

Receiving God's Forgiveness

As well as repentance and confession, which are essential, we need to receive God's forgiveness to get free of the burden of guilt. We have difficulty in receiving forgiveness because it is free. We are not used to getting things free. Forgiveness is freely given by God on the basis of the vicarious and propitiatory sacrifice of Christ. This is why many find the grace of God so difficult to understand.

Those from very dysfunctional families, where basic trust has been damaged, find it difficult to trust others, including God. They have particular difficulty in believing and receiving God's forgiveness.

God wants the believer to walk in the joy and liberating spring of forgiveness. It is the Holy Spirit who gives us the consciousness and joy of what Christ has accomplished for us. It is not just a head understanding of forgiveness but knowing in the heart that I am forgiven.

In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace (Ephesians 1:7).

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 5:1).

I write to you children because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake (1 John 2:12)

Receiving Forgiveness in the Christian Community

This important aspect of forgiveness is very liberating. It is one thing to know God has forgiven you, but an altogether different thing to know that your fellow Christians have also forgiven you. This is why sharing openly and honestly in the Christian community is so necessary. *Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed (James 5:16).*

Jesus said, *Be on your guard! If another disciple sins, you must rebuke the offender; and if there is repentance, you must forgive (Luke 17:3).* Paul said, *Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you (Ephesians 4:32)*

Receiving forgiveness in the Christian Community is particularly necessary if public sin has been involved. If others in the Church know about any specific sinful behaviour of a member (such as adultery, criminal activity, incest, child abuse) it can only be properly resolved by the church, or at least by the church leadership by dealing with this matter. Once the reality of God's forgiveness and the forgiveness of the church is known, there is a powerful and liberating release from guilt and shame that gives the Christian boldness, assurance and acceptance.

Seeking Forgiveness From those I have hurt

All have been both victims and victimisers. Both areas need to be addressed. When I have victimised and hurt others I need God's forgiveness first. It has been well said, *hurt people hurt people*. They leave a trail of devastation and wounding behind wherever they go. This must be addressed. It is often difficult as these hurt people are preoccupied with themselves as the victim.

In seeking forgiveness from the person I hurt, simply go to the other person and say, *I am sorry for, will you forgive me please?*

Forgiving those who have hurt me

One of the most important objectives in Christian counselling is to help people get all resentment and bitterness out of their lives. This is not only possible but it is also God's will for us, and it is for our own good. This also largely dissipates the repressed anger. It is the main key to inner healing. In fact, healing is blocked and cannot proceed if this is not properly attended to (Matthew 6:14-15). Maintaining resentment is like leprosy - you lose the sense of pain while you destroy yourself. The poison you seek to pour out upon others, you drink yourself. It is like a boomerang.

WHY DO WE NEED TO FORGIVE?

Jesus said so (Matt 6:12, 14,15, Eph 4:32, Col 3:13)

Because God has forgiven us (Eph 4:32, Col 3:13)

So as God can forgive us (Matt 6:14, 15)

So that we do not torment ourselves (Matt 18:34-35)

To release the other person (Matt 18:34-35)

It is the only answer to resentment, bitterness and hatred – and helps with anger.

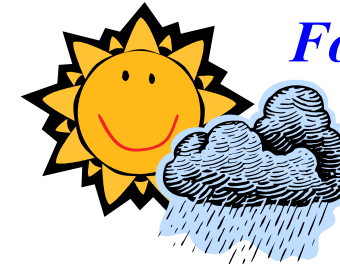
It is the key to our inner healing

HOW TO FORGIVE

1. Ask God to reveal areas where we need to forgive. Make a list. Be specific and thorough.
2. Go down the list, name the person and the hurt, and how it affected you, and pray genuinely. Show the Lord that you really mean it and it is a forgiveness from the heart.

3. Confess resentment, bitterness, greed and un-forgiveness
4. Hand the hurt over to the Lord and receive his comfort (Is 53:4, Matt 11:28)
5. Ask for his grace to work through the process, bringing the emotions into accord with the choice made, so it is from the heart (Matt 18:35)
6. Keep speaking out the forgiveness
7. Expect nothing in return
8. Do not insist on them changing
9. Act out forgiveness (Matt 5:35-48, Rom 12:14-21)
10. Bless them and pray for their prosperity
11. Release the person from saying *I'm sorry.*
12. Overcome evil with good.
(The last six indicate heart forgiveness)

For more information please go to our website at <http://christ-education.blogspot.com.au>



Forgiveness

Do we have to forgive?

The Two Keys to Inner Healing

Understanding forgiveness (receiving God's forgiveness, which removes guilt, and forgiving all those who have caused hurt, which removes resentment).

Understanding identity (Christian identity and self-acceptance).

Forgiveness involves four things:

1. Receiving forgiveness from God
2. Receiving forgiveness in the Christian community.
3. Seeking forgiveness from those I have hurt.
4. Forgiving all those who have caused me hurt.

There is no scriptural support for forgiving ourselves. If God has forgiven us and our fellow Christians have forgiven us that is the end of it. Forgiving ourselves is therefore irrelevant. Those who speak of the need to forgive ourselves, do not understand God's forgiveness, which is full and complete. The word forgive in the Greek simply means **release**. It is setting a person free as a judicial act.