

One Step to Freedom
Chapter 4: Forgiveness

Lesson 1
Salvation and Forgiveness

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:3).

Throughout the Bible there is an underlying theme of forgiveness, beginning with God desiring to forgive sinful men. After a person receives God’s forgiveness (through believing Jesus died on the cross for your sins), God then expects and commands that person to extend this forgiveness to other people who have wronged them.

For people whose lives have involved drug and alcohol abuse, this principle is magnified in its need for practical application. Marriages are destroyed, jobs are lost, families are split, friends become enemies, and enemies become friends. The effects of drugs and alcohol destroy personal lives; yet, through Jesus every alcohol and drug abuser can find forgiveness of their sins. The problem for so many is extending this same forgiveness to other people.

It is hard to forget (and forgive) those who encouraged you in drug and alcohol abuse. It is hard to forgive those who took advantage of you when you were down and out. For some families, healing and restoration never takes place, because the other spouse refuses to forgive the person who destroyed the marriage and/or family through their drug and alcohol abuse. This is the greatest challenge to every Christian: to forgive others as Christ has forgiven us.

Coming to Christ requires humility, and it means saying, “I cannot do it without You, Lord.” The person who receives Jesus has to become, as Jesus said, “poor in spirit.” To be “poor in spirit” means to realize you have no spiritual wealth on your own—that in your own efforts, you could never please God.

Let us see what happened in our lives when we came to Christ.

1. Read Proverbs 16:5. Who is an abomination to the Lord?

2. What is their end result?

3. Read James 4:6. Whom does God resist? To whom does God extend grace?

God forgives the humble (poor in spirit), for they seek His forgiveness; but He resists the proud, for they fail to seek it.

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4. Read Matthew 11:28-30. Whom did Jesus invite to Himself (verse 28)?

5. What attributes does Jesus desire to teach us (verse 29)?

6. When we come to Christ, what do we find (verse 29)?

7. How does Jesus describe the load He asks believers to carry (verse 30)?

In this passage, we see Jesus offering forgiveness and rest from the labors of our sinful nature. Jesus extends this offer to all who hear His voice. He also reveals to us that after He forgives us, He wants to teach us how to have a forgiving spirit like His, a spirit of gentleness (meekness) and lowliness in heart.

Read Colossians 2:13-14.

8. How did God make us alive to Himself (verse 13)?

9. How many of our previous trespasses (sins) did He forgive (verse 13)?

10. What did Jesus do to our trespasses (verse 14)?

When you came to Christ, God forgave you all the sins of your past life, and gave you rest from its burden and guilt. The key to receiving this forgiveness was your willingness to humble yourself in the sight of the Lord. Once you see yourself as “poor in spirit” in need of God’s grace, it will help you forgive others and pray for them.