

# FORGIVENESS & REPENTANCE

## THE STARTING POINT

“But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.” (Mark 11:26)

## THREE TENT PEGS

- 1) We must love our enemies and pray for our enemies.
- 2) We must leave vengeance to God and to the government, his minister.
- 3) We must follow God as our perfect model for how we should forgive.

## HOW DOES GOD FORGIVE?

- 1) God longs to forgive. He is ready, eager, and quick to forgive.
- 2) God offers forgiveness to all people but does not forgive all people. God loves all people but does not forgive all people.
- 3) God seeks out sinners.
- 4) God is not willing that any should perish. He wants to forgive everyone.
- 5) God does not forgive absent repentance.
- 6) God is good, forbearing, and long-suffering to those who do not repent.

## IMPORTANT DISTINCTIONS REGARDING FORGIVENESS AND REPENTANCE

- 1) There is a difference between our forgiveness by God and our forgiveness of others.
- 2) There is a difference between conditional forgiveness and unconditional forgiveness.
- 3) There is a difference between a sin against man and a sin against God.
- 4) There is a difference between sins and annoyances.

- 5) There is a difference between being the sinner and being the “sinnee.”
- 6) There is a difference between forgiving and being willing to forgive.
- 7) There is a difference between forgiving the living and forgiving the dead.
- 8) There is a difference between forgiving someone you know and forgiving a stranger.
- 9) There is a difference between forgiveness by a Christian to another Christian and forgiveness by a Christian to a non-Christian.
- 10) There is a difference between forgiveness based on love and forgiveness based on another motive.

## ARGUMENTS SUPPORTING THE PROPOSITION THAT REPENTANCE IS REQUIRED

- 1) We are to forgive as God forgives; we are to forgive as we ourselves have been forgiven — and we are not forgiven absent repentance.
- 2) We are to follow the model in Luke 17:3-4 and that model requires repentance.
- 3) What God does is good, and God withholds forgiveness absent repentance.
- 4) Some argue it is not possible to forgive absent repentance.
- 5) Why is there a procedure to take problems before the church if we are to forgive such issues absent repentance?
- 6) Human government is set up by God and is instructed by God not to offer unconditional forgiveness but rather to execute wrath on those that do evil.

- 7) Unless all forgiveness is unconditional, there must be a line between those we must forgive and those we must not forgive — and in the Bible that line is repentance.

## ARGUMENTS OFTEN RAISED IN SUPPORT OF THE VIEW THAT REPENTANCE IS NOT REQUIRED

- 1) Just because God does not forgive absent repentance does not mean that he does not impose that requirement upon us.
- 2) Some verses on forgiveness say nothing about repentance.
- 3) We must always be willing to forgive, and if we are willing to forgive then we will forgive.
- 4) Forgiveness of others is healthy for us. It allows us to get over the feelings of bitterness and resentment we might otherwise have.
- 5) The offender wins if we do not forgive him.
- 6) It is loving to forgive, and we must always be loving.
- 7) When we forgive unconditionally we are seen as different, and that action provides a powerful message to the world.

## LUKE 17:3-4

Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.

## MATTHEW 18:15

Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.