

Get Together on Lasting Solutions

The fourth of 4 godly responses to conflict
Go and be reconciled – Matt 5:24

Life Bridge Community Church
Week 7 of 8



Review

G#1; Go to Higher Ground: Glorify God. Don't leave Him out of conflict. What would please and honor?

G#2; Get Real About Yourself: Don't focus on the other person; get the log out of your own eye.

G#3; Gently Engage Others: Having taken responsibility for our own sin, we assist others with the goals of reconciliation and restoration. Remember the PAUSE principle, which helps us have difficult conversations.

Get Together on Lasting Solutions

A combination of BOTH the *resolution of the issue* AND the *reconciliation of the relationship*.

Lasting peace requires a reconciled relationship, which is the result of genuine forgiveness.

Forgiveness

See Matthew 5:23-24 – “... leave your offering at the altar. First go and be reconciled ...”

Being reconciled = the giving and receiving of true heart-level forgiveness.

This should be the hallmark of a Christian, because *one who has been forgiven much, loves much.* (Luke 7:47)

Raises very complex and interesting questions:

- What does forgiveness really mean?
- Do I forgive someone who has not repented?
- What about consequences?

Unpacking Forgiveness

Forgiveness is NOT a feeling or forgetting or excusing.

Forgiveness isn't a matter of forgetting,
but of how we remember

Forgiveness is a **decision** modeled after how God has forgiven us: not to hold an offense against the offender.
See Ephesians 4:32 – “... *forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.*”

Forgiveness: A Two-Step Process



Heart component: Between me and God

Step 1: I release the offense to God; the unconditional willingness to let go of it

Protects me from bitterness

Unforgiveness is the poison we drink hoping someone else will die.

Does NOT require repentance / confession from the offender, but prepares me for reconciliation with them (when they are ready)

Transactional component: Between me and the other person

Step 2: I extend forgiveness to the offender; the unconditional release from the offense

Extends the peace already in my heart (from step 1) to the other person, seeking reconciliation

Requires repentance / confession from the offender

Forgiveness rests on you.
Reconciliation rests on both parties.

What does “I forgive you” really mean?

Forgiveness is four promises: With God’s help...

1. I promise I will not dwell on this incident (H)
2. I promise I will not bring up this incident and use it against you (T)
3. I promise I will not talk to others about this incident (T)
4. I promise I will not allow this incident to stand between us or hinder our personal relationship (T)

What about the consequences?

Heart forgiveness doesn’t necessarily release us from worldly consequences.

Sometimes it is best to show mercy.

Sometimes it is best to allow a person to experience consequences that will teach a needed lesson.

The consequence must be material, not relational.

Is forgiveness hard?

Giving up our right to justice is a form of suffering, a way that we become more like Jesus.

Only the Spirit of God can give us the desire and ability to truly forgive others’ sins. (See Phil 2:13)

Corrie ten Boom on Forgiveness

It was at a church service in Munich that I saw him, the former S.S. man who had stood guard at the shower room door in the processing center at Ravensbruck. He was the first of our actual jailers that I had seen since that time. And suddenly it was all there – the roomful of mocking men, the heaps of clothing, Betsie’s pain-blانched face.

He came up to me as the church was emptying, beaming and bowing. “How grateful I am for your message, Fraulein.” he said. “To think that, as you say, He has washed my sins away!”

His hand was thrust out to shake mine. And I, who had preached so often to the people in Bloemendaal the need to forgive, kept my hand at my side.

Even as the angry, vengeful thoughts boiled through me, I saw the sin of them. Jesus Christ had died for this man; was I going to ask for more? Lord Jesus, I prayed, forgive me and help me to forgive him.

I tried to smile, I struggled to raise my hand. I could not. I felt nothing, not the slightest spark of warmth or charity. And so again I breathed a silent prayer. Jesus, I cannot forgive him. Give me Your forgiveness.

As I took his hand the most incredible thing happened. From my shoulder along my arm and through my hand a current seemed to pass from me to him, while into my heart sprang a love for this stranger that almost overwhelmed me.

And so I discovered that it is not on our forgiveness any more than on our goodness that the world’s healing hinges, but on His. When He tells us to love our enemies, He gives, along with the command, the love itself.

– Corrie ten Boom, *The Hiding Place*, p238.

Discussion Question(s)

1. Is there someone whom God is telling you that you need to forgive?
2. In the video, the one man clearly had not forgiven the other, even though he insisted that he had. What could each of the men in the video have done differently?
3. How can an unwillingness to move toward forgiveness affect our relationship with God? What about with other people (other than the person against whom we're harboring Unforgiveness)?
4. What is the connection between forgiveness and trust?