

TEN QUESTIONS TO DIAGNOSE SPIRITUAL HEALTH WEEK 9: ARE YOU QUICKER IN FORGIVENESS?

Mr 11:25 And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses."

Eph 4:32 Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, **forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.**

Col 3:13 bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, **forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you**, so you also must forgive.

I. REAL BELIEVERS DESIRE TO FORGIVE

A. Believers will never be truly joyful or useful while carrying the load of unforgiveness.

B. Scripture > forgiving = being forgiven

1. Mt 6:14 For **if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you,**

2. Lu 6:37 ¶ "Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; **forgive, and you will be forgiven;**

C. Don't earn forgiveness by forgiving→ Forgiveness is a Characteristic of the forgiven!

D. Repenters are FORGIVERS!

1. Only by God's grace will the flesh of man succumb to the will of God to forgive

2. Fact gives great hope that one is a child of the King when desire to forgive.

3. God's grace causes a desire to forgive→flesh easily justifies reasons not to.

E. Mat 18:21-35 – (paraphrased) Jesus tells a story of a king forgiving a servant that owed him much money.

1. Servant then abuses a fellow servant who owed him just a little.

2. King heard of it and asked the servant he had forgiven, "You wicked servant! Should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant as I had mercy on you?"

3. Wicked servant was then thrown into prison for the rest of his life to pay his own impossibly larger debt.

4. Jesus stated, "**Mt 18:35 So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.**"

F. True believers forgive because they understand all they have been forgiven.

II. "READY TO FORGIVE" vs "ACTUALLY FORGIVING?"

A. Whitney: "*No where in Scripture does it state that Christians must forgive where there is no repentance from the offending party.*"

B. What is required→must always be "ready to forgive" and make this "readiness" visible.

C. Ne 9:17 They refused to obey and were not mindful of the wonders that you performed among them, but they stiffened their neck and appointed a leader to return to their slavery in Egypt. **But you are a God ready to forgive**, gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and did not forsake them.

1. God always stands ready to forgive→ never forgives anyone without repentance.
2. Willing to forgive all who actually seek forgiveness.

D. Christians must in their own heart “be ready” to forgive anyone who sins against them.

E. Lu 23:34 And Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” And they cast lots to divide his garments.

1. NOT UNCONDITIONAL FORGIVENESS.
2. Jesus prayed for His persecutors
3. Jesus displayed a “verbal willingness to forgive”.

F. **Whitney discusses Inward and Outward forgiveness**

1. Inward Forgiveness is what is in the heart
 - a. Christians must always immediately forgive sins against them in their heart.
 - b. NOT commanded to verbalize forgiveness unless person seeks forgiveness.
2. Must personally forgive inwardly and NOT let bitterness build in your heart
3. The Offender (Christian or NOT) has a responsibility to repent and seek forgiveness for offenses to another person.
4. The matter cannot be settled by just one of the parties.

G. Christians must NOT become bitter and allow hatred to grow regardless of whether the offender seeks forgiveness.

1. This is Not to be confused with forgiveness itself.
2. This is again, being “ready & willing” to forgive if the offender comes and repents.

H. **To take the Initiative and Announce forgiveness without Repentance is to Misunderstand Scripture.**

1. Announcing forgiveness without repentance may be construed as judgmental or condescending.
2. Regardless if the offender ever brings it up or asks for forgiveness → we must stand ready to forgive.
3. If NOT WILLING to forgive, it is sin.

I. Leon Morris (commentator): “*We can always think of some good reason why in any particular case we need not to forgive.*”

J. Whitney: “*But that is always error. Growing Christians will recognize that error and become quicker to say, “I am ready to forgive,”*”

III. FORGIVING & FORGETTING

A. Scripture does not say, “forgive and forget” although forgetfulness results from forgiveness at times.”

B. **God forgives sins, but Does God actually forget your sins?**

- C. Jer 31:34 And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. **For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.**"
- D. **"remember no more"**→ Heb "zawkar lo owd" → call to mind, mention, record
- E. Verse looks forward to the New Covenant when God forgives, all sin is removed from your account, not to be mentioned again by God.→ Unlike the Old Covenant when sacrifices were made each year.
- F. Calvin: *"As the prophet is speaking to when mercy and grace which God promises, he is declaring that God would be kind and so gracious as not to remember our iniquities."*
- G. Does NOT mean that God cannot remember your sins after He forgives.
1. God is omniscient, He knows everything past, present and future-→ forgets nothing.
 2. Remember any of your past sins? Do you think you know something God does not?
 3. Means that God will no longer remember your sins to be against you anymore.
- H. **Same is to be true when we forgive sins of others**
1. "I forgive you" is not a commitment that you will erase the wrong from your mind.
 2. Does mean you put it away from your heart's record against this person.
 3. Not to bring it up again, not to rehash it in your own mind!
 4. May take time to build trust again but granting forgiveness always means issue is never again to be a problem in the relationship.
 5. Seeks for the relationship to be guided biblically going forward.

IV. DEALING WITH THE MEMORY

- A. **LIKELY ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT CHALLENGES TO SPIRITUAL GROWTH – NOT BRINGING A HURT UP AGAIN!**
1. Bitterness was a characteristic of your unsaved life→ Ro 3:14 *Whose mouth is full of cursing and **bitterness**: (AV)*
 2. We are to fight to put away→ Eph 4:31 *Let all **bitterness** and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.*
 3. Heb 12:15 **See to it** that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of **bitterness** springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled;
- B. Lu 17:3 *"Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. 4 "And if he sins against you seven times a day, and returns to you **seven times**, saying, 'I repent,' forgive him."*
1. Person sinning against you multiple times– each time we are called to forgive.
 2. Each time! Yes!
 3. **How do I do that?** → Lu 17:5 *The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!"*
 4. You need help→ go to where help is plentiful!

C. Same is True with Memory

1. Memory of the offense comes up over and over.
2. Each time it comes up → you must be willing to forgive it!
3. Must come to Christ to give you new “willingness to forgive” all over again.
4. Repeat as needed→ going to Christ
5. When you truly forgive→ bitterness will be gone→ that is forgetfulness!

D. Have I truly forgiven?

1. At times, just like the world, we simply bury the thoughts, but the bitterness is still there.
2. Careful to not let forgetfulness mask unforgiveness.

V. Test of the Heart

A. C.S. Lewis: *“everyone thinks forgiveness is a good idea, until he has something to forgive.”*

B. Whitney→ Questions to ask yourself intended to by God’s grace help you to forgive as Christ.

1. Is there anyone you are NOT Ready to Forgive?

- a. To grow more like Christ we must do as Christ in every situation.
- b. Go to Christ! → **Ps 86:5 For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, And abundant in lovingkindness to all who call upon You.**

2. Do you need to Initiate the Process of Forgiveness with Anyone?

- a. If you have offended anyone– go ask forgiveness & repent!
- b. Maybe you told everyone about it→ gossiping is sin!
- c. Ask for forgiveness! Regardless whether they get it, you do!
- d. **Mt 5:23 "Therefore if you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your offering there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering.**

3. Was the offense against you actually a sin?

- a. Person may not see it, but if obvious to you→ need to pray and initiate process.
- b. If we love our brother, we need to rebuke sin.
- c. **Jesus→ Lu 17:3 Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him,**
- d. Not every little thing→ Don’t be nit-picky→ **“1Pe 4:8 Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.**
- e. Time to confront sin is when it is **too egregious to overlook** or when it is just too big in your own heart to let go and still be in a relationship in Christ.

4. Do You Love Forgiveness?

- a. Are you too easily offended? Self conscious?
- b. Believers love Forgiveness→ they have been forgiven much→ how little is anyone who offends you compared to what you have been forgiven?
- c. Being Quick in Forgiveness is a mark of Spiritual Maturity