by Christ and you had nothing to do with it. You accept it for free but "free" means it cost you nothing; It does not mean that it comes with no responsibility.

**Matthew 9:17** *Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved.*

In her book, *Forgiveness*, Nancy Lee DeMoss (NLD) states, "Forgiveness is not a method to be learned as much as **a truth to be lived.**"

"The outcome of our lives is not determined by what happens to us but by **how we respond** to what happens to us. Our only hope lies in realizing that **we do have a choice** about how we respond to life's circumstances." - NLD

"Our first natural response is to be **debt collectors.**" - NLD

"One definition of unforgiveness is 'Like **drinking poison** and hoping someone else would die.'" - NLD

"We must deal with the fact that our **unforgiveness is a sin**, just as the original offense was. No worse of a sin, but certainly no less of one." - NLD

When we harbor unforgiveness it causes us to ultimately start **viewing everything through the eyes of hurt** – everything others do and everything that happens to us. - NLD

**Unforgiveness enslaves you.**

God's desire is not to increase you suffering but **heal your pain.**

When we walk in unforgiveness, we are inhibited from **experiencing the fullness** of God's love and forgiveness in our lives.

**Mark 11:26** *But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.* **Matthew 6:14-15** *For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.* **Matthew 18:35** *So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.* **Luke 17:3-4** *Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.*

“The point is not that a forgiving spirit causes us to merit God's forgiveness, but simply that forgiven people forgive others, and that those who persistently refuse to forgive others have no basis to claim to have been forgiven by God.” - NLD

Over the past weekends we have taught that there are two principles God has given us so that we might walk in the true liberty of Christ. These are “**confession and forgiveness**”. Both of these operate in the law of “**repentance**”. True repentance involves both the humble confession of one's transgression of God's law and expectation and the receiving of God's forgiving grace, be it from God or from the heart of another you have transgressed against. In either case, both come with a great responsibility and accountability to the law of repentance. You cannot have forgiveness without confession and a true confession comes not without the fruit of real repentance.

**What is real repentance?** Repentance is when I turn from the identified unrighteousness in my life and never visit it again. It is like true forgiveness. To truly forgive does not mean I cannot remember the wrong done to me, but if I have forgiven I do not dwell on it. I do not allow it to hinder my righteousness in Christ nor yours. In my forgiveness granted to you, an unconditional covenant is made never to bring it up again. So it is with repentance. Your confessed sin is not counted against you by God because you have covenanted never to repeat the offense. In contrast, if you confess yet having reservation to repeat the offense it is not repentance and the responsibility of forgiveness does not lie with God but on the condition of your heart. **Matthew 12:34:** *O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.*

**Romans 10:10:** *For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*

### **Misconceptions of forgiveness:**

1. “***That forgiveness and good feelings go hand in hand.***” - NLD

You have sincerely released your offender from your right of revenge for injustice. You have covenanted to not bring it up again. You have chosen the love of Christ over the pain and anger of offense. Yet, when you see them, receive a phone call from them, or anything triggers your memory of the offense, your emotions start up again. Many conclude, “Well, there has not been true forgiveness.” But forgiveness cannot be proven solely by emotions. Forgiveness is a choice where feelings often are not. Forgiveness is then demonstrated in your response and the measure of your heart's attitudes.

2. “***That forgiveness means forgetting***” - NLD

**Psalms 103:11-12:** *For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.* Note here that the Scripture does not say that God forgets our sin. Instead, it states that they far from Him or removed from us. In **2 Corinthians 5:19** *To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.* Here Scripture states that God has “not counted our sins against us.” Meaning not that He forgets but He does not

keep score against us. He has chosen not to ever bring them back up again. **Hebrews 10:17** *And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.* Here the Greek word for remember is “**mnaomai**” (*mnaah'-om-ahee*) meaning to recollect, recall, to be mindful of, or make a fixture in the mind for the sake of punishment. (Strong's Concordance) “The memory of past hurts can provide a powerful platform for ministry to other hurting people.” - NLD The sons of Joseph are an example of God's intent with your pain and offense. He is not the author of pain and offense, the hearts of men are. However, He is glorified when we respond as He desires. **Genesis 41:51-52** *And Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh: For God, said he, hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house. And the name of the second called he Ephraim: For God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction.* This principle is reaffirmed in **2 Corinthians 1:3-5** *Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.*

3. ***“That forgiveness requires a long, drawn-out process and cannot take place until healing is complete.”*** - NLD

Too often we use this as an excuse to hang onto our offense. We say, “Well, I am working toward complete forgiveness.” What you are really saying is, “I find some satisfaction in my resentment and I do not know what real forgiveness is.” I have seen too many use this and they are still working on that forgiveness ten years later. “As with and by God's grace you can choose as He did, in a moments time.” - NLD The healing and restoration you seek can only begin at the point of true forgiveness.

4. ***“That forgiveness should always make things better.”***

We often live in this misconception that if we will confess to those we have offended and seek their forgiveness, or if we will take the first steps to reconciliation and forgive those who have transgressed us that everything will be much better. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. Just because you have chosen the road of repentance does not mean others have as well. You have to resolve that the principle of forgiveness is not for your selfish gain to feel better but it is part of the lifestyle in Christ you have chosen to govern your life by. It is an act of obedience in honor to God and because of your love for Him and those He has chosen to love. Forgiveness must become a habit as it is to Father.

The Love of God and forgiveness go hand in hand. To receive forgiveness you have to love Him. To love Him you have to obey Him. To forgive is to obey and to love Him as He has loved and forgiven you. The more you realize how much He has forgiven you and how much you were so undeserving, the more you see the depth of His love and the more your love for Him grows. The more you learn to live a lifestyle of forgiveness, the deeper your love for Him grows and the more your ability to love even your enemies or those who have transgressed you can grow. **Luke 7:45-48** *Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven.*

Do not forfeit your Kingdom inheritance because of unforgiveness. **Acts 26:18** *To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.*