

Giving and Receiving Forgiveness

www.aubeacon.com

Introduction: Forgiveness is the foundation from which we learn how to see life.

- A. It is *no small thing* to have a problem in either giving or receiving forgiveness.
 - 1. Forgiveness is a product of the love of God and the basis of having a relationship with God.
 - 2. Without this understanding and realization of how the love of God acts, we have no foundation! **(Eph 3:17-19)**
 - 3. This will affect how we view ourselves and how we view others. Our most basic perceptions are affected by this! **(2 Pt 1:9)**
- B. Most of our problems in a local church can be traced back to this. **(1 Jn 3:14-16)**
 - 1. Have you heard of brethren that would have nothing to do with one another?
 - 2. Do we have a collection of animosity (hatred) for various people who have done wrong in the past?
 - 3. Or are we always happy to see someone return to the Lord and we wish to support and encourage them?
 - 4. Do we often worry whether God or others have really forgiven us?

I. We serve a God that we can believe when He says that He has forgiven

- A. Forgiveness is not part of the worldly philosophy. **(Titus 3:3)**
 - 1. In the world you learn to “keep your friend close and your enemies closer!” You trust no one and learn to expect the back-stab.
 - 2. To forgive means that you take the loss, write off the debt and put the needs of another above yourself.
 - 3. To the world, forgiveness is just “too good to be true.”
- B. We serve a God that teaches all men that He can be trusted.
 - 1. God tells us emphatically and often that He desires to forgive! **(Ex 34:6-7)**
 - 2. That promise is great, but can you trust God? Everything depends on this.
 - 3. This is why you need to come to know God. Look at the record! **(Rom 15:4-5)**
- C. Three things God does when He forgives.
 - 1. He blots out our sins! **(Acts 3:19; Isa 43:25)**
 - 2. God does not remember our sins any more. **(Heb 8:12)**
 - a. He is described as casting them into the sea. **(Mic 7:18-19)**
 - b. When God forgives our sin is long gone! Do you believe this?
 - c. "When God buries our sins in the deepest sea, He posts a sign which reads: No Fishing!"
 - 3. God receives us back to a full fellowship. **(Lk 15:20-24)**

- a. There is no grudge holding with God. Men are another matter!
- b. Our biggest problem is in believing this.

II. Are we honest with God and ourselves when we say we have forgiven others?

- A. This is where the deceitful heart can do the most damage.
 1. "I will forgive you but I do not have to like you."
(1 Jn 3:18-19; 1 Pt 1:22; 2:1)
 2. The church is not a social club to cater to your social needs. It is a group of people who have been crushed by their own sin and have the forgiving love of God as their only bond.
 3. One of the more painful things I have seen is where brethren separate themselves from other brethren under the banner of the "grace of God" by planting bitterness and strife in the hearts of their disciples
- B. How do I know if I have forgiven another? Here is a test.
 1. Do we get pleasure in their hurt?
 2. Do we intentionally avoid being in their presence?
 3. Do we vividly remember what we have suffered?
 4. Are we uncomfortable when they are praised?
 5. Do we go out of the way to be helpful to that person?
 6. Are we willing to pray for the person?

III. Are we able to receive forgiveness from God and others?

- A. Some say they trust God but still struggle with guilt over past sins.
 1. When we come from a background where others let us down and beat us up this can be a problem.
 2. We may have come from a family of grudge holders and gossipers. Often our first impressions of God come from the home!
 3. Our God tells us that Jesus is now personally active in our forgiveness.
(1 Jn 2:1-2)
 4. We must overcome our background with the knowledge of God's nature and of God's conditional promises. **(Rom 8:31-32; 15-16)**
- B. We should trust brethren to do the right thing.
 1. I realize that many fail to do what they say. The love of God in my heart will believe the best concerning my brethren. **(1 Cor 13:7)**
 2. Some who have *wronged others* look at the person *they hurt* with suspicion and in some cases anger! (Ex. Lending someone money)
 3. It is important for their to be follow-up and words of assurance when someone apologizes to you. **(2 Cor 2:7-8)**
 4. Is the fruit of the Spirit in you? It is easy to trust a kind person!
(Gal 5:22-23)
- C. Having our mind filled with cross-centered thinking is the key for all relationships! **(Eph 4:31-32)**

Conclusion: What's in your mind?