

# Forgiveness – How to get it – How to give it – Why I should give it

---

**What does it mean for God to forgive my sins?** He will never think of them again (Isaiah 43:25). He will make them as white as snow/wool (Isaiah 1:18). He will trample my sins under His feet and throw them into the depths of the ocean (Micah 7:19). He removes all my condemnation (John 8:10-11 & Romans 8:1). Does God have amnesia or acceptance?

**What are the conditions to receive and to keep God's forgiveness?** Confession (1 John 1:9). Repentance – a sorrow for sin and a turning away from it (Isaiah 1:15-20 & Ezekiel 18:21-24). Forgive others (Mt 6:12,14-15 & Mt 18:21-35). Should I have amnesia, or acceptance?

**I do my best to meet all those conditions, but you don't understand just how horrible my sins have been. Is there any hope for me?** God's law was given so that I could see how sinful I am. But as I sinned more and more, God's wonderful grace became more abundant (Romans 5:20). Jesus said, "My grace is sufficient for you: for my strength is made perfect in [your] weakness." (2 Corinthians 12:9)

**I am sorry for my sins, but how do I overcome those evil desires (temptations) when they keep coming back?** Recognizing my own powerlessness (Matthew 26:41) and God's loving desire to help me (Philippians 2:13), I pray simply, "Lord, I can't..., You can..., Please do..." My will power is **NEVER** strong enough to resist every temptation that comes to me. My willpower is **ALWAYS** strong enough to **CHOOSE TO SERVE GOD** whenever I am tempted. Then He will work in me to will and to do of His good pleasure (Philippians 2:13). See "The Power of the Will" handout for more information. The intensity and frequency of the temptation progressively decreases with the practice of this principle...

**Forgiveness DOES NOT:** Excuse sin; Make wrong right; Mandate reconciliation (Romans 12:18); Restore trust (especially of myself).

**Forgiveness DOES:** confront, name, and deal with the reality of the offense; free me from the past.

**Forgiveness IS a healing gift from God:** Spiritually, emotionally, and physically. It is the pathway to freedom and peace.

**Results of Un-Forgiveness:** Anger (raises blood pressure), resentment (re-feel over and over again), condemnation, elevated risk of heart disease. You can't swallow the poison pill of un-forgiveness and expect someone else to die! –Dick Tibbits

**"Reframing": take an offense and look at it from a different perspective. Example:** When Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34) He didn't take the offense personally.

**You can either complain and blame OR you can forgive and live!** –Dick Tibbits

**Danger with Pride in "forgiveness"...**

**How do I forgive, when I FEEL those old resentments keep coming back?** This is temptation! See above (and the back of this handout) for how to overcome temptation...

Forgiveness is a process. It often takes time, and it doesn't mean forgetting that wrong was done. I think it is more about allowing for other people's mistakes just as we would like others to allow for our mistakes. Hmm... That sounds a lot like the Golden Rule, from a different perspective. Maybe we should have a Golden Rule of Forgiveness: **"Forgive others, as you would have them forgive you"**.

*"Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, mercy, kindness, humbleness, meekness, longsuffering... forgiving one another... as Christ forgave you..." (Colossians 3:12-13). "When you are praying, first forgive anyone you are holding a grudge against, so that your Father in heaven will forgive your sins, too." (Mark 11:25)*

- Compiled by Sid Nash 11/10/2012