

REVIEW: JUDGING

In the previous studies we discussed how we are NOT to JUDGE or condemn others. What do you recall were the reasons for this?

If we are not responsible to JUDGE or CONDEMN others, how are we told to relate to them?

Only this type of freedom can make it possible for us to LOVE our ENEMIES as Christ commanded.

In what practical ways does judging trap us in our personal lives?

Personal freedom comes through not being bound to another person's actions against us by not sustaining judgment against them. It was never our position to judge, never our position to condemn, and never our responsibility to do anything but LOVE.

James 4:12 (NIV)

There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you--who are you to judge your neighbour?

**NOT JUDGING must be rooted in the theological understanding
that GOD IS JUDGE
and he will take care of justice.**

Ephesians 4:32 (NIV)

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

How have you heard forgiveness explained in the past?

How might our understanding of being free through “not judging” affect our perspective on forgiveness?

**FORGIVENESS then is NOT about setting ourselves free
because we are already freed by the act of
not judging and choosing to love our enemies.
This happens before we come to forgiveness.**

If NOT JUDGING sets us free, then what is the role of FORGIVENESS?

What DOES Forgiveness mean?

-
-

Forgiveness involves 3 elements:

1. An _____
2. A resulting _____
3. A _____ of the debt

**Go through the following checklist and see if you have embraced any of these beliefs in the past.
Forgiveness does NOT mean:**

- ☐ Approving of what someone else did.
- ☐ Pretending that evil never took place.
- ☐ Making excuses for other people's bad behaviour.
- ☐ Ignoring abuse.
- ☐ Letting others walk all over you.
- ☐ Pretending that you were never hurt.
- ☐ All negative consequences of sin are cancelled.

What are some times when you may forgive a person, but LOVE will not let the past behaviour continue?

Benefits of Forgiveness

Psalms 32:5 (NLT)

Finally, I confessed all my sins to you and stopped trying to hide my guilt. I said to myself, "I will confess my rebellion to the Lord." And you forgave me! All my guilt is gone.

Psalms 51:8-12 (NIV)

Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice.

Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity.

Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me.

Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

What is the benefit for the one who is forgiven?

Forgiveness is about setting the OTHER PERSON free.

Can you recall a time when you felt emotionally free despite the fact that someone wronged you, but they however, were plagued by guilt and shame? Share how that situation concluded.

You were already free due to the fact you chose to let God be judge, but they were not free due to the guilt of their actions. What would they need to do in order for THEM to be free from the wrong they perpetuated against you?

Luke 17:3-4 (NIV)

So watch yourselves. "If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him. ⁴ If he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times comes back to you and says, 'I repent,' forgive him."

What is the relationship between REPENTANCE and FORGIVENESS?

Ezekiel 18:30b, 31 (NIV)

Repent! Turn away from all your offenses; then sin will not be your downfall. ³¹ Rid yourselves of all the offenses you have committed, and get a new heart and a new spirit.

What does it mean to repent?

- 1) To _____ personal wrong doing.
- 2) To _____ for wrong behaviour.
- 3) To humbly and sincerely _____.
- 4) To change one's mind and _____ and to live righteously.

**If the goal of forgiveness is to set the other person free,
they can only become free when they come to a point of repentance.**

Colossians 3:13 (NIV)

Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

What is the example God gives us with regard to forgiveness?

- 1) God _____ the wrongs we have committed against him
- 2) God understands that those wrongs have created a _____ in the relationship.
- 3) God _____ healing in the relationship by paying the consequence for our wrongs – even when we didn't care.

- 4) God _____ of forgiveness at expense to himself.
- 5) God lovingly _____ his forgiveness through repentance and restore relationship with him.

Why do you think people in relationship with God are told to forgive?

Why would we be willing to forgive someone if they repeatedly wrong us?

What if the person refuses to repent?

Can you share an example of how *others* have forgiven you?

Can you share an example of someone *you* have had to forgive?

Romans 5:8 (NIV)

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

How have you typically responded when you've been relationally hurt?

Forgiveness is not about ignoring history, nor is it about ignoring changes that need to occur. Forgiveness is about giving the other person the opportunity to move forward in their relationship with you as opposed to being trapped in their past sin.

Matthew 6:12-14 (NLT)

¹² And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

¹³ And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

¹⁴ For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

¹⁵ But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

How would you paraphrase what Jesus is saying?

Why does Jesus connect God's forgiving us with how we forgive others?

When we refuse to forgive, what does that imply about our view of God as Judge?

Additional reading:

Parable of the Unforgiving Debtor (Matthew 18:21-35)

Personal Reflection:

Who has wronged you that you are still judging and condemning, and have not offered forgiveness.

Write down any names you believe the Holy Spirit is prompting you to forgive.

Next week we will discuss HOW to stop judging and HOW we can initiate offering forgiveness.