**Lesson 3**

**Part II How Do I Experience Forgiveness?**

1. Forgiveness is one of the greatest spiritual \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of every person. (Ps. 130:3-4{OT – pg. 821})
   1. Definition: A judicial act/declaration wherein guilt is removed; a pardon; “Forgiveness is a lifting of the charge of guilt from another, a formal declaration of the fact and a promise (made and kept) never to remember the wrong against him in the future” – *Jay Adams*
   2. (Matt. 6:6-12{NT- pg. 9}) – Forgiveness is associated with a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ debt either to God or one another.
   3. **What forgiveness is:**
      1. **...the act with the authority by the offended to remove the guilt of the offender.**
      2. **A decision with a promise…**
      3. **…to not dwell upon the incident mentally.**
      4. **…to not bring up the incident again and use it against the…person.**
      5. **…to not talk to others about the incident.**
      6. **…to not allow the incident to stand between you and the other person or hinder your personal relationship with them.**
      7. **It is an act of the will and not of the emotions/feelings.**
   4. **What forgiveness is not:**
      1. **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ – there is no commandment to forget before we forgive. When Isaiah 43:25{OT – pg. 924}; Jer. 31:34{OT – pg. 994} speaks of God “remembering” them no more, it is the context of bringing them up against you again. An omniscient God is incapable of “not knowing” the past.**
      2. **Excusing sin; minimizing sin, or not taking sin seriously. This is a dishonest way of addressing sin or calling it something other than what God calls it.**

**[Quotes from Dr. Coomer]**

* 1. Caution: repentance and forgiveness has nothing to do with the un-Biblical Catholic teaching of “penance”. People who are influenced by this thinking will strive to work and work and work to atone for the wrong and earn the forgiveness. Forgiveness is the fruit of God’s grace and mercy 🡪 totally undeserved.

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ alone is the author of forgiveness (Psalm 86:5; 130:4{OT – pg. 792}; Eph. 1:7{NT – pg. 273})
   1. His forgiveness is predicated upon our confession and repentance (I John 1:9{NT – pg. 335}).
   2. He forgives all our sin (Col. 2:13{NT – pg. 286}; Ps. 103:3{OT – pg. 801}).
   3. His forgiveness is predicated upon His shed blood (Eph. 1:7{NT – pg. 273})
   4. His forgiveness is complete in that our sins will never be held against us again (Isa. 43:25{OT – pg. 924}; Jer. 31:34{OT – pg. 994})
   5. In regards to salvation, “Forgiveness” is the removal of the guilt and “Justification” is the declaration of righteousness, i.e. just as if we had never sinned and just as though we were as righteous as Christ in God the Father’s eyes.
   6. While forgiveness judicially removes the guilt, it does not remove the stain in and through our mortal life. **{While God can and does forgive us for the act of murder, that does not bring the dead back to life; nor does it change the fact of who killed that person. Neither does God’s forgiveness void such a debt to society – the death penalty should still apply.}**
2. The need and desire for forgiveness is a testimony to the fact that our conscience reveals there is a divine right and wrong (i.e. sinful, criminal, etc.) in actions, words, etc. and that wrong has undesirable consequences.
3. The need and desire for forgiveness reveals that wrong (i.e. sinful, criminal, etc.) produces \_\_\_\_\_\_ in both the victim and the villain of the wrong.
4. When there is no desire for forgiveness and restoration, it reveals the presence of a seared or defiled conscience.
5. The need for forgiveness is “bi-directional”
   1. Since we are sinners and because we have sinned, we have offended the holy God; therefore, we have a moral debt to God.
      1. This debt can be satisfied by our own payment in eternal hell.
      2. Or, this debt can be “forgiven” through repentance to God and faith in Jesus Christ.
      3. The acceptance of God’s forgiveness is personally experienced through faith.

* **The secular humanist philosophy substitutes here the idea of “forgiving yourself”.**
  + **The Bible never speaks about anyone forgiving themselves for sinful/wrong behavior.**
  + **The foundation of this idea is rooted in the lie Satan told Eve in the Garden 🡪 that ye shall be as gods!**
    - **Thus implying that you have the authority to grant self-forgiveness for your sinful behavior.**
    - **We have no authority to forgive ourselves for sinning against God…only God can do that.**
    - **We have no authority to forgive ourselves for crimes/wrongs against people…only they can do that.**
  1. When we sin against another (and we do), we offend them; therefore, we have a moral \_\_\_\_\_ to them. [Caution against “being offended” and the political correctness mania.]
     1. This moral debt can be resolved by apologizing to the one we have hurt with anticipation of receiving their forgiveness.
        1. We can only be responsible for our actions and we have no guarantee that they will forgive.
        2. When someone comes to us with an apology, we have an obligation before God to forgive them (Matt. 6:6-12{NT – pg. 9})
     2. (II Sam. 12:13{OT – pg. 443}) As demonstrated in David’s sin against Bathsheba any and every sin committed against a person is first and foremost a sin against God.

Supplemental passages/thoughts:

Matt. 18:21-31{NT – pg. 29-30} – how often; how many times.

Eph. 4:32{NT – pg. 277} – we are commanded

Prov. 25:21-22{OT – pg. 855}; Matt. 5:21-26, 43-48{NT – pg. 8-9}; 6:12, 14-15{NT pg. 9}; Rom. 12:20-21{NT – pg. 231}

In Luke 23:34{NT pg. 127} we see where Christ requested forgiveness for the soldiers who crucified

Christ. This was for their act of crucifying Him, not for the state as a sinner before God.

Stephen does the same in Acts 7:60{NT – pg. 179}.

We can forgive people for wrongful acts against us; however, that does not erase the

possibility of facing criminal charges for their acts.

**Divine Judicial Forgiveness:**

Guilty – eternal; violated God’s perfect holiness and law

Punishment – Punitive; Eternity in hell; just and deserving

God – the offended and the judge

Rebuke – condemnation

Sense of guilt – produces a fear of God’s just judgment

Confession – acknowledging wrong and guiltiness; remorse

Forgiveness – removes the penalty of hell; pardon

Relationship – establishes a new relationship with God.