



Recovering the Lost Art of Forgiveness

Lesson One

As Christ followers we have a moral imperative from our Lord to RECOVER the lost art of forgiveness.

“The single most important concept in biblical Christianity is forgiveness.” –Understanding and Facilitating Forgiveness

“Forgiveness is at the very core of Christianity. In fact, forgiveness is so central to the Christian faith, the argument could successfully be made that without forgiveness, Christianity as we know it would not exist. The central message of Christianity is that God loves mankind and has forgiven their sins because of the sacrifice of His Son Jesus. Forgiveness cannot be separated from Christianity any more than a man can be separated from air and still survive.” – Unknown

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1. Have We Lost the LEGACY of Forgiveness in the Bible?

1. The **first time** the concept of “forgiveness” is introduced in the Bible – Genesis 3:9, 15, 21

“Then the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, ‘Where are you?’” Gen 3:9

“And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel’...The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them.” Gen 3:15, 21

2. The **first use** of “forgive” in the Bible – Genesis 50:17 (NAS)

“Thus you shall say to Joseph, ‘Please forgive, I beg you, the transgression of your brothers and their sin, for they did you wrong.’ And NOW, please forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of your father.’ And Joseph wept when they spoke to him.” Gen 50:17

3. The **second use** of “forgive” in the Bible – Exodus 10:17 (NAS)

“Now therefore, please forgive my sin only this once, and make supplication to the LORD your God, that He would only remove this death from me.” Ex 10:17

4. The **third use** of “forgive” in the Bible – Exodus 32:32 (NAS)

“But now, if You will, forgive their sin — and if not, please blot me out from Your book which You have written!” Ex 32:32

5. The **fourth use** of “forgive” in the Bible – Exodus 34:6-7 (NAS)

“Then the LORD passed by in front of him and proclaimed, ‘The LORD, the LORD God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations.’” Ex 34:6-7

6. The **first use** of “forgive” in the New Testament – Matthew 6:12, 14-15; Mark 11:25 (NAS)

“And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors...for if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.” Matt 6:12

7. The **second use** of “forgive” in the New Testament – Matthew 9:2-6 (NAS)

“And they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralytic, ‘Take courage, son; your sins are forgiven.’ And some of the scribes said to themselves, ‘This fellow blasphemes.’ And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, ‘Why are you thinking evil in your hearts? Which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up, and walk’? But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins’ — then He said to the paralytic, ‘Get up, pick up your bed and go home.’” Matt 9:2-6

8. Yet **another use** of “forgive” at the end of Gospels – Luke 24:46-48; John 20:23 (NAS)

“and He said to them, ‘Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. “You are witnesses of these things.”” Lk 24:46

9. **Other uses** of “forgive” in the Book of Acts – Acts 10:42-44; 26:16-21 (NAS)

“And He ordered us to preach to the people, and solemnly to testify that this is the One who has been appointed by God as Judge of the living and the dead. Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins.” Acts 10:42-43

10. **Vertical and horizontal uses** of “forgive” in the Epistles – 1 John 1:8-10; Ephesians 4:30-33 (NAS)

“He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” 1Jn 1:9

“Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.” Eph 4:32-33

2. We Have a Moral Imperative to Recover God's Legacy of Forgiveness.

God's Moral Imperative Is to...

1. Recover the **CHARACTER (HEART)** of our forgiving God. *Exodus 34:6-7*
2. Recover **CHRIST** as the one and only Mediator of forgiveness for all people. *Matthew 9:4-6*
3. Recover the **COMMISSION** to proclaim forgiveness through Christ to all people groups. *Luke 24:46-48; Acts 10:42-44*
4. Recover a **COMMITMENT** to the practice of being forgiven by God and sharing that same forgiveness with others. *Matthew 6:12, 14; 1John 1:9; Ephesians 4:31-32*

3. Recovering the Lost of ART of Forgiveness.

Goal: Grow in the talent, skill, and discipline of being forgiven by God and forgiving one another in Christ.

The Lost Art of Forgiveness Is...

1. A supernatural **TALENT**. *Matthew 6:12, 14*

- Forgiving others is the **BIRTHMARK** of every true child of God.

Forgiven people are forgiving people.

- It is the supernatural **RESPONSE** to receiving and rejoicing in God's forgiveness of us in Christ Jesus.

Being forgiving is not a natural talent but a supernatural one given by God to His people in Christ.

- It is a grace-enabled gift that God the Father gives to **EVERYONE** of His children when they are born again.

2. Forgiveness is a sacred **SKILL**. *1John 1:9; Ephesians 4:31-32*

- Receiving and giving forgiveness is **BOTH** an art and a skill that must be taught, learned, and practiced.

Forgiven people are forgiving people that need to be taught how to receive and give forgiveness!

- We need to equip ourselves and others in **What** it is, **How** to do it, **When** to do it, and most of **Why** to do it!

Forgiven people are forgiving people who are able to pass on the skill of forgiveness to others – one of the greatest life skills you can ever pass on to anyone!

3. Forgiveness is a spiritual **DISCIPLINE**. *1John 1:9; Ephesians 4:32*

"Believers without spiritual disciplines are only spiritual romantics who want relationship without work." – Dallas Willard

Spiritual Disciplines are...

Heart-engaging habits which are a means of grace that the Father has put in our grasp by the Spirit to become more like Christ!

The Twin Spiritual Disciplines of Confession and Forgiveness

- The Spiritual Discipline of **CONFESSION**: *Asking and Receiving Forgiveness from God.*
- The Spiritual Discipline of **FORGIVING**: *Asking and Giving Forgiveness with One Another.*

We Can Recover the Lost Art of Forgiveness

Because God the Father gives us this supernatural talent when we are born again into His family.

Because God the Son teaches us this sacred skill as we follow other disciples who follow Him.

Because God the Spirit enables us to develop this spiritual discipline by His empowering presence.