

# “FORGIVE”

Dear Beloved Brethren:

*Please consider the information contained in this document as an optional path to reconcile differences related to any offenses which may arise among us. I have prayerfully sought wisdom from the scriptures concerning Gods standard of forgiveness and reconciliation. It is my honest conviction that traditional expectations for resolving grievances fall far short of the higher level of Christ – like attitudes and actions taught and demonstrated by Jesus and revealed in a large body of both Old Testament and New Testament scripture. The following outline reveals and exposes my true heart concerning this matter and I shall endeavor to practice these truths in my own spiritual walk before God and with my brothers and sisters in Christ. I am simply offering and suggesting forgiveness without any apologies or strings attached, just like the Father and Jesus have forgiven us. Their forgiveness was radical, extravagant, and unconditional; without any strings attached. Self, the natural, carnal and fleshly man, always cries out for personal rights and justice, demands apologies, requires explanations and desires malice. I have discovered that I, the new man in Christ, do not need or even expect to receive an apology; I can and do choose to love and forgive unconditionally, just as I have been loved and forgiven, and am taught to love and forgive unconditionally. Demanding apologies before forgiveness builds un-climbable walls rather than accessible bridges. Jesus has broken down middle walls of separation which make it easily possible to reconcile separated individuals into one body; Eph. 2:15-16. Demanding apologies means; guilt of an offense must be proved as to who initiated the offense; involving a full investigation of all charges, an evaluation of all accusations, gathering evidence, locating and interrogating witnesses, establishing proof of the offence, defining guilt and giving final judgment and discipline. Many times, both parties could be partially guilty of causing the offense or one or both parties perceive an offense has been committed when in reality none ever existed; it was only a perception. Jesus provided forever a much simpler way to reconcile through voluntary and unconditional forgiveness. My appeal is very simple; “let us all learn to simply forgive one another unconditionally without threatening apologies”, and commit ourselves and justice to Him who judges righteously; 1Pt. 2:23! I believe I speak to you as wise individuals of spiritual maturity. The worst of all evils is to refuse to reconcile; Matt. 5:24.*

TEXT: Lk. 23:34; Lk. 7:36-50; Acts 3:17

- DEFINITION:

*In clarification, I am speaking only proper order for forgiveness of a real or perceived relational conflict between brethren. We, however in this document are not dealing with; sins committed against God, transgressions because of disobedience to the Word of God, evident moral sins against the body of Christ, crimes against humanity or any sin or atrocity against an individual which of course would require full confession, taking responsibility for one’s action, repentance, punishment and restitution. This would include child abuse, abuse in marriage, defrauding a brother and others. There could be a long list of sins which would require confession to and apology for, and even discipline and perhaps excommunication from the community of Christians if one is judged guilty. Righteously, someone committing such sins **must be required to confess** and make full apology for their sin not only to God but to the victim. Certainly a sinner must confess his sin; if we say we have no sin; that is to deny guilt, we have deceived ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we say that we have not sinned, we make God a liar, and His word is not in us, 1Jn. 1:8-10.*

*So in clarification, it is worthy to note that the twelve encountered strife, offenses and disputes among themselves. (disputes, Grk , philoneikia; quarrelsome and fond of strife)*

➔ *The ten were “greatly displeased” – Matt. 20:24*

- ➔ What was it that you “disputed” among yourselves on the road? – Mk. 9:20
- ➔ Then a “dispute” arose among them; Lk. 9:46-49
- ➔ At the last supper; Now there was also a “dispute” among them; Lk. 22:24-27

*Disagreement is common and acceptable within relationships; unwilling to forgive unconditionally should never be common or acceptable within the circle of spiritual relationships.*

*Do all things without complaining and disputing that you may become  
Harmless children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and  
Perverse generation among whom you shine as lights in the world.  
Philippians 2:14-15*

- JESUS’S “NON OPTIONAL COMMANDS” TO FORGIVE!
  - ➔ Forgive: *Unrestrained, unconditional, unlimited, voluntary cancellation of offensive action!*
  - ➔ Remit: *Forever blotting out as though it never existed, any and all offense and consequence!*
- 1) MUST I FORGIVE? Mk. 11:25-26
- 2) WHEN MUST I FORGIVE? “Even if it is only a perception of offense”
  - 1- Quickly – *Before the day ends; do not let the sun go down on your wrath; Eph. 4:26, Psa. 4:4!*
  - 2- Immediately – *Before it is necessary to attempt confronting the perceived offender!*
  - 3- Before Satan gets advantage; 2Cor. 2:1-11; Eph. 4:26-27
  - 4- Before consequences to begin to germinate and corrupt; Heb. 12:14-15.
  - 5- Before a root of bitterness eats like a cancer and defiles both the offender and the offended.
  - 6- Before you fall into the hands of some form of tormenting; Matt. 18:30-35.
  - 7- Before your lack of forgiveness rules out God’s forgiveness to you; Matt. 6:12; 14-15; Mk. 11:25-26; Jas. 2:13. *Un-forgiveness will definitely affect one’s position of fellowship and relationship with God Almighty!*
- 3) UNDERSTANDING THE SCRIPTURAL RULES OF FORGIVENESS
  - 1- In preparation for forgiving one another; “put off or away from you”; all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor (loud quarrelling), evil speaking, with all malice, (the desire to hurt or punish) and be:
    - a. Kind
    - b. Tenderhearted
    - c. Forgiving one another’ even as God in Christ forgave you; Eph. 4:31.
    - d. Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; do not fret – it only causes harm; Psa. 37:8.
  - 2- In preparation of forgiving someone, first or ahead of time; “put on” tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering, bearing with one another; Col. 3:12-13.
  - 3- In preparation of forgiving others; even though you may be distressed and suffering; in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself; Phil. 2:3-4.
  - 4- Finally before forgiving as Christ forgave; put on His garment of “forgiving one another”; the same garment Jesus wore as he suffered every form of human humiliation, which enabled Him to forgive as the Father forgave; Col. 3:13
- 4) HOW SHALL I FORGIVE? ➔ Exactly like God for Christ’s sake forgave you
  - 1- Exactly like God for Christ sake forgave you; Eph. 4:29-32! *This is heavens standard.*
  - 2- Exactly like Christ forgave, (on the cross); Col. 3:12-13. *Jesus demanded no apologies or mandated no confessions, He simply forgave all who were present who would accept His forgiveness; then, now and in the future; Lk. 23:34.*
- 5) SHOULD I WAIT FOR APOLOGIES BEFORE I FORGIVE?
  - 1- The sacrificial unconditional offering of a “tiny portion of your forgiveness” to your offender of; Christ’s “mammoth” portion of forgiveness which He extended to you; would be a much higher level of forgiveness than waiting for or demanding an apology from your offender before you forgive him!

- 6) CAN I TRULY FORGIVE WITHOUT APOLOGY?
- 1- Your offer of free, unconditional and unlimited forgiveness without apology will probably initiate a response of apology from the offender, but if not you will have operated within the boundaries of Christ-like forgiveness and the spirit of glory will rest upon you, 1Pt. 4:14.
  - 2- Choosing to suffer an offence is part of the privileged commendable calling; (1Pt. 2:21) given to us who have taken on His name; 1Pt. 2:19-23.
- 7) FOR WHO'S BENEFIT IS THE APOLOGY MOST BENEFICIAL?
- 1- Woe to him through whom (offenses) come; Lk. 17:1.
  - 2- The individual causing the offense may need to apologize to clear his conscience.
  - 3- The individual embracing or "taking on an offense" may need to apologize for being offended, to clear his or her conscience.
  - 4- Choosing to overlook offence without apology is a higher glory! It is the glory of a man to pass over transgression, Prov. 19:11.
  - 5- I can choose; not to demand apology and move immediately into forgiveness. I do not need an apology; I can choose to commit the offence to Him who judges righteously; 1Pt. 2:23.
  - 6- If I must have an apology from someone else, I first must have already fulfilled completely the demands of Love. My fervent love for my brother must first have covered a multitude of his sins or perceived offence against me; 1Pt. 4:8!
- 8) QUESTIONS CONCERNING IF, IF, IF?
- 1- What "IF" apologies are not given; MUST WE STILL FORGIVE? Yes, absolutely!
  - 2- What "IF" the apologies appear to be superficial apologies; MUST WE STILL FORGIVE? Yes!
  - 3- What "IF" there is no apparent repentance; IS IT COMMENDABLE WE STILL FORGIVE? Yes!
  - 4- What "IF" there are impasses; MUST WE STILL FORGIVE? Mt. 5:25 (quickly on the way) Yes!
  - 5- What "if" we suffer injustice: MUST WE STILL FORGIVE? 1Pt. 2:19 Yes!
  - 6- What "if" there is: a HIGHEST level of forgiveness in which; WE COULD FORGIVE? Mk. 11:25
  - 7- What "if" we actually followed and lived out Jesus example: AND FORGAVE AS HE WOULD FORGIVE? Eph. 4:32
- 9) SCRIPTURAL EXAMPLES OF THIS HIGHER LEVEL OF FORGIVENESS
- There are many examples in scripture of forgiveness without apology, but I will cite only four.*
- 1- "Man, your sins are forgiven you", Lk. 5:20-26. In this passage, Jesus forgives without any indication of confessions, defining of the sinners sin or transgression; no apologies but simply because Jesus possessed the power to forgive sins. Immediately the man rose up, departed to his own house and went away glorifying God.
  - 2- "Her sins which are many are forgiven", Lk. 7:47. "Your sins are forgiven"; Lk. 7:48. Simon the Pharisee, was shocked when he saw the woman who he knew as a well-known sinner in the City, come and touch Jesus feet, with hands, tears, hair, lip kisses and anointing oil. If Jesus were a true prophet he would know what manner of woman she was. Jesus responded with the wonderful analogy of the "creditor" who "freely" forgave two debtors who could not pay their debts. One owed a very large debt and one a smaller debt; however both received "freely" the same "equal" forgiveness without paying anything, because they both "**had nothing with which to pay**". This woman's sins which were many were forgiven without verbal confessions or apologies simply by her silent demonstrations of love. We also, by the Holy Spirit have been given power (authority), to remit sins of others; Jn. 20:21-23
  - 3- Peter and all the disciples had promised they would never be made to stumble; Matt. 26:31-35; but did break promise to Jesus and fled, Matt. 26:56; when He was arrested to be crucified; however Peter did publicly deny Jesus three times, which was witnessed by one of the other twelve, (John himself), Jn. 18:15-27. Luke records an interesting element not referred to by the other gospel writers; when the rooster crowed, "**the Lord turned and looked at Peter**". Then Peter remembered the previously warning of Jesus, that Peter would

- deny Him three times. Is it not possible that the look of Jesus was a look of mercy rather than a look of, "I told you so, and you should have listened"? Could it be that Jesus was communicating to Peter that; on the cross I will deal with your sin and failure and I will make a declaration which will cancel your sin, without any apology! Jesus did make that statement at the place of the skull, Calvary; "*latin, calvaria*", when He said, "**FATHER, FORGIVE THEM FOR THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY DO**". Scripture tells us Peter went out and "wept bitterly" which indicates his internal sorrow for denying having known Jesus. After the resurrection, Jesus appeared to His disciples at the Sea of Tiberias. Jesus specifically gave attention to Peter but the message, I believe, was for all present. Jesus in addressing Peter simply asked Peter three times in three different ways, "**do you love me now**"? Each time Peter affirmed his love for Jesus and Jesus responded with a fresh mission for Peter. Jesus demanded no apology or explanation for, or defining why he had denied knowing Him. In finality Jesus gave Peter only two qualifications; love me and follow me!
- 4- In my appeal, I am taking the position of Paul in his appeal to Philemon on behalf of Onesimus who evidently could have wronged Philemon; specifically in Philemon. 8-21. I say, Onesimus could have, because of the language Paul uses in verse 18. IF, he has wronged you or IF he owes anything, put it on my account! There seems to be a question or unproven accusation against this beloved brother, and Paul requests Philemon to "receive" him. Paul does not make a demand but rather in the form of an appeal. Note the language;

*But without your consent I wanted to do nothing, that your good deed might not be by compulsion, as it were, but voluntary.*

*When a controversy arises, everyone involved in this controversy affirms his/her love for the other party. Then it is time to rise by grace, above any offense with a simple but powerful statement; "**I forgive you!**" Secondly, all parties involved must respond with an equally simple but powerful statement; "**I receive and accept your forgiveness!**" No explanation is needed to define what we are forgiving for or for what we are receiving and accepting forgiveness for. We need no apology or explanation for word, deed or perceived offence. If this is followed, the issue is forever resolved and should never be spoken of, explained or discussed again to anyone. No one needs to know anything other than, we have been reconciled by radical and extravagant forgiveness!*

*Recently a profound statement was given to me, which came through, Bill Johnson, a prominent leader in our generation. "What we know can keep us from what we need to know, to take a child-like faith towards life and ministry". I want to reposition myself to child-like innocence.*

*Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.*

*2Corinthians 5:18-19*

*Respectfully presented by,*

*Paul R. Tucker*