# Wordtruth

# Forgiveness—God's Pattern for Your Practice[*]

Forgiveness is at the heart of Christianity and means "to cancel a debt" or "to set aside." The awesome demonstration of God's love—the sacrifice of Jesus—is the perfect example of forgiveness that sets the standard by which God's children are to forgive others.

> **Ephesians 4:32**, Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, *as God in Christ forgave you. [Emphasis added]*

> **Romans 5:6-10**, For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—*but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us*. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. *[Emphasis added]*

- God's forgiveness is freely offered but its cost is beyond our full comprehension. *See The Cost of Forgiveness—We Can Only Imagine*

- No one is worthy to receive God's forgiveness since potential recipients are weak, sinning, unworthy enemies who should receive God's wrath. God willingly offers forgiveness to those who are unworthy to receive it.

- God demonstrated His willingness to forgive due to His love, mercy, and grace. His willingness to forgive is part of His nature and is not conditioned by someone's confession or deeds of repentance.

- When God forgives a person, He no longer relates to that person on the basis of past sinfulness.

## TRAITS OF BIBLICAL FORGIVENESS

Those who are maturing in Christ realize that biblical forgiveness is patterned after God's example and should be integral to their lives.

*See Forgiveness—Know the Basics from God's Perspective*

When biblical forgiveness is recognized to be impossible from a human perspective, then believers realize the necessity of relying on God to help them forgive others. Biblical forgiveness may seem impossible, but with God, all things are possible.

> **Matthew 19:26**, But Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

> **Jeremiah 32:17**, Ah, Lord GOD! It is you who have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm! Nothing is too hard for you.

When believers depend on God's unlimited power and His Word, they will truly forgive instead of trusting in their own natural wisdom, limited strength, and unpredictable emotions that prohibit biblical forgiveness. Biblical forgiveness is demonstrated in the following manner:

- Forgiveness is offered because it is needed, not because it is deserved.

- Forgiveness is a purposeful choice that overshadows emotional responses that are often wrongfully used to legitimize the withholding of forgiveness.

- Forgiveness is offered because God's grace, mercy, and love are active in the lives of those offering forgiveness instead of forgiveness being conditioned on the supposed "worth" of the person(s) receiving forgiveness.

- Forgiveness can be granted for any type of sin, from simple mistakes to the worst sins imaginable.

- Forgiveness is often offered at great cost to the person granting forgiveness.

- Forgiveness is *ready* to be offered before wrongdoers realize their need for forgiveness.

- Forgiveness will always be granted to those who confess personal wrongdoing.

- Forgiveness covers sin in such a manner that past sin is not brought up again in an accusing or manipulative manner. *Any discussion of past failures is to focus on a more comprehensive restoration to the Lord and others and not simply be a recitation of past misdeeds.*

- Forgiveness provides the possibility for renewed relationships, including those that are considered beyond repair or completely "dead."

Rely on God's power, trust His Word, respond to Christ's love, and forgive others, demonstrating the difference Jesus has made in your life.

[*]Excerpted from *Forgiveness: The Possible Impossibility*