

Forgiving and Being Forgiven

Living our lives God's way requires changing the way we think and act. At first this is somewhat like learning a new language using the same words we used before but with a totally different mindset.

As we progress and grow we leave behind old ways we are familiar with and replace them with new ones. Our new lifestyle changes the way we think, and how we communicate with others. This process is an ongoing thing for as long as we live in our physical bodies.

One of the most difficult concepts to embrace is forgiving. The world is not into forgiving. We need to surrender our lives to Jesus to make this one work for us.

Forgiveness includes forgiving ourselves as well as others.

The Bible says we have to forgive others in order to be forgiven ourselves. What will happen if we don't forgive is addressed directly and clearly.

Matthew 6:14 For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

Also:

Matthew 11:25 And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.

Also:

*Proverbs 20:22 Do not say, "I'll pay you back for this wrong!"
Wait for the LORD, and he will deliver you.*

We need to do good works. Getting even does not qualify.

Also:

Colossians 3:13 Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

Living in a world where forgiving once is not in vogue, we now find the requirement to forgive as many times as our brother asks us to. If we don't things will just simply not go well for us.

Matthew 18:21-35 Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, "I tell

*you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times. "Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt. "The servant fell on his knees before him. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.' The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go. "But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii. He grabbed him and began to choke him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he demanded. "His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.' "But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. When the other servants saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed and went and told their master everything that had happened. "Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?'³⁴In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. **"This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart."**(Emphasis Added)*

We should not **judge or punish** others who do things that require our forgiveness.

1 John 1:9-10 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.

Our instructions are clearly stated. We have to forgive. God is just and therefore will punish those who harm others.

Romans 12:19 Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord.

Jesus presents the ultimate role model to emulate:

Luke 23:34 Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.

Jesus asked forgiveness for them while they were killing Him. This bought for us the opportunity to be with him.

By always remembering this, and with the help of the Holy Spirit, we all can forgive so we may be forgiven.

Thoughts by John Oliver
a grateful and unworthy servant