

## FORGIVENESS

Several years ago, I unduly punished one of my children. Without describing the circumstances, the act was completely unjustified and my behavior completely out-of-line. Realizing the wrongdoing, I confessed it as a sin, received forgiveness from the Lord, and began a series of requirements aimed at reconciliation. Though the outcome of the requirements was very positive, the intended purpose of reconciliation seemed to fall short from the view point of others.

I have accepted God's forgiveness freely or with the understanding that nothing I have done and can do is sufficient; rather that his forgiveness is a gift made possible through the shed blood of Jesus. In the book of Romans, this gift had the effect of bringing righteousness to all mankind. A creation previously condemned to death by first sin of Adam, were offered forgiveness. In chapter 5, forgiveness has overcome death.

For this one man, Adam, brought death to many through his sin. But this other man, Jesus Christ, brought forgiveness to many through God's bountiful gift.

Forgiveness means to pardon for a wrongdoing. Though not necessarily warranted or earned, the wrongdoing is pardoned to allow for

- Repentance – or admitting or confessing to wrongdoing
- Reconciliation – the wanting or process of restoration in the relationship
- Redemption – the wanting or desire that the one who has done the wrong will be restored to God.

Repentance may not occur prior to forgiveness; that is, someone can be forgiven even though they have not yet repented or admitted to wrongdoing. For reconciliation to begin however, repentance must occur as a desired outcome over judgment and condemnation.

Reconciliation allows healing or restoration in the relationship in a form of an invitation to the offender. This step bears cost for both {the offended and the offender} in that one grants mercy while the other must repent. Understand that reconciliation is not the one-sided effort of peace at any cost; rather, it is mutual effort with the central aim of restoration and fulfillment of much desired redemption.

Redemption is necessary for true forgiveness to occur. Redemption represents the desire that the offender be restored to God or the beauty made possible through God's indwelling in their lives becomes visible and real. Just as God redeemed us through Christ, so too can God redeem the offender.

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