

1 ☐ Forgiving

Do I Have to Forgive?

2 ☐ Forgiveness

- American Psychological Association
 - Forgiveness involves willfully putting aside feelings of resentment toward someone who has committed a wrong, been unfair or hurtful, or otherwise harmed you in some way. Forgiveness is not merely accepting what happened or ceasing to be angry. Rather, it involves a voluntary transformation of your feelings, attitudes, and behavior, so that you are no longer dominated by resentment and can express compassion, generosity, or the like toward the person who wronged you.
- Here forgiveness is focused on your action (putting aside feelings of resentment towards) with respect to another person (someone who has harmed you in some way)

3 ☐ Forgiveness

- To forgive (according to this definition) is to act on our feelings towards another person
- Forgiveness is subjective (how I feel), but in the Bible it is objective (what I do).
- The Bible is concerned with what action is required regarding the wrong that has been done.
- The Bible presents a transactional view of forgiveness.

4 ☐ The Lord's Prayer

Matthew 6

¹²and forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

¹⁴For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, ¹⁵but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Luke 11

⁴And forgive us our sins,
for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us.

5 ☐ The Lord's Prayer

Matthew 6

¹²and cancel for us our debts,
as we also have cancelled that for our debtors.

¹⁴For if you cancel for others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also cancel yours, ¹⁵but if you do not cancel for others their trespasses, neither will your Father cancel your trespasses.

Luke 11

⁴And cancel for us our sins,
for we ourselves cancelled the same for everyone indebted to us.

6 ☐ Forgive?

- Two Greek words are used:
 - aphiemai
 - charizomai
- For both of these words:
 - the object of forgiveness is what has been done wrong

- The beneficiary of forgiveness is the person who has committed the wrong
- The action of forgiveness is necessary because the beneficiary is unable to do it for himself
- The English word "forgive" is confusing because the object could be taken to be the person whose wrong has been forgiven. In non-English translations it is not the person who is forgiven, but the wrong they have done.

7 ☐ **The word "forgive" has changed its meaning**

- "Prevent us O Lord in all our ways" (1662 Prayer Book)
- "Forgive" was closely connected with word "give".

8 ☐ **Aphiemi**

- Common word with many meanings:
 - forgive, remove, take away, divorce, release, permit, allow, etc
- Context is important
- When action is taken for the sake of another (forgive, take away, permit), it is because they are unable to do it for themselves
- Take away from us our debts
 - A debtor is unable to cancel their own debt, only the lender can
- Forgiveness separates the person from the act
- Aphiemi applies to the act, not the person. However, the person is the beneficiary.

9 ☐

- A debt.
- A sin is any departure from a righteous way of life.
- A trespass (transgression) is any breaking of a rule or law.

10 ☐ **Psalm 103**

- ¹⁰ He does not deal with us according to our sins,
nor repay us according to our iniquities.
- ¹¹ For as high as the heavens are above the earth,
so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him;
- ¹² as far as the east is from the west,
so far does he remove our transgressions from us.
- He removes our transgressions from us because of his steadfast love toward us, and not because he is dealing with his own resentment at our transgressions.

11 ☐ **Charizomai**

- Focus is on the generous nature of the person who forgives.
- Forgiveness is an act of generosity.
- There is no moral obligation on a person to forgive.
- There is an obedience issue for the Christian.
- However, if we expect to be forgiven, then we need to forgive
- Used by Paul exclusively.

12 ☐ **Do I have to forgive?**

- There is no moral obligation to forgive.

- Forgiveness is not an entitlement; it is a gift.
- However, not forgiving has consequences.
 - In the Lord's Prayer we are asking God to forgive our debts on the basis that we forgive others their debts.
- Forgiveness is normally predicated on forgiveness.
- Retaining the sins another is a possibility which Jesus himself recognizes.

13 ☐ **Forgiveness costs**

- The money owed you in a debt is no longer yours.
 - There may be things you can no longer afford.
- Forgiveness costs God.
 - Sacrifice
 - "without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins." Hebrew 9:22
 - "he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Hebrews 9:26
- "If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him."
- Giving up your rights to justice and being generous to the person who has wronged you. May involve some emotional difficulties.

14 ☐ **Not forgiving**

- Forgiving or not forgiving is not about dealing with our emotions, it's about our love for the person.
- It is always wrong to hold onto resentment or anger.
- To not forgive, is to continue to hold a person accountable for what the wrong they have done to you.
- God will deal with the wrong that has been done to us.
- "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord."

15 ☐ **So now**

- Are you aware of a way you have wronged another person?
 - What does repentance involve?
 - What can you expect from the wronged person?
 - To be held accountable
 - To be forgiven
- Are you aware of a wrong that has been to you?
 - Are you clear about the wrong is?
 - Are you willing to forgive?
 - On what grounds would you forgive?
 - Have you dealt with feelings of bitterness and resentment?