

A Summary of Biblical Forgiveness (Part 2)

Ten Principles to keep in mind

1. Forgiveness is not about how we make life more bearable for ourselves under overwhelming affliction, but what we do for somebody else.
2. Forgiveness, whether God's or our own, is to grant someone pardon for his sins, and that, in turn, means never mentioning those sins again.
3. The great incentive for believers to forgive others is that God in Christ has forgiven us.
4. We cannot expect, if we have forgiven someone who has offended us, that everything is going to go well in our relationship with him from now on. We are still both sinners, after all, and we need to be patient with one another.
5. Forgiveness is a gracious response to repentance. There must be some indication therefore that the offender wants to turn his life around, however difficult it may be for him to do that.
6. The offender's willingness to pay restitution demonstrates that his repentance is real and sincere.
7. If there is no restitution, and perhaps there cannot be, the offender should demonstrate in some other way that his repentance is entirely genuine.
8. If the one who is offended has misgivings about the sincerity of the repentance, he is still better to forgive than to harbour a grudge or seek revenge.
9. If the offender does not repent, it is important for the offended to drop the matter and let it go. Letting something go like this is not an act of forgiveness, but we must never allow someone else's sin to become an occasion for sin in us.
10. Forgiveness is not about one pardoning himself. What everyone really needs is to become a believer, to know that he has the Lord's approval, to accept that, and to be constrained to love the Lord all the more for it.