

Forgiveness

(From the book: **Forgiveness: How to get along with everybody all the time** by Harold Vaughan)

Matthew 25:20 “ye have done it unto me”

Matthew 5:23-24 – must first be reconciled before bringing the offering

What is Forgiveness?

Defined:

- 1) Not an emotion – feelings are irrelevant
- 2) Not forgetting
- 3) Not shrugging it off with a “whatever”
- 4) Not just asking God to forgive you for being hurt
- 5) Not rationalizing why it happened

Forgiveness is a CHOICE. An act of the will. No longer keeping score.

- I. Learning to Forgive Others
 - a. Causes of NOT forgiving others

- i. Spiritual Death – Matt. 25:40
- ii. Unanswered Prayer – Mark 11:25-25
- iii. God’s presence removed
- iv. Infects others
- v. Become a stumbling block to the unsaved
- vi. Emotional depression or physical ailments possible

b. Unforgiveness gives ground to Satan to work

c. The downward spiral of Unforgiveness –
Ephesians 4:26-32

- i. Bitterness – harboring hurt
- ii. Wrath - a slow burn
- iii. Anger – outward signs begin to show
- iv. Clamor – begin verbalizing inward bitterness and anger
- v. Evil Speaking – specific outbursts like “I hate you”
- vi. Malice – desire for harm

II. How should we handle forgiving others? –
Matthew 18:15-17

a. Go to brother/sister alone first

b. Don’t broadcast your hurt to others

- c. Approach others only if they know there is a problem
- III. What to do when we are tempted to UN-forgive
 - a. Don't rehearse it – dwell and remember it
 - b. Don't nurse – lick old wounds
 - c. Don't curse it – waiting for God to bring down judgement upon them
 - d. Just Pray for them!
- IV. How to Ask/Seek Forgiveness
 - a. Admit your wrongs
 - b. Make no excuses
 - c. Make things right first with God, then others
- V. Common excuses for not making things right
 - a. It was before I was saved – Zacchaeus (Luke 19:8)
 - b. I lost track of them
 - c. But the matter was so small
 - d. I'm just being too sensitive
 - e. They wouldn't understand
- VI. How to tell if my conscience has been violated
 - a. I have uncontrollable anger
 - b. I am dealing with anxiety
 - c. I am critical – Romans 2:1

- d. I have a lack of Love
- e. I am able to list all my hurts
- f. I feel guilt
- g. I have a lack of joy
- h. I condemn myself
- i. I am defensive

KEY VERSE: And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void to offence toward God, and toward Acts 24:16

VII. Asking forgiveness is:

- a. More than conviction – not just acknowledging*
- b. More than confession – not just admitting*
- c. More than contrition – not just tears*
- d. More than retribution*

VIII. Fruits of Repentance

- a. Repentant people love more (washing Jesus' feet with hair)*
- b. Repentant people demonstrate humility – prodigal son*

c. Repentant people are quick to forgive others –
Luke 17:3

IX. Fruits of forgiveness

a. Reconciliation – Matt. 18:15

b. Revival

c. Joy & Praise – Romans 12:18