

We Must Learn to Receive Forgiveness

Series on forgiveness (4)

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Introduction: The road to healing from sin goes beyond the initial reception of forgiveness.

- A. It is not uncommon for a person to continue to grieve over a sin even after God and brethren have forgiven the person.
 - 1. One woman asked a preacher if she should be baptized again because of a sin committed years ago!
 - 2. Others have concluded that they are "going to hell anyway" and lose all interest in spiritual matters.
 - 3. There are things that must be done after forgiveness to uplift the one who has returned! **(Heb 12:11-13)**
- B. The path to a healed spirit can take place regardless of what men do. **(Mt 13:15-16)**
 - 1. God will aid those who turn to Him.
 - 2. Still there is a role for Christians to play. God gave the local church for these reasons! **(Heb 10:23-25)**

I. We must seek forgiveness.

- A. We must meet the conditions of forgiveness!
 - 1. God requires repentance for both the Christian and the non-Christian. **(Acts 2:38; 8:22)**
 - a. The non-Christian is then baptized for forgiveness.
 - b. The Christian is to pray to God for forgiveness.
 - 2. Repentance requires a changed heart. **(2 Cor 7:10)**
 - a. All genuine repentance must first come towards God.
 - b. If we have sinned against another then we must ask their forgiveness as well. **(Lk 17:3-4)**
 - c. If our hearts have changed we will be put into action. Public confession is one way of letting others know of your change of heart and to ask forgiveness of those whom you hurt. This comes *after* finding God's forgiveness.
- B. It may be possible for men to play games with other men.
 - 1. Some statements of "repentance" are in effect a way of saying: "get off my back!"
 - 2. God knows our hearts and we will never fool Him. **(Heb 4:13)**
 - 3. God's way will involve humility and honesty. There is no other way.
- C. The alternative to seeking forgiveness involves a measure of hiding.
 - 1. It is not uncommon for one to return to services without acknowledging repentance and over time to "slide back in" to fellowship with brethren.
 - 2. This is one reason we must follow God's way of dealing with sin that will include marking one who refuses to repent! **(Mt 18:15-17)**
 - 3. Because men tend to forget that does not mean God will! **(Ex 34:7)**
 - 4. Have you sought the forgiveness of God? Of others?

II. We must accept forgiveness.

- A. There are many who continue to feel the guilt of their sin after meeting the conditions of forgiveness.
 - 1. The example of the woman who though she should be baptized again.
 - 2. This is a matter of faith! Do we believe that God will do what He said? (**Jer 31:34; 1 Jn 1:7-9**)
 - 3. Here is where we need to take God's promises and read them over and over! God is not like a man nor does He hold grudges like a man. (**Num 23:19**)
 - 4. Please study more about the character of God and there find the comfort of the scriptures. (**Rom 15:4; 5:6-8**)
 - 5. You may need to also be praying for a lack of faith! Our God knows and understands! (**Mk 9:23-24**)
- B. Some common misunderstandings.
 - 1. You can only repent sincerely of a sin once.
 - 2. If you repent you will not go out and do the same thing again. (**Acts 8:9-10, 13, 19-20, 22-23**)
 - 3. "I have committed the unpardonable sin." (**Mt 12:31; Heb 6:4-6; 10:26-30**)
 - 4. If brethren will not accept me then God must not as well.

III. We must encourage and uphold each other.

- A. We need to draw closer to those who have been forgiven.
 - 1. Imagine the guilt the one publicly marked felt! (**1 Cor 5:1-4**)
 - 2. It was this very guilt that drove him to repentance. (**2 Cor 2:5-8**)
 - 3. Now comes the time to "reaffirm *your* love to him."
 - 4. Here is where Satan wins battles because of our negligence! (**2 Cor 2:10-11**)
- B. The one who has been forgiven needs to seek out the company and association of faithful Christians.
 - 1. Often it is this lack of association that helped sin to have a opportunity. (**1 Cor 15:33**)
 - 2. Many times one stops attending or runs out after services! It may be difficult to face others but this is a must to find the healing you need!
 - 3. You will find in faithful Christians an understanding because they have also have been where you are! (**2 Cor 1:3-4**)
- C. There are some Christians who will not encourage you.
 - 1. Hopefully that will not happen to you. If it does do not let what a few do speak for the others and especially not for God! (**Rom 3:4**)
 - 2. I have seen some Christians:
 - a. Look indifferently upon one's response.
 - b. Openly say: "They will not make it!"
 - c. Refuse to have much to do with you because of what you did.
 - d. Some will try to enslave you by continuing to bring you sin up.
 - 3. These people are not serving God! They will receive from God as they have treated others! They need to repent. (**Jas 2:13**)
 - 4. Let us show mercy too and not try to read minds and be sensitive.

Conclusion: Are you willing to receive God's forgiveness?