

# Forgiveness

The most important message of the Bible is God's love for mankind. The power of the Gospel message is that God has made available the forgiveness of sins and the gift of eternal life through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ who is God in the flesh.

The crucifixion of Jesus Christ upon the Cross represents the centrality of all the ages. It is the focal point of all Christian theology and the outworking of practical Christianity. It is the ultimate illustration of the differences between, and the culmination of, the love and forgiveness of God.

Forgiveness affects us, to some degree, in every relationship. Apart from the love of God, there is no more important doctrine to understand than the doctrine of forgiveness.

How well do you understand true Biblical forgiveness?

Take these two tests, the Forgiveness Exam and the True – False Test, to find out if there is still more that you can learn!

## **60 Exam Questions on Biblical Forgiveness**

(From the *Overcoming Anger and Bitterness Seminar*)

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***How much do you know about the Biblical differences between overcoming anger and bitterness and forgiveness?***

1. What is the Biblical difference between grieving and mourning as illustrated in the Bible?
2. How does Biblical mourning help us to understand Biblical meekness?
3. What are the Biblical characteristics of meekness when responding to an offender?

### **Counseling Example:**

**A woman in her forties comes to you for counseling. She was sexually abused from the ages of 5 to 15 by her step father. She has confronted him, but he lives in denial. She thinks she “forgave” his sinning against her, but the feelings of bitterness keep resurfacing. She says that she is willing to “forgive,” but cannot get rid of the resurfacing surges of anger.**

4. How would you explain to her that forgiveness is not the issue?
5. How would you show her biblically that she is already like God as far as forgiveness is concerned?
6. How would you biblically counsel her to rid of anger and bitterness before forgiving and apart from forgiving?
7. Since she is willing to forgive the offense upon repentance, give at least five reasons reason she is still angry and bitter?

### **Forgiving an enemy?**

**In the Bible, Jesus never said to, "Forgive your enemy," but He did say to respond to an enemy or offender in the following ways: "love, do good, bless, pray for, turn the other cheek go the extra mile..." In your own words:**

8. Explain why most people think Jesus said to forgive your enemy.
9. Give at least four examples of the Biblical differences between love and forgiveness.
10. Give at least three Scriptural references to support each of the concepts of “unconditional” love yet “conditional” forgiveness.

**God loves everyone, but only aphiemi/forgives the sins of those who repent. Explain why, according to the Biblical Greek text:**

11. God never forgives people, but only forgives sin *from* people.
12. No one in the Bible ever prays, "God, forgive me!"
13. In Leviticus 19:17-18, what two things does Moses say to do in order to get rid of anger and bitterness without mentioning "forgiveness?"

**Vs. 17.** \_\_\_\_\_

**Vs. 18.** \_\_\_\_\_

14. The first thing Jesus commands us to do when a brother offends us is never to forgive but to \_\_\_\_\_ (John 17:3) and to \_\_\_\_\_ (Matthew 18:15)

There are 6 words for forgive in the Bible (Young's concordance: 3 Hebrew and 3 Greek.)  
Define each word:

- A. *Kaphar* (H)
- B. *Nasa* (H)
- C. *Salach*: (H)
- D. *Aphiemi*: (G)
- E. *Apoluo*: (G) (see #17 below)
- F. *Charizomai* (G)

### **Aphiemi and Charizomai**

15. Explain how the main two words for forgiveness, *Aphiemi* and *Charizomai*, are similar.
16. Explain how the words *Aphiemi* and *Charizomai* are different. (Give at least two examples.)
17. Why does Vines dictionary suggest that *Apoluo* "does not mean to forgive?" (Luke 6:37)
18. What is the significance of Paul's using the Greek word *Charizomai* (forgive) rather than the word *Aphiemi* (forgive) in Ephesians 4:31-32 and Colossians 3:8-10, 12-13?

**Ephesians 4:** <sup>31</sup>Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: <sup>32</sup>And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

**Colossians 3:** <sup>8</sup>But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. <sup>9</sup>Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; <sup>10</sup>And have put on the new man...<sup>12</sup>Put on therefore, .....bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; <sup>13</sup>Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.

19. Using the verses above, explain how it is possible to do as Paul suggested: put off anger, wrath, malice, etc., *before* forgiving, in contrast to our paradigm of *forgiving first* in order to rid of anger and bitterness.

20. According to the Greek text, why does Jesus use two different words (Charizomai then Aphiemi) for *forgive* in Luke 7:36-50 at Simon's house? How does this help explain the different connotations of the two words?
21. Explain how we could Biblically forgive (Charizomai) a person of some sins without forgiving (Aphiemi) them of other sins?

### **Aphiemi-Forgive as an action verb:**

22. Give at least 3 reasons why defining "forgive" as a reflexive verb - "releasing myself of anger or bitterness," is an unbiblical and confusing definition.
23. Explain how defining "to forgive" as "letting go of anger or feelings of vengeance" negates the Biblical teaching of reconciliation.
24. Explain why the concept that "unforgiveness leads to bitterness" is impossible according to the Bible. Give references.

### **Teshuva**

25. List five aspects of the Biblical Teshuva paradigm found in Luke 15:11-32 and Matt. 18.
26. List the four laws of the Rabbinical Teshuva paradigm found in Matthew 18.
27. How does Jesus invert the four laws of Rabbinical Teshuva in Matthew 18?
28. We are to love as God loves and forgive as God forgives. Jesus commanded us to *love* our enemies and *pray* for those who persecute us. However, according to Bible, Jesus never commands us to *forgive* our offenders unless they \_\_\_\_\_(Matthew 18:32).

### **Vengeance** Romans 12:19

29. Explain why we will be more capable of loving our enemy if we believe in God's vengeance on our unrepentant enemies. Romans 12:19.
30. Why does God promise that He will repay our unrepentant offenders rather than forgive them of their wrong doing?
31. When does God forgive an offender and when does God repay an offender?
32. How do we obey God's command and "give place unto wrath?"

### **Joseph:** The forgiveness of Joseph toward his brothers

33. When does the Bible indicate clearly that Joseph first forgive the sins of his brothers?

34. Why did Joseph wait so long to forgive the sins His brothers?
35. How does Joseph illustrate the Jewish principles of Teshuva?
36. How does Joseph illustrate the Biblical principle of loving offenders rather than forgiving the guilt of unrepentant offenders?
37. What was Joseph's motivation in being willing to be "complicit" in his father's possible death – possibly causing him to have a heart-attack- as his brothers suggested might happen?

### **Rebuke**

38. When dealing with a sinning brother, Jesus said to first rebuke (Luke 17) or confront with the truth (Matthew 18) and to forgive only if they repent (or "hear" you). Explain what we are doing if we first forgive rather than first rebuke a brother. We are \_\_\_\_\_.
39. Before rebuking another person, what does Jesus commands us to do first? Luke 6:14
40. In Matthew 18, Jesus commands us to treat the unrepentant/unhearing one as a heathen. If we forgive rather than treat him as a heathen, is a sin being committed? Explain.
41. Explain how, according to Jesus, an unrepentant brother is to be treated exactly the same way we would treat a heathen. Matthew 18:17

### **The Lord's Prayer and Mark 11** Matthew 6:14-15 and Mark 11:25

*For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you;  
But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your  
trespasses.*

*And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your  
Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.*

42. Why is understanding of the difference in a debtor and a trespasser important to the Jewish Teshuva principle as well as the Christian principals of forgiveness and repentance in the Lord's Prayer?
43. In one word, what is the difference between our sinning against God and our acknowledging our sin and indebtedness against Him?
44. Is there any example in the Bible of God forgiving egregious sins that go willfully unrepented?
45. If there is no scriptural example where God forgives egregious sins that go willfully unrepented, is it possible for a human to be more forgiving or loving than God or to "forgive" when God will not?

46. If God forgives our sin as we forgive, and if I forgive the sins of an arrogant, unrepentant murderer who spits in my face, will God forgive my sins if I remain an arrogant, unrepentant murderer and spit in His face?

### **Acceptance:**

**In the parable of the Wedding Feast, the king invited all into the banquet, even the good and the evil, but then kicked out the one who was not wearing a wedding garment.**

47. Explain why the king dismissed the man without a wedding garment after inviting him to the feast.
48. Explain what the wedding Garment represents.

### **The Prodigal Son**

49. Explain why it would not fit Jewish culture for the Father to seek out the wayward son and offer him forgiveness.
50. What would have happened to the prodigal son if he had come home arrogant, successful, doing drugs and with prostitutes on each arm?
51. Explain why the prodigal son was planning on confessing his sin, but did not plan on asking for forgiveness nor asking to be reconciled.
52. How does question 51 point out the differences between Biblical concepts and modern concepts of asking for forgiveness?

### **The Rich Young Ruler**

53. Is it possible for Jesus to love someone yet reject them?
54. Did Jesus indicate that He forgave or that He would not forgive and accept the “Rich Young Ruler” as he was (i.e., as an unrepentant “Rich Young Ruler”)?
55. Apart from selling all His possession, what was Jesus really requiring of the “Rich Young Ruler” before He would accept him into His kingdom?

### **The Cross**

**Jesus had both the authority and the power to offer the forgiveness of sins to the woman at Simons house (Luke 7) the paralytic, (Matthew 9) and only one of the thieves beside Him on the cross (Luke 23). Why did He not offer forgiveness to the other thief or to the Roman soldiers?**

56. Explain the difference between making an offer or making a request (i.e., *making an offer of* one million dollars or making a *request for* one million dollars).
57. Explain why Jesus offered forgiveness of sins to the one thief, reconciled with him, justified him, and invited him to heaven, but did not *request (pray for)* forgiveness for him
58. Explain why Jesus *did not* offer reconciliation, justification, or forgiveness for the sins of the Roman soldiers nor invite them to heaven before or after requesting (praying) “Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.”
59. Discuss at least three possible motivations why Jesus' *prayed for forgiveness* for the soldiers without offering forgiveness of sin to them.
60. Explain how the differences between love and forgiveness are illustrated at the Cross in Luke 23.

## True or False

- \_\_\_\_ 1. Jesus forgave His enemies while hanging on the cross.
- \_\_\_\_ 2. Jesus taught to "Forgive your enemy."
- \_\_\_\_ 3. Joseph readily forgave his brothers when he saw them after many years.
- \_\_\_\_ 4. If we do not forgive everyone who sins against us, God will not forgive us of our sins.
- \_\_\_\_ 5. We are to forgive all those who trespass against us.
- \_\_\_\_ 6. We are always to forgive 70 x 7.
- \_\_\_\_ 7. God's forgiveness is unconditional.
- \_\_\_\_ 8. Our forgiveness of others should be unconditional.
- \_\_\_\_ 9. The three Greek words for "forgive" in the New Testament all mean basically the same thing: "to release from guilt and debt."
- \_\_\_\_ 10. The story of the two debtors (in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of Matthew 18) teaches us that we should always forgive anyone who sins against us.
- \_\_\_\_ 11. In Matthew 18:32 the king was willing to forgive the wicked servant because he was a gracious and loving king.
- \_\_\_\_ 12. On the cross, Jesus could have forgiven the soldiers Himself without praying to His Father.
- \_\_\_\_ 13. We should always forgive those who say they are sorry because we may not know what is truly in their hearts.
- \_\_\_\_ 14. It is always better to be forgiving than to be confrontational.
- \_\_\_\_ 15. God will always forgive me as I forgive others.
- \_\_\_\_ 16. God accepts us as we are.



- \_\_\_ 17. If we do not forgive we will be angry and bitter.
- \_\_\_ 18. The Bible uses the term “unforgiveness” over 20 times.
- \_\_\_ 19. If someone remains arrogant and unrepentant, we should forgive them anyway in order to imitate God’s forgiveness of us.
- \_\_\_ 20. Forgiveness means to release myself from anger, resentment, bitterness, etc.
- \_\_\_ 21. Love and forgiveness are inseparable Biblical concepts.
- \_\_\_ 22. Love and meekness are separable Biblical concepts.
- \_\_\_ 23. I can forgive without being reconciled.
- \_\_\_ 24. The Bible instructs us to forgive those who sin against us because God forgives all those who sin against him.
- \_\_\_ 25. The story of the Prodigal Son illustrates that we should always forgive others.
- \_\_\_ 26. The story of the Paralytic (Mark 2) shows how God forgives even before we repent.
- \_\_\_ 27. The story of Hosea and Gomer shows how God forgives even before we repent.
- \_\_\_ 28. God has forgiven everyone, we just have to accept it.
- \_\_\_ 29. Unforgiveness will lead one to anger and bitterness.
- \_\_\_ 30. The Biblical prescription to overcoming anger and bitterness is forgiveness.

\_\_\_ ***What is your score at 3.4 points each? (All of the answers are False.)***