

## FORGIVE GOD

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**Forgiveness** is the process by which a person is released from the consequences of an action against another person or group and restored to a positive relationship with the offended party. Forgiveness is dynamic and multidimensional. Forgiveness from God releases a person from the consequences of sin and restores a proper relationship between that person and God. For this reason, when one person forgives another person, restoration and reconciliation between the parties should likewise follow. Forgiveness is a central aspect of Christian ethics, connected to other Christian ethical ideals such as love, mercy, and justice. Moreover, in Christian ethics, to forgive—and take steps to be forgiven—is a moral imperative (Mt 6:14-15).

Stanley J. Grenz and Jay T. Smith, *Pocket Dictionary of Ethics*, The IVP Pocket Reference Series (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 43.

- In essence, forgiveness is a “Litmus Test” for the believer, which determines their level of assimilation to the character of God. Any area in which we struggle with or have chosen to remain unforgiving is an area that we have yet to yield to God or allow His Holy Spirit to heal.
- **Forgiveness is not a singular event or a solo project.** It is a systematic process, fortified through collaborative effort, that helps an individual come to grips with the complexities of the offense, the severity of the injury, and the realities of the aftermath. If the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit all worked in tandem to bring about forgiveness for humanity, we certainly will need support in our journeys of forgiveness.
- If we are gonna live in forgiveness and be a forgiving people, I believe we must start at the most vital entity... we must **FORGIVE GOD**. That's right, I said it, and before you call me a heretic, let me state my case.
- Many of us have been disappointed, offended, and downright hurt by God. Remember the time that you asked and He said “no” or didn't answer at all? Or what about the time you went through that horrendous situation, and He let it happen? You begged and pleaded for Him to keep them alive, and He let them die anyway.

These realities don't necessarily fit our "God is good all the time" theology. You see, there are times when God's divine reality clashes with our anthropomorphic ideologies. In other words, sometimes God's actions are like 6-7.

- If we don't reconcile how we feel with what God has determined to be real, we will find ourselves, subtly but surely, building walls in our lives to keep God from "hurting us again". While this concept may seem foreign and maybe even sacrilegious to some, the reality is that any relationship that is plagued by disappointment and/or offense will have ruptures and/or blockages in the flow of trust, submission, and intimacy.
- **Genesis 4:6-8** **6** The Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? **7** If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, and you must rule over it." **8** Cain spoke to Abel his brother. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him.
  - The Lord is always available to process with you.
  - Don't expect people to settle your divine frustration. Wait in the tension with God.
  - Any pain you don't process with God will become violence to those you are closest to.
- **2 Samuel 12:15-22** **15** And the Lord afflicted the child that Uriah's wife bore to David, and he became sick. **16** David therefore sought God on behalf of the child. And David fasted and went in and lay all night on the ground. **17** And the elders of his house stood beside him, to raise him from the ground, but he would not, nor did he eat food with them. **18** On the seventh day the child died. And the servants of David were afraid to tell him that the child was dead, for they said, "Behold, while the child was yet alive, we spoke to him, and he did not listen to us. How then can we say to him the child is dead? He may do himself some harm." **19** But when David saw that his servants were whispering together, David understood that the child was dead. And David said to his servants, "Is the child dead?" They said, "He is dead." **20** Then David arose from the earth and washed and anointed himself and changed his clothes. And he went into the house of the Lord and worshiped. He then went to his own house. And when he asked, they set food before him, and he ate. **21** Then his servants said to him, "What is this thing that you have done? You fasted and wept for the child while he was alive; but when the child died, you arose and ate food." **22** He said, "While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept, for I said, 'Who

knows whether the Lord will be gracious to me, that the child may live?’ **23** But now he is dead. Why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he will not return to me.”

- Quiet yourself long enough to receive divine revelation.
- Maintain healthy rhythms to keep yourself regulated.
- Realize that anything God takes, he preserves, and if it is His will, you will see it again in a glorified state.

- **Forgiveness Prayer** - Lord God, I forgive you for not doing what I wanted, expected, or prayed for you to do. Forgive me for placing my desires above your will. Please help me restore submission, trust, and intimacy with you, in Jesus' name, amen.