



## Study 2

# EXTENDING FORGIVENESS TO OTHERS

## Objectives

1. To understand who deserves our forgiveness.
2. To be able to make Christ our model of forgiveness.
3. To distinguish between God's unconditional love and His conditional forgiveness.
4. To help others experience the blessing of transactional forgiveness.

The young pastor had just preached another sermon on the need for Christians to forgive those who had hurt them. Several people responded at the end of the message. Some confessed their unforgiveness toward those who had hurt them. Some confessed that they needed to experience God's forgiveness for their own shortcomings. But one middle-aged woman responded and tearfully asked the pastor to pray for her as she had been struggling for years at the pain caused to her by her ex-husband who had left her for another woman. She quietly cried as she told the pastor, "I've tried to forgive him! I've tried to forgive him! But I just can't! Every time I think of him my stomach knots up and I feel ill. Please pray for me to be able to forgive him!" The pastor listened, and then asked, "Do you mind? Before I pray for you, can I ask you some questions?" She agreed. "Has your ex-husband ever asked for your forgiveness?" "No" she responded. "Do you wish him any harm for what he has done to you?" "No." "Do you trust him?" "Trust him? After what he did to me? Certainly not!" "And neither should you" replied the pastor, who continued, "it sounds to me that you have forgiven him but you have been confusing *trust* with *forgiveness*." The tearful lady looked at the pastor as if he had just lifted a heavy sack of potatoes from off of her shoulders.

## How To Forgive

We have seen that forgiveness begins in the heart of the offended when they relinquish their right to hurt the offender back. There are many ways to hurt someone back for what they have done to you including gossiping about them, undermining their reputation, slandering them, or even hurting them physically. Consider how someone’s unforgiveness is revealed in this short exchange:

“I think Debony is such a nice person.”

“Yes she is, until you really get to know her.”

1. Describe what Christ modelled in Luke 23:32-34. What aspects of forgiveness do we notice in this episode?

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We notice in this episode that those Christ forgave, were undeserving, yet Jesus still released them from their debt of unresolved and unjust offence. But we also notice that Jesus began the process of forgiveness by p \_ \_ \_ \_ r . We should also consider that He asked His Father to forgive those who had been party to Christ’s mistreatment and abuse.

2. Why did Jesus ask His Father to forgive those who had been part of the *His* mistreatment? (Consider Luke 5:21)

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Only *those who have sinned* can seek forgiveness for *their sins* from God.

Only *God* can forgive those who have *sinned against Him*.

3. What is the value in telling someone who intentionally hurt you that you forgive them? Discuss.

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## Forgiveness is Core to Christianity

Christianity is referred to in the Bible as the \_\_\_ \_\_\_ Covenant (2Cor. 3:6). The Old Covenant that God had with Israel was treated as if it was all about laws and rules.

4. How did the Prophet Jeremiah describe the coming New Covenant? (Jer. 31:31-34) That is, how would it be different to the Old Covenant?

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5. How did Jesus sum up the gospel message in (Luke 24:46-47) that His followers would now proclaim everywhere?

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The prophets declared that when the New Covenant would come, God would *forgive* the sins of the guilty. What kind of God would forgive the sins of those who had been so vile toward Him? The answer:

*The God of u\_\_\_\_\_ l love!* (Note John 3:16; Rom. 5:8).

6. Read Mark 2:1-12. What does this story reveal about God? Discuss.

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While God's love for people is unconditional, receiving His forgiveness is not!

7. In what way is receiving God's forgiveness *conditional*? (Note Matt. 18:35; Luke 12:10; Acts 26:20; Heb. 4:16; 10:26; 1John 1:9)

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Understanding how God forgives those who sin against Him helps us to understand how we are to forgive those who sin against us.

8. Based on Ephesians 4:32, how are we to *transact* forgiveness with someone? (Col. 3:13)
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9. How does Luke 17:3-4 teach us how to *transact* forgiveness of someone?
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## How We are Enabled To Forgive

10. What advantage does a child of God have in being able to forgive someone who has wronged them? (Consider Matt. 6:14-15)
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This is why an *apology* is much more than merely saying the words: *I'm sorry*. In fact, it is possible to truly apologise without actually using those words provided it is a true confession or responsibility for the hurt that has been caused. This is why the most appropriate response to such a genuine apology is: *I forgive you*.