



## God's forgiveness

1. The nature of God is to forgive sins (Neh 9:16-17; Ps 86:5; Is 43:22-25).
  - Every sin can be forgiven by God (Ex 34:6-7; Ps 32:1-2, 5; 103:3, 10-12).
  - He was ready to forgive you while you were still His enemy (Rom 5:10) and before you were ready to ask for or receive forgiveness (Ps 86:5; Rom 5:8).
  - He forgives you out of His mercy and grace and not because you deserve His forgiveness (Rom 5:6-8; Eph 2:4-7; Col 2:13-14).
2. God forgives you completely (Ps 103:10-12; Jer 50:20; Rom 5:16-21; 8:1, 33-34; 1 John 1:9).
  - When God forgives you, you are changed
  - When God forgives you, He no longer deals with you according to your sin (Ps 103:10). Instead, He covers your sin (Ps 32:1) and blots it out (Ps 51:9; Is 43:25, 44:22).
  - When God forgives you, He no longer will charge the guilt of your sin to your account (Ps 32:2; Rom 3:24-25, 4:8, 8:1; 2 Cor 5:19).
  - When God forgives you, He removes your sin from you and from His presence (Ps 103:12; Is 38:17; Mic 7:19) and promises not to remember it against you any longer (Heb 10:14-18).
3. God's forgiveness cost you nothing (Eph 2:8-9), but it was very costly to God (Is 53:4-12; John 3:16; Acts 20:28; Rom 5:8; 2 Cor 5:21; 1 Pet 1:17-19).
4. God never withholds forgiveness when sins are confessed in a sincere, biblical manner (1 John 1:9).

## Our \_\_\_\_\_ to God's forgiveness

1. You are to forgive others just as God in Christ has forgiven you (Eph 4:32; Col 3:13).
  - Willingly grant forgiveness whenever another confesses sin to you;
  - Forgive any type of sin, no matter how severe or devastating it might seem to be;
  - Forgive on the basis of grace not on the merit of the person to be forgiven;
  - Expect a renewed relationship with the one who is forgiven;
  - Recognize that it may be costly to you when you grant forgiveness; and
  - Forgive completely and do not remind the forgiven person of his sin in an accusing manner, even though it may not be appropriate to release the offender from all the consequences of his sin.

2. Forgive others in your heart (mind) even before they ask to be forgiven (Mark 11:25).

## Principles of forgiveness

1. Forgiveness is an act of obedience to the Lord (Luke 17:3-10; Eph 4:32; Col 3:13) and must be granted from the heart (Matt 18:35).
2. Forgiveness gives the offender what he needs rather than what he deserves (Ps 103:10; Luke 23:39-43; Rom 5:8).
3. Forgiveness is the love of Jesus Christ in action and is a promise to:
  - Not keep a record of wrongs suffered (1 Cor 13:5);
  - Not gossip about a person's sins to others (Eph 4:29);
  - Not dwell on the offense yourself (Phil 4:8); and
  - Restore fellowship with the forgiven person or the offender, as far as is biblically possible (Rom 12:18; 2 Cor 2:6-8).
4. Loving God without loving people is impossible (1 John 4:20-21).
5. Forgiveness should include comforting those who have sinned and have repented, as well as reaffirming your love to them (2 Cor 2:6-8).
6. Forgiveness is to be granted when requested without limitation (Matt 18:21-22; Luke 17:3-4).
7. When you forgive another who has sinned against you, you are not to demand restitution; but, instead, you are to demonstrate mercy and love toward him with a goal of reconciling with him (based on Matt 18:21-35; Luke 6:27-38; 1 Cor 6:5-7; 2 Cor 2:5-7).
8. Especially when you pray, if you have something against someone, you must forgive him from your heart (Matt 18:35; Mark 11:25).

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## about forgiveness

1. You must forgive yourself
  - Receiving God's forgiveness is not a matter of feeling forgiven; rather, it is a matter of trusting God (Heb 11:6) and His promises (Rom 5:1-2; Col 1:21-23; 1 John 1:9).
  - Since God says there is no condemnation for you in Christ Jesus, then it is true, regardless of your feelings (Rom 8:1).
  - When God says that He forgives you and cleanses you from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9), there is absolutely nothing you can or need to do to complete His work.
  - "Forgiving self" has no biblical support.

2. You won't experience any of the consequences for your sin
  - When you receive God's forgiveness for salvation, you pass from death to life (John 5:24), thus having the ultimate judgment and consequence of your sin removed (Rom 6:23).
  - In your daily life as a child of God, you do not need to be judged and disciplined by the Lord when you judge yourself rightly and deal with sin immediately (1 Cor 11:31-32).
  - However, receiving God's forgiveness does not guarantee that all the consequences of your wrongdoing will be removed (Col 3:25).
3. When you forgive you must also forget
  - Scripture says that God's forgiveness involves remembering sins against you no more (Is 43:25; Jer 31:34; Heb 10:17).
  - This means that He will not hold your sins against you since He has cleansed you with the precious blood of Jesus Christ (Rom 3:23-25; Eph 1:7; Heb 10:19-22; 1 John 1:7).
  - Scripture uses the term "not to remember" as meaning "not to mention or bring to mind" or "not to keep an account."
  - Scripture uses "forget" in the sense of "escaping notice."
  - Nowhere does Scripture require you to have a blank memory about your own sins or sins committed against you.

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## with others

1. Repent from your sin(s)
  - Biblical repentance results in a change from disobedience to biblically obedient behavior (Ps 51:12-13; Matt 3:8; Luke 3:8; Acts 26:20).
  - Biblical repentance acknowledges sin and takes personal responsibility for it (Ps 51:1-6; 1 John 1:8-10).
  - Biblical repentance results from a sorrow for sins committed against God and others (Ps 38:1-18; 2 Cor 7:9-10).
2. Confess your sin(s)
  - You are to confess sins to God in all aspects of thought, word, and action (Ps 51:1-4; 1 John 1:9).
  - Confess your sins to those against whom you have sinned (James 5:16).
    - Do not accuse him, judge him, or bring up his failures (Matt 7:1-5; Rom 2:1; 1 Cor 13:5).
    - Do not give excuses.
    - Do not stop at merely expressing your feelings by saying, "I'm sorry."

### 3. Make restitution

- Biblical restitution should be made whenever possible (based on Lev 6:2-5;
- Biblical restitution is to be made to those against whom you have sinned (Ex 22:1-17; Luke 19:8-9).
- Since the goal of biblical restitution is to be at peace with another, you are not to attempt to “buy back” the relationship or “manipulate” the other person to respond in a way that you desire (Rom 12:9a, 18).

### 4. Reconciling is extremely important

- Biblical reconciliation can only begin with being reconciled to God through Jesus Christ (Rom 5:10-11; 2 Cor 5:17-20; Col 1:21-22).
- The ministry and message of reconciliation between God and mankind is a responsibility and privilege that has been entrusted to you (2 Cor 5:17-20).
- Biblical reconciliation with others is so important that it must be done before your worship and service to the Lord. You are not able (fit) to worship or serve the Lord unless you have sought reconciliation with others who are estranged from you (Matt 5:23-24).

### 5. Hindrances to reconciliation

- Inadequate understanding or a lack of biblical forgiveness on the part of another may impede reconciliation.
- Waiting for another to initiate and demonstrate forgiveness delays reconciliation.
- Unscriptural demands for “sinlessness” or perfection restrict reconciliation.
- Reconciliation with a person who has sinned is not possible when that person will not respond with true repentance, confession, and restitution.

## When we refuse to forgive and reconcile

1. Because you are commanded to forgive others (Eph 4:32), you sin when you refuse to forgive (James 4:17).
2. You show ingratitude for God’s merciful forgiveness toward you when you do not forgive others
3. (Matt 18:21-35).
4. God as your Father withholds His forgiveness of your everyday transgressions when you do not forgive others (Matt 6:14-15; Mark 11:25-26).
5. You taint both the purpose of the gospel and the substance of the church (Matt 5:9; Eph 4:1-6)