

Lesson 7

FORGIVING OTHERS

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy
(Matthew 5:7).

WHY DO I NEED TO FORGIVE?

God forgives us of our sins through our faith in Jesus Christ. As God has forgiven us, He wants us to forgive others.

When a person receives God's forgiveness (through believing Jesus died on the cross for their sins), God then expects and commands that person to extend this forgiveness to other people who have wronged them. Regardless of the circumstances, if we choose to live a life that pleases God, then we must learn to forgive others.

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

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

READ MATTHEW 6:9-15

1. What is the stipulation for our sins being forgiven (Verse 12)?

2. What happens if we do not forgive others (Verse 15)?

It is important to note here that as Jesus taught the disciples how they should pray, He emphasized forgiveness as the key to prayer. If we do not forgive others, we sin, and our fellowship with God is broken. God's Word commands us to forgive others, and His Holy Spirit gives us the power to do so. Those who desire to find mercy with God must show mercy to others. Christ came into the world as the great peacemaker, not only to reconcile us to God but one to another.

3. Write out Ephesians 4:32.

4. Share what Colossians 3:13-14 says to you.

READ LUKE 6:27-37

5. How are we to treat our enemies and those who hate us (Verse 27)?

6. How are we to treat those who curse us and treat us in a hurtful way (Verse 28)?

7. How does God want us to treat others (Verse 31)?

8. How does God want us to show our love to our enemies (Verse 35)?

9. Why do we need to be merciful (Verse 36)?

10. Why is it vital for us not to condemn or judge others and to forgive them (Verse 37)?

According to this passage, Jesus shows us four practical applications in forgiving others: (1) Love them, (2) Do good things for them, (3) Ask God to bless them, (4) Pray for them.

If we do these four things, God will change our hearts toward those who have wronged us. We will begin to experience a true sense of forgiveness and love for them.

Loving your enemies is difficult. You can try to forgive them and be nice, but then they'll do something that reminds you why they are your enemy. But Jesus said God is "kind to the unthankful and evil." You may say, "But I can't do that. That's impossible!" Yes, it is. But God wants to do the supernatural within us, that we can show forth His love—to all people.

11. Write Matthew 19:26.

12. Write Luke 6:36.