

HFG Questions for Genuine Forgiveness: Attitude and Action (Matthew 18:21-35)

Read 1 John 3:4.

1. God takes sin very seriously. Discuss the ESV Study Bible's definition of sin: "Sin is anything (whether in thoughts, actions, or attitudes) that does not express or conform to the holy character of God in His moral law." What remedy does God provide for our sins?

2. How do people (including believers) commonly try to cover up or minimize their own sins? Should we "rate" or "color code" our sins? Give some examples from Scripture of some "little" sins that had huge consequences. Having said that, are all sins equally heinous?

3. What are the three positions on forgiveness that people tend to hold to (largely unconsciously)?

4. Having considered those views, what does true Biblical forgiveness involve? Discuss both the heart attitude and the interpersonal interactions involved.

5. Are Christians commanded to forgive others even when the offender has not repented or asked for forgiveness? Why or why not? What Scriptures can you point to in support of your answer?

6. Why is it so essential for Christians to forgive others? Why is an "unforgiving Christian" not a real Christian?

7. What does counterfeit (or false) forgiveness look like, and how can we distinguish it from genuine Biblical forgiveness?

8. In the parable of the unforgiving servant, do we see genuine forgiveness on the part of the master? Why was that forgiveness retracted, so to speak? What main point was Jesus making to us in this parable?

9. Does true forgiveness necessitate immediate restoration of complete trust? Does true forgiveness necessitate a lifting of all consequences of sin? Does true forgiveness necessitate a lack of bitterness on the part of the forgiver (Eph. 4:32)?

10. Is there someone from whom you've withheld forgiveness when they've asked for it? Is there someone whom you're ready to forgive, but that person hasn't asked for forgiveness? Is there someone whom you need to ask for forgiveness?
