

Christmas Gifts

The Gifts of Forgiveness

2 Samuel 19:1-8 (NIV)

Joab was told, "The king is weeping and mourning for Absalom." [2] And for the whole army the victory that day was turned into mourning, because on that day the troops heard it said, "The king is grieving for his son." [3] The men stole into the city that day as men steal in who are ashamed when they flee from battle. [4] The king covered his face and cried aloud, "O my son Absalom! O Absalom, my son, my son!"

[5] Then Joab went into the house to the king and said, "Today you have humiliated all your men, who have just saved your life and the lives of your sons and daughters and the lives of your wives and concubines. [6] You love those who hate you and hate those who love you. You have made it clear today that the commanders and their men mean nothing to you. I see that you would be pleased if Absalom were alive today and all of us were dead. [7] Now go out and encourage your men. I swear by the Lord that if you don't go out, not a man will be left with you by nightfall. This will be worse for you than all the calamities that have come upon you from your youth till now."

John 8:3-11 (NIV)

The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group [4] and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. [5] In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" [6] They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him.

But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. [7] When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her." [8] Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground. [9] At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. [10] Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?"

[11] "No one, sir," she said. "**Then neither do I condemn you,**" Jesus declared. "**Go now and leave your life of sin.**"

How we process forgiveness defines our lives!

I. Scriptural Boundaries --understanding the ground rules.

A. Forgiveness is not optional

Matthew 6:14-15 (NIV)

For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. [15] But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

B. No statute of limitations

Matthew 18:21-22 (NIV)

Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.

C. Forgiveness can be achieved quickly!

Mark 11:25 (NIV)

And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins."

II. Understanding the Process

A. Def --- **Forgiveness:** the act of setting someone free from an obligation to you -that is a result of a wrong done against you.

B. 3 Elements in the Process of Forgiveness:

1. Injury
2. Debt
3. Cancellation of the Debt

Bondage is always the result when the process of forgiveness is abandoned!

- C. Forgiving the Hurts We Don't Deserve
- D. Consequences of an Unforgiving Spirit

III. Healing Through Forgiveness

A. Misconceptions about Forgiveness

1. justifying, understanding or explaining away someone's behavior is the same as forgiving him or her
2. time heals all wounds
3. forgiving others is denying that we have been hurt or pretending that the hurt is no big deal
4. truly forgiving others requires us to go to them personally and acknowledge our forgiveness

B. Forgiveness is a Choice, Not an emotion!

1. Recognize that we have been totally forgiven.
Col. 2:13-14 (NIV)
He forgave us all our sins . . . he took it away, nailing it to the cross.
2. Release the person from the debt we think is owed
3. Accept others as they are AND release them from any responsibility to meet our needs.
4. A perspective change
5. When possible make a step toward restoration

C. Consequences of Forgiving

1. Our negative feelings will dissipate
2. Easier to accept people without the need to change them.
3. Concern for others will outweigh our concerns about what they did to us

Prayer

Lord, I forgive (name of person) for (name the specifics). I take authority over the enemy, and in the name of Jesus Christ and by the power of His Holy Spirit, I take back the ground I have allowed Satan to gain in my life because of my attitude toward (the person) and give this ground back to my Lord Jesus Christ. I thank you that I am forgiven and I choose to forgive all others. In Jesus' name, amen.