

**Matt 6:14-15 NIV**

14 For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

**Matt 18:23-35 NIV**

23 "Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. 24 As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. 25 Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.

26 "The servant fell on his knees before him. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.' 27 The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.

28 "But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii. He grabbed him and began to choke him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he demanded.

29 "His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.'

30 "But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. 31 When the other servants saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed and went and told their master everything that had happened.

32 "Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. 33 Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?' 34 In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.

35 "This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart."

**Col 3:13-14 NIV**

Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

### Heb 12:14-15 NIV

14 Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. 15 See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.

## FORGIVENESS

If forgiving is so important, we really need to ask the question: what is forgiveness? There is great confusion on this matter today, and therefore we must first understand what forgiveness is not.

Forgiveness does not mean that we will cease to hurt. The wounds are deep, and we may hurt for a very long time. Just because we continue to experience emotional pain does not mean that we have failed to forgive.

Forgiveness does not mean that we will forget. That would do violence to our rational faculties. Helmut Thielicke, a German pastor who endured the darkest days of the Nazi Third Reich, says, "One should never mention the words 'forgive' and 'forget' in the same breath." No, we remember, **but in forgiving we no longer use the memory against others.**

Forgiveness is not pretending that the offense did not really matter. It did matter, and it does matter, and there is no use pretending otherwise. The offense is real, but when we forgive, **the offense no longer controls our behavior.**

Forgiveness is not acting as if things are just the same as before the offense. We must face the fact that things will never be the same. By the grace of God they can be a thousand times better, but they will never again be the same.

from Prayer by Richard Foster

### 2 Cor 5:17-21 NIV

17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! 18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: 19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. 20 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. 21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

