

# Forgiveness - Key to Freedom

## Key Verse

*Ephesians 4:32 - Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. (ESV)*

## Exploring the Bible

As a saint, a holy one, forgiveness is one of the key components in living a holy lifestyle. Unforgiveness is one of the main tools that the devil uses to gain access into our life.

### I. **The Need For Forgiveness**

*Ephesians 1:7 - In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace. (ESV)*

Question: What do we receive from Christ?

Answer:

*Luke 17:3-4 – Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him, and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, "I repent," you must forgive him. (VERSION??)*

Question: If your brother sins against you what are you to do?

Answer:

### II. **A Picture of Forgiveness**

Forgiveness can best be described by the three Greek words in the New Testament that are translated as the word "forgiveness." Let's take a look at these three words and see what they teach us about the nature of forgiveness.

#### A. **"charidsomai" (*khar-id'-zom-ahee*) - cancel the debt**

This word means to give freely or graciously. In addition it means to freely

forgive or pardon. The idea in forgiveness is to freely cancel a debt because of grace.

*Ephesians 4:32 - Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. (ESV)*

Question: We are to forgive each other just as who forgave us?

Answer:

*1 Corinthians 2:12 - Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. (ESV)*

Question: We have been given God's Spirit so we can understand what?

Answer:

The word used in 1 Corinthians 2:12 for the phrase "freely given" is the same word as the word "forgive" in Ephesians 4:32. It highlights the joyous freedom with which things are given including the cancellation of a debt in forgiveness. This word highlights the first aspect of forgiveness. You have to cancel the debt you are holding.

Read *Luke 7:40-50*

Question: What did the money lender do for his two debtors (verse 42)?

Answer:

We can freely cancel our debt we hold against others because an adequate payment was made for all debts by Jesus Christ on the cross.

## B. **"aphesis" (*af'-es-is*) - release the debtor**

The meaning of this word is the cancellation of an obligation or guilt and deals with the legal sense of pardon for an offense. In practical terms of forgiveness it

means releasing the one who has wronged us.

*Ephesians 1:7 - In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace. (ESV)*

Question: What did we receive through the blood of Jesus?

Answer:

*Matthew 26:28 - for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. (ESV)*

Question: What does the blood of Jesus provide?

Answer:

Both of these verses highlight the fact that because of the blood of Jesus we have received a legal pardon for our offenses against God. Because the blood of Jesus has also paid for the offenses against us, we can now pardon those who have sinned against or offended us.

**C. "aphiemi" (af-ee'-ay-mee) - release the creditor**

This word literally means to let go of something. In everyday life it meant to simply leave something. In the area of forgiveness it means to "let go" or "to leave" the debt that you are holding against someone.

*Mark 1:16-18 - Passing alongside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew the brother of Simon casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men." And immediately they left their nets and followed him. (ESV)*

Question: What did Simon and Andrew leave to follow Jesus?

Answer:

*Luke 11:4 - and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation. (ESV)*

Question: What are we supposed to do to all who are indebted to us?

Answer:

Question: What will God do for our sins?

Answer:

In Luke 11:4 we are asking God to let go and walk away from our sins just as we let go and walk away from all the debts we hold against others. The focus is on us, the creditor, the one who was wronged, letting go of the offense and walking away from it. It is this part of forgiveness where we release ourselves from the bondage of an offense against us.

Read *Matthew 18:21-35*

Question: How much did the servant owe his master (verse 24)?

Answer:

Question: How much did his fellow servant owe the forgiven servant (verse 28)?

Answer:

Question: Where did the servant end up because of his lack of forgiveness (verse 34)?

Answer:

This word for forgiveness is used throughout this passage. It implies that if we don't let go of our debts and walk away from them it is us who will end up in prison.

### III. **The Fruit of Forgiveness**

Read *Luke 6:27-34*

Question: What are we supposed to do to those who curse and abuse us (verse 28)?

Answer:

Question: What are you supposed to do to those who hate you (verse 27)?

Answer:

It is one thing to say, "I forgive." It is another thing to speak blessings over that person who offended or hurt you. Yet, Jesus asks us to do good and bless and pray for those who hate us or have done us wrong. The key to knowing if you have really forgiven from the heart is to be able to speak the blessing of the Lord over them. When we bless, we are not excusing the wrong or diminishing what the other person did to us. Instead, through forgiveness and blessing, we release them to God so He can work in their lives. In forgiveness we recapture lost territory. In blessing we take new territory from the enemy.

#### **What Forgiveness is NOT**

- It is NOT saying that what the other person did was okay.
- It is NOT excusing what the other person did to you.
- It is NOT continuing to open yourself up to an abusive situation.
- It is NOT automatically trusting someone who has wronged you.

#### **Practical Exercise**

Who do you need to forgive? Take a few minutes and write down everyone who you need to forgive. The person you may need to put at the top of the list is yourself. You must be able to forgive yourself for things you have done. If you don't, you become a prisoner of condemnation.

Below is a prayer of forgiveness that you can pray over anyone who you need to forgive:

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ I forgive \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_. I  
cancel this debt and nail it to the cross. I release \_\_\_\_\_ from this debt. I  
release myself from this debt and offense. I bless \_\_\_\_\_ in Jesus name.