



Matthew 6:7-15

And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words. 8 “Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him. 9 In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. 10 Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven. 11 Give us this day our daily bread. 12 And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors. 13 And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.^[a] 14 “For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Introduction: The Greatest Challenge!

The greatest challenge we face today in this Recession is not that we may:

- Lose our job
- Lose money
- Lose possession
- Lose reputation
- Lose staff
- Lose loved ones
- Lose your health

Or as CJ's City our income dropping as people feel the impact of the Credit crunch.

The GREATEST CHALLENGE is that we may lose OUR RELATIONSHIP with God and losing our relationship means losing heaven.

When you hold tight to an unforgiving spirit, you proving that you have never been indwelt by the Spirit of Christ and therefore never truly believed in Christ.

The Lord's Prayer

Jesus said (in Matthew 6:9, 12),

"Pray like this: 'Our Father who art in heaven . . . forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.'"

The Explanation of this prayer 14–15:

"For if you forgive men for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions."

- ◇ If we hold fast to an unforgiving spirit, God will not forgive us.
- ◇ If we continue on in that way, then we will not go to heaven, because heaven is the dwelling place of forgiven people.

Illustration:

Peter asks the question in verse 21,

"Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?"

And Jesus answers,

"I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven."

The story of the King who forgave his servant who owed him millions:

He forgave a servant who owed him a million but the servant couldn't forgive someone who owed him one hundred, so he was tortured until he could pay the full amount¹.

¹And then he tells the parable about the king who forgave his servant a million dollar debt. The servant went out from the king and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a relatively small amount, refused his desperate pleas for mercy, and had him thrown in prison. When the king heard about it, he called for the servant and said (in vv. 32–35),

"You wicked servant, I forgave you all that debt because you entreated me. Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow servant, even as I had mercy on you?" And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him. So shall My heavenly Father also do to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart.

The point of Matthew 6:15 and 18:35 is that if we hold fast to an unforgiving spirit, we will be handed over to the tormentors.

We will basically lose our relationship with God and therefore lose heaven.

The reason is not because we can earn heaven or merit heaven by forgiving others, but because holding fast to an unforgiving spirit proves that we do not trust Christ.

The Epistles teaching

Ephesians 4:32,

"Forgive each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you."

In other words God's forgiveness is underneath ours and creates it and supports it. So that if we don't give it to others—if we go on in an unforgiving spirit—what we show is that God is not there in our lives.

We do not trust Him. And not trusting Him will keep us out of heaven. And cause us to be handed over to the tormentors.

What Is Forgiveness?²

Forgive, Forgave, Forgiveness

A. Verbs

- 0. *Aphiemi*
- 0. *Charizomai*

B. Noun

- 0. *Aphesis*

A1. Forgive, Forgave, Forgiveness [Verb]

Aphiemi primarily, "to send forth, send away" (apo, "from," hiemi, "to send"), denotes, besides its other meanings, "to remit or forgive"

(a) debts, [Matt 6:12](#); [Matt 18:27,32](#), these being completely cancelled;

(b) sins, e.g., [Matt 9:2,5,6](#); [Matt 12:31,32](#); [Acts 8:22](#) ("the thought of thine heart"); [Rom 4:7](#); [James 5:15](#); [1 John 1:9](#); [1 John 2:12](#).

In this latter respect the verb, like its corresponding noun (below), firstly signifies the remission of the punishment due to sinful conduct, the deliverance of the sinner from the penalty Divinely, and therefore righteously, imposed; secondly, it involves the complete removal of the cause of offense; such remission is based upon the vicarious and propitiatory sacrifice of Christ. In the OT atoning sacrifice and "forgiveness" are often associated, e.g., [Lev 4:20,26](#). The verb is used in the NT with reference to trespasses (paraptoma), e.g., [Matt 6:14,15](#); sins (hamartia), e.g., [Luke 5:20](#); debts (see above) (opheilema), [Matt 6:12](#); (opheile), [Matt 18:32](#); (daneion), [Matt 18:27](#); the thought (dianoia) of the heart, [Acts 8:22](#). Cp. kalupto, "to cover," [1 Pet 4:8](#); [James 5:20](#); and epikalupto, "to cover over," [Rom 4:7](#), representing the Hebrew words for "atonement."

Human "forgiveness" is to be strictly analogous to Divine "forgiveness," e.g., [Matt 6:12](#). If certain conditions are fulfilled, there is no limitation to Christ's law of "forgiveness," [Matt 18:21,22](#). The conditions are repentance and confession, [Matt 18:15-17](#); [Luke 17:3](#).

There are seven words in Scripture that denote the idea of forgiveness:

Three in Hebrew and four in Greek. No book of religion except Christianity teaches that God completely forgives sins. God remembers our sins no more ([Heb. 10:17](#)). God is the initiator of forgiveness ([Col. 2:13](#)).

Aphiemi (To remit or forgive) and as long as we repent and confess our sins God keeps on forgiving and we need to follow God as we relate to others in this area of forgiveness

Charizomai (To Bestow a favor unconditionally) to release, to forgive, there is a sense of liberty in forgiveness for both parties.

There is only one sin for which the Father does not promise forgiveness: blasphemy against the [Holy Spirit](#) ([Mark 3:28](#); [Matt. 12:32](#)). The contexts suggest this to be the sin of attributing to unclean spirits the work of the Holy Spirit.

What does forgiveness look like?

As to limits to the possibility of Divine "forgiveness," see [Matt 12:32](#), 2nd part (see [BLASPHEMY](#)) and [1 John 5:16](#) (see [DEATH](#)). See [FORSAKE](#), [LAY](#) at end, [LEAVE](#), [LET](#), [OMIT](#), [PUT](#), [REMIT](#), [SEND](#), [SUFFER](#), [YIELD](#).

See also : [aphiemi](#) in other topics

A2. Forgive, Forgave, Forgiveness [Verb]

charizomai "to bestow a favor unconditionally," is used of the act of "forgiveness," whether Divine, [Eph 4:32](#); [Col 2:13](#); [Col 3:13](#); or human, [Luke 7:42.43](#) (debt); [2 Cor 2:7,10](#); [2 Cor 12:13](#); [Eph 4:32](#) (1st mention). Paul uses this word frequently, but *aphiemi* only, in [Rom 4:7](#), in this sense of the word. See [DELIVER](#).

Note: Apoluo, "to let loose from" (apo, "from," luo, "to loose"), "to release," is translated "forgive," "ye shall be forgiven," [Luke 6:37](#), AV (RV, "release," "ye shall be released"), the reference being to setting a person free as a quasi-judicial act. The verb does not mean "to forgive." See [DISMISS](#), [RELEASE](#).

See also : [charizomai](#) in other topics

B1. Forgive, Forgave, Forgiveness [Noun]

aphesis denotes "a dismissal, release" (akin to *aphiemi*); it is used of the remission of sins, and translated "forgiveness" in [Mark 3:29](#); [Eph 1:7](#); [Col 1:14](#), and in the AV of [Acts 5:31](#); [Acts 13:38](#); [Acts 26:18](#), in each of which the RV has "remission." Eleven times it is followed by "of sins," and once by "of trespasses." It is never used of the remission of sins in the Sept., but is especially connected with the Year of Jubilee ([Lev 25:10](#), etc.). Cp. the RV of [Luke 4:18](#), "release" (AV, "liberty"). For the significance in connection with remission of sins and the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, see *aphiemi*. See [DELIVERANCE](#), [LIBERTY](#), [RELEASE](#), [REMISSION](#). Cp. the different word pareasis, "a passing over, a remission," of sins committed under the old covenant, [Rom 3:25](#). The RV should be used here. This passing over, or by, was neither forgetting nor "forgiving;" it was rather a suspension of the just penalty; cp. [Acts 17:30](#), "the times of ignorance God overlooked," RV; see also, e.g., [Psalm 78:38](#).

See also : [aphesis](#) in other topics



We have heard from Jesus that it is essential to our eternal life.

Two things distinguish us from all other religions as Christians:

- 1) Love (Definition given in the sermon “Moving Towards Excellence”)
- 2) Forgiveness

Let us now define forgiveness with a little help from Thomas Watson³:

Here is forgiveness: when you feel that someone is your enemy or when you simply feel that you or someone you care about has been wronged, forgiveness means,

- ⇒ Resisting revenge,
- ⇒ Not returning evil for evil,
- ⇒ Wishing them well,
- ⇒ Grieving at their calamities,
- ⇒ Praying for their welfare,
- ⇒ Seeking reconciliation so far as it depends on you,
- ⇒ And coming to their aid in distress.

³ Thomas Watson

Question: When do we forgive others? Answer: When we strive against all thoughts of revenge; when we will not do our enemies mischief, but wish well to them, grieve at their calamities, pray for them, seek reconciliation with them, and show ourselves ready on all occasions to relieve them. (Thomas Watson, *Body of Divinity*, p. 581)

I think this is a very biblical definition of forgiveness. Each of its parts comes from a passage of Scripture.

Resist thoughts of revenge: Romans 12:19, "Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord."

Don't seek to do them mischief: 1 Thessalonians 5:15, "See that no one repays another with evil for evil."

Wish well to them: Luke 6:28, "Bless those who curse you."

Grieve at their calamities: Proverbs 24:17, "Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, and do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles."

Pray for them: Matthew 5:44, "But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you."

Seek reconciliation with them: Romans 12:18, "If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men."

Be always willing to come to their relief: Exodus 23:4, "If you meet your enemy's ox or his donkey wandering away, you shall surely return it to him."

All these point to a forgiving heart. And the heart is all important Jesus said in Matthew 18:35—"unless you forgive your brother from your heart."

For man to receive forgiveness, repentance is necessary ([Luke 17:3-4](#)).

For the holy God to extend forgiveness, the shedding of blood is necessary ([Heb. 9:22](#); [Lev. 17:11](#)). Forgiveness is based upon the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. That is where we find the power to forgive on the FINISHED WORK of Christ.

All the people who hurt you so deeply cannot be forgiven just through your own power and strength, you need the power of Christ to do it.

How can you...

- ⇒ Resisting revenge,
- ⇒ Not returning evil for evil,
- ⇒ Wishing them well,
- ⇒ Grieving at their calamities,
- ⇒ Praying for their welfare,
- ⇒ Seeking reconciliation so far as it depends on you,
- ⇒ And coming to their aid in distress.

...in your own strength, it's impossible you need Christ's power to do it.

WHAT FORGIVENESS IS NOT

But now notice what is not there in this definition. Notice what forgiveness is not.

1. Not the Absence of Anger at Sin

- Forgiveness is not the absence of anger at sin.

2. Not the Absence of Serious Consequences for Sin

- 2 Samuel 12:14, David's son dies

One last observation remains:

3. Forgiveness of an Unrepentant Person?

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- Forgiveness of an unrepentant person doesn't look the same as forgiveness of a repentant person.
 - Forgiveness of a repentant person leads to reconciliation and intimacy.
 - Liberty for the one forgiving



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