

## Forgiving Others as God Forgives Us

[www.cvillechurch.com](http://www.cvillechurch.com)

**Introduction: All Misunderstandings About Forgiveness Can be Cleared up by the Word of God!**

### I. Forgiveness is an Absolute Requirement of God.

- A. It is commanded (**Mark 11:25**).
  - 1. This command is *just as* binding as any other command of God and should be taken just as seriously (**John 14:15**).
- B. We are to follow the example of Jesus in His willingness to forgive.
  - 1. Christians to be Christ-like (**1 Pet. 2:21**).
  - 2. Jesus sets the perfect example in His attitude of forgiveness (**Luke 23:33-34; cf. Isa. 43:25**)
- C. The forgiveness of our sins is conditioned upon our commitment to forgive others (**Mat. 6:14-15**)

### II. What Does it Mean to Forgive?

- A. The release of a debt (**Mat. 6:12**).
  - 1. Sin is “lawlessness” (**1 Jn 3:4**), but also a liability or a debt we cannot pay back to God and therefore we must ask Him to forgive us of our debt.
  - 2. That is why we need the Savior Jesus Christ who died on the cross to redeem us or release us from the debt of sin (**Eph. 1:7**).
  - 3. The word “forgive” in Mat. 6:12 (*aphiemi*) means: “*To let go, to give up a debt, to forgive, to remit; To give up, to keep no longer.*” (Thayer).
  - 4. To forgive someone is to give up that debt and to keep it no longer! (No harbored ill-will, no resentment or plans of revenge, etc.).
  - 5. Like God, we are to “remember no more” the sin (**Heb. 8:12**).
- B. Like God, when we forgive others of sin, we must do so *from the heart* (**Mat. 18:21-35**).
  - 1. Forgiveness is not mere “lip service,” it must be genuine and sincere.

### II. When Should We Grant Forgiveness to Others?

- A. God in His Word does not require more from us than He requires of Himself.
  - 1. We are to be like God, imitators of Him (**Mat. 5:48; Eph. 5:1**) and therefore we are to practice forgiveness in the *same* manner that He does.
  - 2. We cannot see in the hearts of men, only God can (**Jer. 17:10**), yet we still have a duty to forgive in the same manner as God does (**Eph 4:32**).
- B. God does not forgive anyone without repentance (e.g., **Luke 13:3; 24:47; Acts 2:38; 3:19**).
  - 1. Since God does not grant forgiveness without repentance, it follows then that we also should not forgive without repentance.
  - 2. The Lord taught that the condition of repentance should be met *before* we grant forgiveness to others (**Luke 17:3-4**).

C. If there is evidence of a person's lack of repentance then we should not forgive (**Luke 3:8**): *This is true love for others!*

1. If we extend forgiveness to an obviously impenitent person then we condone his sinful behavior (**Gal. 2:11-13**).
2. If we forgive when there is no repentance we may spur that person on toward more evil behavior and we may cause others to sin! (**1 Cor. 5:1-13**; cf. **2 Thes. 3:14-15**).

### III. Whether or Not We Forgive a Person, We Must Always Behave Like Children of God!

A. Practicing the goodness of God.

1. God does all within His power that is consistent to His character and will to lead people to repentance (**Rom 2:4**).
2. We in like manner are obligated to do all within our power (in harmony with God's will) to bring those who have wronged us to repentance.
3. We do this by doing good unto them that they might be ashamed and repent (**Rom 12:14, 19-21**; cf. **Luke 6:27-36**; **1 Thes 5:14**; **Mat 18:15ff.**).
  - a. We do not forgive until they repent meanwhile we do good to them!
  - b. Goodness is shown in a number of ways (e.g., love, blessing, prayer, service, generosity, mercy, kindness, patience, teaching, admonition, encouragement, reprove)
4. God is not unloving when he doesn't forgive us! He still continues His goodness to lead us to repentance. – *Let us do the same and be like God!*

B. Demonstrating patience and forbearance (**Col. 3:12-13**).

1. Forbearing is the ability to be patient when we are wronged.
  - a. We do not condone sin (**Rev. 2:20**), but we do need to be patient.
2. Patience can go a long way in leading someone to repentance.
  - a. God is longsuffering with us; we will not do the same with others? (**2 Pet. 3:9**).

C. Love all people as ourselves including our enemies (**Rom. 13:9-10**).

1. Love does no wrong to a neighbor, even if he or she does not repent of the sin committed against you!
2. We are *commanded* by Jesus to "love our enemies" (**Mat. 5:44**).
3. Even if a person does not repent we are to *love* them! (**1 Cor. 13:4-8a**).

D. When we do forgive, we must not keep count (**Mat. 18:21-22**).

1. Rather than keep score, we, like God, "remember no more" the sin committed against us (**Heb. 10:17**).
2. The love of God demands that we, out of love for others, keep no record of wrongs (**1 Cor. 13:5**).

**Conclusion: Our Greatest Motivation to Forgive Others is Found in God Forgiving us in Christ (Eph. 4:31-32).**