

“FORGIVENESS – WHY, WHEN, HOW & WHAT?”

Forgiveness is something that is often misunderstood, even in Christian circles. Today we’ll look to God’s Word to answer the questions of WHY, WHEN, HOW & WHAT with regard to forgiveness.

I. WHY Should I Ask for Forgiveness? (Ps.66:18)

- To Avoid a Strained Relationship **With God**
- To Avoid a Strained Relationship **With Others**

II. WHEN Should I Ask Forgiveness? (Mat.5:23-24)

- Jesus describes it as an **URGENT** situation
- Know when **NOT** to ask forgiveness

III. HOW do I ask for Forgiveness? (Prov.10:19; 25:11; 28:13)

- Do - Use simple/factual terms
- Do - Clearly **request** forgiveness
- Don’t - confess with poor attitude
- Don’t - confess accusing or **excusing**

IV. WHAT Comes After Forgiveness

- **Restitution** (Lk.19:8; Ex.22:1-4)
- Remaining **Consequences** (Num. 14:20-23; 2Sam.12:13-14)
- Reconciliation (Prov.18:19; 2 Cor.2:7-8)

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(Understanding and Practicing Forgiveness)

Small Group Discussion Guide

1. **Read and discuss Psalm 66:18**
Why is it important for us to ask for forgiveness when we sin? (Consider also 1 Pet.3:7 and 1 Jn.1:6, 9)
2. **Read and discuss Matt.5:23-24**
Why is Jesus’ instruction on the urgency of reconciling with a brother such an important teaching for the Christian life?
3. What are some important “Do’s” and “Don’ts” when asking someone to forgive you? Consider Prov.10:19; 25:11; 28:13 and 1 Jn.1:9 in your answer.
4. **Read and discuss Prov.18:19**
Why can it be so “hard” to reconcile with a brother who has been offended? What can we do to help tear down the “wall” mentioned in Prov.18:19 if we find ourselves on either side of it?
5. **Read and discuss 2 Cor.2:7-8**
Why are these verses so important to understand true forgiveness? What are some specific things we can do to apply these verses in a situation in which we have forgiven someone? How does Rom.5:20 relate to this question? What does Rom.5:20 mean to you personally?

Digging Deeper:

How do the following passages show that even when our sins are forgiven, there may still be painful consequences – Num.14:19-23; 2 Sam.12:13-14; and Gal.6:7.

Review the following passages to see how God feels about the importance of making restitution when we have wronged someone – Ex.22:1-4; Lev.5:16; 6:5; Num.5:5-7; and Lk.19:8.

For next week – Reflect upon Christ’s amazing words from the cross recorded in Lk. 23:34. What does this tell us about our Savior? How is this an example for us?