



## ANSWERS TO LIFE'S 7 MOST IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

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### HOW CAN I KNOW HOW TO FORGIVE SOMEONE WHO HAS HURT ME?

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Introduction: C.S. Lewis wrote, “Forgiveness is a lovely idea, until we have something to forgive.” Although we extol the value of forgiveness in theory, we find it difficult to practice in our everyday life. Yet, choosing to forgive those who hurt us is essential for our physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

#### I. Why Forgiveness Matters

“Forgiveness is hard, it hurts, and it costs.” But the decision not to forgive is even more costly.  
David W. Augsburger

#### A. Physical Benefits of Forgiveness

“Forgiveness releases us from prolonged anger, rage, and stress that have been linked to physiological problems, such as cardiovascular diseases, high blood pressure, hypertension, cancer, and other psychosomatic illnesses.” Dr. Glen Mack Harnden

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### B. Emotional Benefits of Forgiveness

“To forgive is to put down our 50-pound pack after a 10-mile climb up a mountain. To forgive is to fall into a chair after a 15-mile marathon. To forgive is to set a prisoner free and discover the prisoner was you.”  
Lewis Smedes

### C. Spiritual Benefits of Forgiveness

Matthew 6:14-15 “<sup>14</sup>For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. <sup>15</sup>But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.”

Matthew 18:27 “The lord of that slave felt compassion and released him and forgave him the debt.”

Matthew 18:32-34 “<sup>32</sup>Then summoning him, his lord said to him, ‘You wicked slave, I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. <sup>33</sup>‘Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave, in the same way that I had mercy on you?’ <sup>34</sup>And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him.”

Matthew 18:35 “My heavenly Father will also do the same to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart.”

“Unforgiving people are consumed with their own circumstances and feelings. The sad result is an arrogant denial of God’s mercy, trivializing God’s own great sacrifice. Their sense of personal wrong (however warranted) so fills their vision that they cannot see beyond it to the cross. Unforgiving people cannot be truly contrite before God in response to their own sins.” Kathy Dahlen

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### II. Misunderstandings About Forgiveness

#### A. Forgiveness Is Not Ignoring or **Rationalizing** Offenses

Genesis 50:20-21 “<sup>20</sup>‘As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive. <sup>21</sup>So therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones.’ So he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.”

#### B. Forgiveness Is Not Surrendering Our Desire for **Justice**

Romans 12:19 “Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,’ says the Lord.”

Psalms 82:3 “Vindicate the weak and fatherless; do justice to the afflicted and destitute.”

Isaiah 1:17 “Learn to do good; seek justice, reprove the ruthless, defend the orphan, plead for the widow.”

Romans 13:4b “...a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil.”

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### C. Forgiveness Is Not **Forgetting** Offenses

Micah 7:19 “He will again have compassion on us; He will tread our iniquities under foot. Yes, You will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.”

Jeremiah 31:34b “...for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.”

Romans 4:7-8 “<sup>7</sup>Blessed are those whose lawless deeds have been forgiven, and whose sins have been covered. <sup>8</sup>Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will not take into account.”

Romans 3:23a “For the wages of sin is death...”

Colossians 2:13b-14 “<sup>13</sup>...having forgiven us all our transgressions, <sup>14</sup>having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.”

### D. Forgiveness Is Not **Reconciling** with Our Offender

Romans 12:18 “If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.”

Reconciliation Requires...

1. **Repentance**

2 Corinthians 7:10 “For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death.”

2. **Rehabilitation**

3. **Restitution**

III. Understanding Authentic Forgiveness

Matthew 18:27 “And the lord of that slave felt compassion and released him and forgave him the debt.”

## HOW CAN I KNOW HOW TO FORGIVE SOMEONE WHO HAS HURT ME?

A. Genuine Forgiveness **Acknowledges** the Offense

B. Genuine Forgiveness **Calculates** the Debt

C. Genuine Forgiveness **Releases** the Debtor to God

Mark 11:25 “Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father who is in heaven may forgive you your transgressions.”

“When we genuinely forgive, we set a prisoner free and then discover the prisoner we set free was us.”  
Lewis Smedes

Conclusion

*Next week's message: "How Can I Know There Is A God?"*