

FOUNDATIONAL BIBLE STUDY



The Art of Forgiveness

The Christian life is full of challenges. It is a day to day struggle as we strive to become the person God desires. Change is hard and every day we face things that tempt us back into the old life style. One of our biggest challenges is other people. And one of the hardest things about dealing with other people is learning to forgive. But it is also one of the fundamental truths about God. In our efforts to become more Christ-like, there are very few things that are more important, to learn, than the art of forgiveness.

(All Scriptures NIV)

Let's establish a few basic guidelines as we prepare to look at forgiveness. Please read the following scriptures and, in your own words, write what they say to you.

Romans 3:22 & 23: _____

2 Corinthians 5:17-19: _____

John 14:12: _____

So from these three scriptures we can clearly see that:

- Everybody messes up (sins) (**Romans 3:23**)
- God does not hold our sins against us. (**2 Corinthians 5:19**)
- The things Jesus did, we should do also. (**John 14:12**)

Please read the following scriptures and fill in the blanks.

Matthew 6:14 & 15 - For if _____ forgive men when they _____ against _____, your heavenly Father will also _____ you. But if you _____ forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive _____ sins.

Mark 11:25 - And when _____ stand praying, if _____ hold anything against anyone, _____ him, so that _____ in heaven may _____ you _____ sins.

From those scriptures it may appear that without forgiving we cannot be forgiven. Time doesn't allow for a complete study of this but let's go back to the beginning of our study. John 14:12 tells those of us who believe that we should attempt to become like Jesus. And Romans 3:23 tells us that everybody messes up. Your salvation is based on your belief in Jesus Christ and His Lordship over your life. (Read Galatians 2:20) But being

saved means striving to be like Christ.

So how many times should I be willing to forgive someone? Good question; please read the following scriptures and fill in the blanks.

Matthew 18:21 & 22 - Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall _____ my brother when he _____ against _____? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, "I tell _____, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.

Luke 17:3 & 4 - So _____ yourselves. "If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, _____ him. If he _____ against you seven times in a day, and seven times comes back to you and says, 'I repent,' _____ him."

So how many times does God expect you to forgive someone? You may want to say 77 times. But that number is there for a reason, God knows we can't keep track of the number of times someone sins against us. Also some translations say seventy times seven.

What happens when we forgive? Please read the following scriptures and fill in the blanks.

Psalms 103:8-12 - The LORD is _____ and gracious, _____ to anger, abounding in _____. He will not always _____, nor will he harbor his _____ forever; he does _____ treat us as our sins _____ or _____ us according to our _____. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he _____ our transgressions from us.

As we prepare to end this study, please read **Luke 23:33&34**.

Even as Jesus hung on the cross, dying for you and me, He asked God to forgive those who crucified Him. Should we do any less?

There is so much more we could study about forgiveness. We could look at the peace that comes when we truly forgive. We could look at the freedom that comes to us when we learn to forgive. We could look at the witness and ministry opportunities that come when we forgive.

As you continue to study God's word, as you spend time with other believers and as you strive to become the person God desires you to become, please ask God to reveal more to you about the art of forgiveness. Ask God to teach you to forgive. In fact why not take a moment right now and search your heart? Is there someone that you need to forgive?

Suggestion: Please pick a verse that spoke something to you and memorize it.