



The Lost Art of Being Forgiving Like the Father

Lesson Eight

In February 2015, jihadis from the self-described Islamic State murdered twenty-one Coptic Orthodox Christian men, migrant workers from Egypt, by beheading them on a beach in Libya. The mother of victim Tawadros Youisif had this to say about the murderers of her son:

“I can’t wish them evil. I pray for them that God may open their hearts and give them his light.”



When We Recover the Lost Art of Being Forgiving...

- We **REPRODUCE** the heart attitude of Jesus on the cross and Stephen being stoned. (Palm Sunday)
- We **REFLECT** God’s unconditional attitude toward sinners in general. (Resurrection Sunday)

“What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.” A.W. Tozer

Recovering the Lost Art of Being Forgiving Like the Father

1. How God the Father shows a forgiving attitude toward **UNREPENTANT** sinners.

- God’s attitude of being forgiving toward sinners is revealed in...
 - 1) His **unchanging CHARACTER** toward sinners. *Exodus 34:6-7; Numbers 14:18*
 - 2) His **unappreciated CARE** of sinners. *Matthew 5:43-47; Luke 6:35-36*
 - 3) His **undeserved COMPASSION** for sinners. *Jonah 4:1-2, 10*
 - 4) His **unlimited CONCERN** for sinners. *John 3:16; 1John 2:2; 1Timothy 4:10*

The Father’s provision and the Son’s payment on the cross was sufficient for all but effective only for the elect who turn from their sin to trust in Jesus Christ alone!

The Father did not forgive everyone in Christ but provided the one and only way for any and every sinner to be saved if they hear the message and place their faith in Christ alone for salvation.

- Because God has a forgiving attitude toward the worst of sinners (including us before we were saved), we can have a forgiving attitude toward the worst of sinners...even if they never repent of their sins and ask for forgiveness.

2. How God the Father shows a forgiving attitude toward **REPENTANT** sinners. Luke 15:17-24

The Heart of a Repentant Son - Luke 15:17-20, 21

- His repentance was rooted in a change of **MIND/HEART**. (v. 17)
- His repentance was revealed in a change of **LIFE** that returned without any demands, conditions, excuses, or blame shifting. (vv. 18-19, 21)
- His repentance was reported with a confession of **SIN** against God and his father. (vv. 18, 21)

The Heart of a Forgiving Father - Luke 15:20-24

- He kept **ONE EYE ON THE HORIZON** with a forgiving heart that was ready and willing to give forgiveness. (v. 20)
- He **SAW HIM WITH COMPASSION** that revealed a tender heart of kindness and sympathy. (v. 20)
- He **RAN TO MEET HIM** revealing an eagerness for forgiveness and reconciliation. (v. 20)
- He **ACCEPTED HIM BACK** with undeserved and unrestrained love. (v. 20)
- He **IMMEDIATELY FORGAVE HIM** on the basis of his repentance and was quick to reconcile and restore him to a right relationship. (vv. 21-22)
 - 1) Orders the servants to **DRESS** “this son of mine” (v. 24) like servants do a king.
 - 2) Put the best **ROBE** on him!
 - 3) Put a **RING** on his finger!
 - 4) Put **SANDALS** on his feet!
- He **CELEBRATED** his repentance and the restoration of the relationship with others. (vv. 23, 27)
- He **JOYFULLY PROCLAIMED** the forgiveness, reconciliation, and restoration with others. (v. 24)

3. How God’s children FAIL to follow in their Father’s footsteps and be forgiving toward repentant sinners. Luke 15:25-32

- We **BECOME ANGRY** at God’s eagerness, readiness, and willingness to be forgiving and give forgiveness to repentant sinners. (vv. 25-28)
- We **REFUSE TO ACCEPT** those God has chosen to accept so freely and graciously. (v. 28)
- We **MAINTAIN A HARD HEART** filled with self-centered envy and jealousy. (v. 29)
- We **FORGET HOW MUCH** the Father has freely given us in Christ when we did not deserve it, understand it, or appreciate it. (v. 31)
- We **MISS OUT ON CELEBRATING** the forgiveness and grace the Father gives us in His Son, Jesus Christ. (v. 32)

Reflect the Father’s Heart of Being Forgiving Toward All Who Are Far from Him

- ***Be forgiving*** toward both the “bad boy” rebels and the “good boy” rebels – *both need to repent and be forgiven!*
- ***Be willing*** to humble yourself in order to be forgiving toward the unrepentant and give forgiveness to those who do repent.
- ***Keep seeking and pleading*** with those who persist in their sins with hard heart – *but don’t let them rob you of your joy in the Lord or keep you from your daily responsibilities to the Lord and His people!*
- ***Keep celebrating*** when those who are far from God come home and receive forgiveness – *throw a party when the lost get found and dead get raised to new life!*