

PEACEMAKER – Reconciliation

STEP 5 - Peacemakers Know Forgiveness

Pastor Michael Vuorensivu - June 26, 2022

Christians are the most forgiven people in the world. Therefore, we should be the most forgiving people in the world. Only God can give us the grace and guidance we need to forgive others as He forgives us.

The Slippery Slope - see link below

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 18:21-35

FORGIVENESS IS NOT:

- **A FEELING** - It is an act of the will.
- **FORGETTING** - forgetting is a passive process in which a matter fades from memory merely with the passing of time...but as we know time does not heal all wounds -- what is not forgiven festers and can cause greater difficulty in the future - it can begin to weigh us down over time.
- **EXCUSING** - because forgiveness deals honestly with sin & this process...brings a freedom that no amount of excusing could ever hope to provide.

WHAT IS GENUINE **BIBLICAL** FORGIVENESS?

An excellent definition of forgiveness is found in the book *Unpacking Forgiveness: Biblical Answers for Complex Questions and Deep Wounds* by Chris Brauns

- **God's Forgiveness:** A commitment by the one true God to pardon graciously those who repent and believe so that they are reconciled to him, although this commitment does not eliminate all consequences.
- **General Human Forgiveness:** A commitment by the offended to pardon graciously the repentant from moral liability and to be reconciled to that person, although not all consequences are necessarily eliminated.

GOD'S FORGIVENESS HAS NO LIMIT

Matthew 18:21-22

21 Peter...asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?" 22 Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.

SO here we see that Jesus is saying don't just give up -- don't withhold help and forgiveness and mercy when they need it most.

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Luke 6:36-37

36 Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. 37 “Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.

This means we have a choice to make. We can either take payments on the debt someone owes us bit by bit or seek to forgive fully when they repent.

We can take or extract payments on a debt of sin from others in many ways:

- withholding forgiveness,
- dwelling on the wrong,
- being cold and aloof,
- giving up on the relationship,
- inflicting emotional pain,
- gossiping,
- lashing back or
- seeking revenge against the one who hurt you.

FORGIVENESS IS HARD! JESUS WANTS US TO CHOOSE FORGIVENESS OVER A LIFE OF HATE, BITTERNESS, AND SINFUL RESPONSES...HE SAYS THIS TO PROTECT US.

WARNING: Matthew 18:35

“This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

4 PROMISES FROM GOD ON BIBLICAL FORGIVENESS provided by Ken Sande in his book “The Peacemaker”.

PROMISE #1 - “I will not **DWELL on this incident.”**

- **Matthew 6:12** *And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.*
- **Luke 17:3-4** *3 So watch yourselves. “If your brother or sister sins against you, rebuke them; and if they repent, forgive them. 4 Even if they sin against you seven times in a day and seven times come back to you saying ‘I repent,’ you must forgive them.”*

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PROMISE #2 - “I will not bring up this **INCIDENT again and use it against you.”**

- **Psalm 103 11-14 (NLT)** *11 For his unfailing love toward those who fear him is as great as the height of the heavens above the earth. 12 He has removed our sins as far from us as the east is from the west. 13 The Lord is like a father to his children, tender and compassionate to those who fear him. 14 For he knows how weak we are; he remembers we are only dust.*
- **Ephesians 4:32** *Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you*

PROMISE #3 - “I will not **TALK TO OTHERS about this incident.”**

- **Proverbs 16:28** *A perverse person stirs up conflict, and a gossip separates close friends.*

PROMISE #4 - “I will not let this incident stand **BETWEEN us or hinder our personal relationship.”**

- **Matthew 5:22-24** *22 But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, ‘Raca,’ is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell. 23 “Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, 24 leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.*

1 Corinthians 13:5 ‘...LOVE keeps no record of wrongs’.

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PEACEMAKER CHALLENGE QUESTIONS:

The Slippery Slope found in the book called “The Peacemaker” by Ken Sande -

<https://rw360.org/product/the-peacemaker-a-biblical-guide-to-resolving-personal-conflict-paperback/>

Diagram - <https://www.reliancefellowship.org/conflict-styles-slippery-slope/>

1. Read Luke 6:27-28. When it comes to forgiveness and reconciliation, are you more typically hopeful or negative when it comes to what you expect to happen when you are dealing with difficult people and situations? What do you do to change any negative perceptions of them?
2. Go back and check off the way(s) in which you take or extract payments on a debt of sin from others. Why and how do you ‘*extract payments*’ when you are in a conflict?
3. Read 1 John 3:18 - What is the challenge for us as Christ followers? Can you give an example where you went out of your way to show love for someone who has hurt you? If not, can you think of a way to challenge yourself to do this and become accountable to do it.

C. S. Lewis noted, “Don’t waste time bothering whether you ‘love’ your neighbor; act as if you did. As soon as we do this we find one of the great secrets. When you are behaving as if you loved someone, you will presently come to love him.”

4. Pray for one another as you reflect on what has been shared in your conversation.