

FORGIVENESS: FORGETTING AND FEELINGS

Thus far, we have classified forgiveness under six different headings. The first four headings relate to God's work of forgiveness. The final two headings relate to the work of forgiveness in human relationships. Let's briefly review our terms:

1. **Initial Judicial Forgiveness** (Col. 1:20-22). This occurs the moment of our salvation.
2. **Initial Fellowship Forgiveness** (Eph. 2:1-10). Forgiven sinners are given access into God's presence.
3. **Repetitive Judicial Forgiveness** (I John 2:1). Jesus Christ our High Priest and advocate stands to claim unconditional forgiveness for the sins of the saints (Heb. 7:24-25; Gal. 3:3).
4. **Repetitive Fellowship Forgiveness** (I John 1:9). Fellowship forgiveness requires confession. It is conditional.
5. **Vertical Forgiveness**. Instead of seeking vengeance (Rom. 12:19), I am to unconditionally release the offense to God (Mark 11:24-26).
6. **Horizontal Forgiveness** (Luke 17:3f). Horizontal forgiveness is conditional. It is granted when the offender confesses his offense to the one offended.

Scenarios for discussion:

- ❖ Illustrate the difference between Initial Judicial Forgiveness and Initial Fellowship Forgiveness. (Hint: "Rooms")
- ❖ What kind of forgiveness must a Christian seek from God when he/she has sinned?
- ❖ Describe the process of granting vertical forgiveness.
- ❖ Describe the process of granting horizontal forgiveness.

Let's address two more crucial concerns related to the topic of forgiveness.

FORGIVING AND FORGETTING

Many assume that granting forgiveness requires that one forget the offense. Thus, when a forgiven offense comes back into the memory, the one who has granted forgiveness often feels guilty. Let's consider the matter of "forgetting."

"For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" (Jer. 31:34).

Three truths must be considered in order to come to a biblical conclusion regarding what it means to "forgive and forget."

1. God is omniscient. In truth, all things are immediately available for God to consider (Heb. 4:12-13; Ps. 139:6, 17-18).
2. The word "remember" carries with it a number of ideas.
 - Luke 23:43 – Remember means to bless.
 - Ps. 78:38 – Remember means to show pity.
3. We can choose to "forget" while still remembering (Phil. 3:13; Acts 6:5-8:3; Acts 22:4-7; 26:11-15; Gal. 1:3).
 - While the memory may remain, the act of remembering can be avoided.

Questions:

- ❖ Does forgiveness mean that I never bring up the past?
- ❖ Does forgiveness mean that the sins of the past will never impact any part of the future?

FORGIVENESS AND FEELINGS

What do we do when we don't "feel like" forgiving?

1. Remember that forgiveness is an act of obedience (Lk. 17).
2. Remember that forgiveness is an act of love (Lk. 7:26-35).
3. Remember that forgiveness without feelings is not hypocrisy.