

Doctrine of Forgiveness

These studies are designed for believers in Jesus Christ only. If you have exercised faith in Christ, then you are in the right place. If you have not, then you need to heed the words of our Lord, Who said, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten [or, uniquely-born] Son, so that every [one] believing [or, trusting] in Him shall not perish, but shall be have eternal life! For God did not send His Son into the world so that He should judge the world, but so that the world shall be saved through Him. The one believing [or, trusting] in Him is not judged, but the one not believing has already been judged, because he has not believed in the Name of the only-begotten [or, uniquely-born] Son of God." (John 3:16–18). "I am the Way and the Truth and the Life! No one comes to the Father except through [or, by means of] Me!" (John 14:6).

Every study of the Word of God ought to be preceded by a naming of your sins to God. This restores you to fellowship with God (1John 1:8–10). If there are people around, you would name these sins silently. If there is no one around, then it does not matter if you name them silently or whether you speak aloud.

From: http://gracebiblechurchwichita.org/?page_id=1133 accessed July 8, 2012. Considerable editing of this doctrine has been done. Points have been combined, added and removed. Also, the original person who put this together seemed to be having some problems in his church directly related to the concept of forgiveness. That has been left in. There were some problems with a legalistic approach both in Old Testament and New Testament function. That has been changed.

1. Definition:

- 1) There are always two parties in the act of forgiveness:
 - (1) The one who exercises forgiveness, pardons or excuses another party from the guilt of a sin, transgression, offence or wrongdoing.
 - (2) And the one who has received pardon or forgiveness is released from punishment and is immune to any future reprisals or acts of retribution (i.e. revenge) for the transgression.
- 2) The willingness to forgive or pardon is dependent on the grace orientation of the offended party and not on any personal qualities of the transgressor. It is the person who forgives who actually makes the choice to forgive.
- 3) Ultimately, all sin, by its very definition is committed against God. When David committed adultery with Bathsheba and then had her husband killed in battle, he later wrote: *Against You [God], You only, have I sinned, and done evil in Your sight; that You might be justified when You speak, and be clear when You judge* (Psalm 51:4). See also 1Kings 8:50

- 4) However it is a fact that people are offended, hurt or caused to stumble by others and, in a very real sense, the sin of the offending party is committed against individuals too. Gen. 20:9 Luke 17:4, cf. Prov. 18:19
2. Preliminary considerations of forgiveness:
 - 1) Forgiveness is just one aspect of the plan of God; there is justification, redemption, reconciliation, etc. Forgiveness from God means, we have committed an offense or many offenses against God, and God has forgiven us these offenses, but while being able to remain consistent with His perfect nature.
 - 2) God stands ready to grant forgiveness to all. Ex. 34:6-7 Num. 14:18 Psalm 86:5 Neh. 9:17
 - 3) It is far easier for Jesus Christ to perform a miracle than it is to forgive us our sins (Matt. 9:5). This is because Jesus, as the Creator of the Universe, is able to modify His creation at will, as long as it is within the plan of God. Forgiveness means that something has to be done about the penalty for our offenses against God. This requires that someone pay the penalty for our sins; and this is what Jesus did on the cross.
 - 4) As an aside, Jesus has both the authority to forgive sins and to perform miracles (Matt. 9:6).
 - 5) God must act within the confines of His Own character. God cannot forgive us out of sentimentality, personal attraction, favoritism or for any reason related to human emotion. God is perfect righteousness and perfect justice; therefore, God must act in accordance with those attributes. God can only forgive sin because this lines up with His essence.
 - (1) Therefore, forgiveness is tied to redemption. Deut. 21:8
 - (2) Forgiveness is tied to grace. 1Kings 8:50
 - (3) Forgiveness is tied to God's people turning to Him. God said, "If my people, who are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." (2Chron. 27:14). See also 2Chron. 6:24-25
 - (4) Forgiveness is tied to God's glory. Psalm 79:9
 - (5) Forgiveness is tied directly to the blood of Christ, which is our Lord's spiritual death on the cross. Eph. 1:7
 - 6) The person whose disobedience is forgiven and sin is covered, is blessed. Psalm 32:1 Rom. 4:7
 - 7) In order to be ready for service for the Lord, one's sins must be forgiven. Isa. 6:7-8
 - 8) There are times that people have legitimately prayed for the sins of their enemies not to be forgiven. Jer. 18:22-23
 - 9) In the Millennium, God will forgive the Jews and remember their sins no more. Jer. 31:33-34
 - 10) God hoped that the Jews would see all of the difficulties that God had planned for them, and would turn from their evil ways, and therefore be forgiven. Jer. 36:3

- 11) God forgives because Jesus Christ took upon Himself our sins and paid the penalty for those sins. Apart from this gracious act of our Lord, we cannot have forgiveness from God. Acts 13:38 Eph. 1:7 4:32
 - 12) God's forgiveness is complete and total. Psalm 103:12 Jer. 31:34 Ezek. 16:63
 - 13) All believers are made alive with Christ by means of God's forgiveness. Col. 2:13-14
 - 14) The exercise of faith in Christ results in forgiveness by God. Acts 10:43
 - 15) The issue of forgiveness is an issue of paramount importance in the phase II of a believer.
 - 16) After salvation, the confession of personal sin to God results in temporal forgiveness for the believer. 1 John 1:9 reads: *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*
 - 17) In relation to our interaction with others, we are commanded to forgive everyone regardless of the offense. Colossians 3:13 reads: *...bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.*
3. Vocabulary:
- 1) Hebrew verb: *tâhêr* (תָּהַר) [pronounced *taw-HAIR*] which means *to be cleansed [clean, pure] [physically, of disease; ceremonially, of uncleanness]; to purify, to be clean morally, to be made clean; to declare clean.* Strong's #2891 BDB #372. This word occurs 95–98 times¹ and is found in Lev. 16:30
 - 2) Hebrew verb: *kâphar* (כָּפַר) [pronounced *kaw-FAHR*] and it literally means *to cover, to cover over [with], to be covered [with]; to spread over; to appease, to placate, to pacify; to pardon, to expiate; to obtain forgiveness; to free an offender of a charge.* Strong's #3722 BDB #497. 102–121 occurrences. Lev. 4:20, 19:22, cf. Psalm 78:38
 - 3) Hebrew verb: *kâçâh* (כָּסָה) [pronounced *kaw-SAWH*] and it means *to cover, to clothe, to conceal.* In the context of Psalm 78:53, *engulf* is a good rendering. The Piel meanings are *to cover, to clothe, to spread over, to overwhelm, to engulf.* Strong's #3680 BDB #491. Occurs 151–152 times. Psalm 32:1.
 - 4) Hebrew verb: *mâchâh* (מָחָה) [pronounced *maw-KHAWH*], which means *to wipe, to wipe out, to blot out, to obliterate, to exterminate to completely blot out, to completely obliterate, to completely remove something.* Strong's #4229 BDB #562. Occurs 35–36 times; Neh. 4:5.
 - 5) Hebrew verb: *nâsâ'* (נָסַח) [pronounced *naw-SAW*], which means *to lift up, to bear, to carry.* Strong's #5375 (and Strong's #4984) BDB #669. In certain

¹ One of these numbers comes from the original source material and the other comes from the King James concordance in E-sword. There are times when a verb and its cognate noun are so close that, it is a tossup as to which occurs in some passages. Also, some verbs have a form which is so common that it earns its own Strong's number. These and other reasons account for the difference in the number of occurrences.

contexts, the verb is translated as "forgive." It figuratively depicts the taking away of an individual's sin or the taking away of guilt. Also, it is used to refer to the exercise of forgiveness on the part of both man and God. This word occurs 656–659 times. Gen 50:17 Josh. 24:19.

- 6) Hebrew verb: *çâlach* (סָלַח) [pronounced *saw-LAHKH*], which means *to forgive, to pardon; to overlook, to not hold responsible for, to not hold to*. It is found throughout the Bible; for instance: Ex. 34:9 Lev. 4 Num. 14:19 15 Psalm 103:3 Isa. 55:7; it appears to be more widely used after the establishment of the Law. I had thought that perhaps it might mean *overlook, not hold responsible for, not hold to*; but it appears primarily to mean *forgive* or *pardon*. Strong's #5545 BDB #699. This term doesn't refer to individuals forgiving each other. It occurs 46 times; Num. 15:28 Psalm 103:3
- 7) Hebrew feminine noun: *selîychâh* (סְלִיחָה) [pronounced *sehl-ee-KHAW*], which means, *forgiveness*. Strong's #5547 BDB #699. This occurs 3 times. Psalm 130:4
- 8) Hebrew adjective: *sallâch* (סָלַח) [pronounced *sahl-LAWKH*], which means, *ready to forgive, forgiving*. Strong's #5546 BDB #699. This occurs once in Psalm 86:5
- 9) The verb *apoluô* (ἀπολύω) [pronounced *ap-ol-OO-oh*], which means, 1) *to set free*; 2) *to let go, dismiss, (to detain no longer)*; 2a) *a petitioner to whom liberty to depart is given by a decisive answer*; 2b) *to bid depart, send away*; 3) *to let go free, release*; 3a) *a captive, i.e. to loose his bonds and bid him depart, to give him liberty to depart*; 3b) *to acquit one accused of a crime and set him at liberty*; 3c) *indulgently to grant a prisoner leave to depart*; 3d) *to release a debtor, i.e. not to press one's claim against him, to remit his debt*; 4) *used of divorce, to dismiss from the house, to repudiate*. The wife of a Greek or Roman may divorce her husband.; 5) *to send one's self away, to depart*. These definitions added in by this doctrine: *legal term to grant acquittal, set free, release, pardon*. Thayer and Thieme definitions only. Strong's #630. According to the King James concordance, this word occurs 111 times. Luke 6:37
- 10) Greek verb *aphiêmi* (ἀφίημι) [pronounced *af-EE-ay-mee*], which means, 1) *to send away*; 1a) *to bid going away or depart*; 1a1) *of a husband divorcing his wife*; 1b) *to send forth, yield up, to expire*; 1c) *to let go, let alone, let be*; 1c1) *to disregard*; 1c2) *to leave, not to discuss now, (a topic)*; 1c2a) *of teachers, writers and speakers*; 1c3) *to omit, neglect*; 1d) *to let go, give up a debt, forgive, to remit*; 1e) *to give up, keep no longer*; 2) *to permit, allow, not to hinder, to give up a thing to a person*; 3) *to leave, go way from one*; 3a) *in order to go to another place*; 3b) *to depart from any one*; 3c) *to depart from one and leave him to himself so that all mutual claims are abandoned*; 3d) *to desert wrongfully*; 3e) *to go away leaving something behind*; 3f) *to leave one by not taking him as a companion*; 3g) *to leave on dying, leave behind one*; 3h) *to leave so that what is left may remain, leave remaining*;

- 3i) *abandon, leave destitute*. Strong's #863. This word occurs 143–156 times. Luke 5:20 1John 1:9
- 11) Greek feminine noun: *áphesis* (ἀφεσις) [pronounced *AWF-ess-iss*], which means *forgiveness, remission, freedom*. Its verb cognate means *to stand away from, to cause to stand away from, to release from; the act of freeing from an obligation, guilt, or punishment, pardon, cancellation, forgiveness (i.e. cancellation of the guilt of sin)*. Strong's #859. Occurs 17 times. Luke 1:77 Acts 10:43).
 - 12) Greek verb *epikaluptô* (ἐπικαλύπτω) [pronounced *ep-ee-kal-OOP-toe*], which means, *to cover over [up]; to hide from view by covering*. Thayer Thieme definitions only. Strong's #1943. This verb is used only once in the New Testament to translate Psalm 32:1 where David asks God to "cover up" his sin This verb occurs once in Rom. 4:7.
 - 13) Greek verb: *kaluptô* (καλύπτω) [pronounced *kal-OOP-toe*], which means, *to hide, to cover, to veil; to hinder the knowledge of a thing; the covering of sin*. Thayer definition only. Strong's #2572. In certain passages the term refers to the covering of sin This verb occurs 8 times. (James 5:20, 1Peter 4:8).
 - 14) Greek verb: *charizomai* (χαρίζομαι) [pronounced *khar-ID-zohm-ahee*], which means, *to do something pleasant or agreeable (to one), to do a favour to, gratify; to show one's self gracious, kind, benevolent; to grant forgiveness, to pardon; to give graciously, give freely, bestow; to forgive; graciously to restore one to another; to preserve for one a person in peril; to show oneself gracious by forgiving wrongdoing, forgive, pardon*. Thayer and Thieme definitions. Strong's #5483. The root is *charis*, which is grace or kindness. 23 or 24 occurrences. 2Cor. 2:7 Col. 3:13.
4. The forgiveness of mankind by God.
- 1) Forgiveness and salvation.
 - (1) The inherent penalty of sin is spiritual, physical, and eternal death (Gen. 2:17 Rom. 5:12-14, 6:23). God cannot be associated with sin, so we cannot be eternally associated with God apart from forgiveness of sin. God's perfect righteousness demands that we be punished for our sins, which would mean eternal judgment. Sins in time would mean no fellowship with God, as God cannot have fellowship with sin.
 - (2) If mankind was to be saved, he must first be released from the penalty of sin.
 - (3) In addition to the penalty of sin, mankind is viewed in disfavor by God. John 3:36 Rom. 1:18, 5:9 Eph. 2:3
 - (4) The penalty was graciously removed through Christ's perfect sacrifice on the cross where He bore the punishment for ALL mankind's sin in His body. Isa. 53:5-12 1Pet. 2:24
 - (5) Subsequent to Christ's perfect work on the cross, the penalty of sin was removed and forgiveness was made possible. Acts 13:38-39 Rom. 8:1, 33-34.
 - (6) Christ knew that dying for our sins was His role during the incarnation. Matt. 20:28

- (7) His death on the cross provides the basis for the forgiveness of mankind by God. Rom. 4:7 Col. 2:13-14, cf. John 1:29
 - (8) The pardon or forgiveness of man's sin is the legal act of God whereby He removes the charges that were held against mankind.
 - (9) Although mankind has been forgiven by God, an individual doesn't secure His forgiveness until he changes his thinking and believes in Jesus Christ as Savior. Luke 3:3; 24:46-47 Acts 2:38; 26:18
 - (10) At the point of saving faith, the individual is "officially" (positionally) forgiven by God and is exonerated from the guilt of sin. Mark 2:5 Luke 7:48-50
 - (11) The believer is justified or declared righteous by God (i.e. imputation of God's righteousness) when we exercise faith in His Son. This enables the sinner to have fellowship with God. Gen. 15:6 2Cor. 5:21
 - (12) At salvation, forgiveness results in a restoration to fellowship due to the cleansing which takes place when the believer is forgiven. This means that we begin salvation in fellowship. James 4:8
- 2) Forgiveness after salvation (also known as phase II forgiveness or forgiveness in time).
- (1) After the salvation, a believer is in periodic need of forgiveness due to acts of personal sin.
 - (2) Personal sin causes the believer to be in an impure state in need of cleansing or forgiveness (cf. Lev. 16:16).
 - i The O.T. believer followed a protocol for cleansing which includes:
 - i) Personal confession to God (Psalm 32:5, 38:18 Prov. 28:13, cf. Psalm 51:2, 7 Jer. 33:8).
 - ii) Sin offerings (Lev. 4:27-35, 5:5-10). This is symbolic of God's temporal forgiveness of sin. Although Old Testament believers were supposed to do this, they were forgiven temporally for naming their sins to God and not for participating in a ritual (just as they were saved by faith in Y^ehowah, and not by means of offering up a lamb or a bull as a blood offering).
 - iii) National confession and cleansing (Lev. 26:40, Dan. 9:4-20, cf. Ezek. 36:25, 33; 37:23). This latter act is because God deals with believers corporately as well as individually. "If my people, who are called by My name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." (2Chron. 27:14).
 - ii The believer who is out of fellowship is forgiven when he confesses his personal sin to God. At the point of confession, the believer in effect is cleansed from all unrighteousness (also

known as rebound: 1John 1:9 *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*).

- (3) Post salvation forgiveness is based on the fact that Christ was judged for every sin. Additionally, God is completely faithful and just to forgive every time a believer confesses personal sin(s) (cf. 1John 1:7 *but if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.*).

5. The unpardonable sin.

- 1) We find this spoken of in Matt. 12:24–32 *But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, "This man does not cast out demons, except by Beelzebul, the prince of the demons." Knowing their thoughts, Jesus said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand. If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? If I by Beelzebul cast out demons, by whom do your children cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges. But if I by the Spirit of God cast out demons, then the Kingdom of God has come upon you. Or how can one enter into the house of the strong man, and plunder his goods, unless he first bind the strong man? Then he will plunder his house. He who is not with me is against me, and he who doesn't gather with me, scatters. Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men. Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in that which is to come."*
- 2) Jesus was presenting the gospel to those who were listening to Him and watching what He was doing.
- 3) The Holy Spirit worked within the souls of men and made the gospel clear while Jesus spoke to them and worked miracles.
- 4) The miracles illustrated the concept of salvation: man, who is unable to do anything to correct his position before God is cleansed and made righteous before God, just as a man who suffered from an incurable illness was made well by Jesus Christ.
- 5) Those who resisted the Holy Spirit said that these works were being done by Satan, thus attributing the power of Jesus to Satan.
- 6) Those who rejected Jesus Christ, and were resisting the Holy Spirit when He presented the gospel, were committing the unpardonable sin, which is, in essence, not exercising faith in Him. *"For God didn't send his Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him. He who believes in Him is not judged. He who doesn't believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the uniquely-born Son of God."* (John 3:17–18).

6. Believers are enjoined to forgive others.

- 1) All believers are commanded to forgive others even as Christ has forgiven us. Matt. 6:14 Mark 11:25 Eph. 4:32 Col. 3:13
- 2) We are especially to forgive others in the royal family of God. Col. 3:13
- 3) Furthermore, forgiveness is to be extended to the offending party every time an offense is committed against the believer regardless of the severity. Luke 17:4
- 4) In the post-salvation niche, receiving forgiveness from God is dependant on a believer's willingness to forgive others.
 - (1) Believers are forgiven all sins because of Christ's work on the cross. Eph. 1:7 Col. 2:13-14 1John 2:12, cf. Psalm 32:1
 - (2) Therefore, as we received pardon, we are to forgive the anyone who might give us cause for complaint. 2Cor. 2:7 Eph. 4:32
 - (3) If the believer fails to forgive the offense of others, he will not be forgiven his sin. Matt. 6:14-15 18:21-22 Luke 11:4
 - (4) Failure to forgive is often manifested in anger, bitterness, grudges, a malicious attitude, a lack of care or concern for another, acts of retaliation or revenge, etc.
 - (5) Apart from the sin of unbelief, there is no sin the Father will not forgive. John 3:18
 - (6) Who are we as believers to refuse to forgive when God graciously forgives us of our every sin?
 - (7) The believer who brings his lack of forgiveness to mind falls out of fellowship. For many believers, this is one the unknown sins which is forgiven when the known sins are named.
 - (8) Forgiving others is a part of spiritual growth.
 - (9) Various ramifications for the believer who is out of fellowship:
 - i He is under the domination of the old sin nature. Rom. 8:7
 - ii He is unable to correctly understand Divine viewpoint which results in instability and insecurity in the life of the believer. 1Cor. 2:14, cf. Eph. 4:14
 - iii A believer who does not forgive, and is therefore out of fellowship when this is brought to mind, forfeits the opportunity for supergrace³, which is a stage of growth for Christians; and the wreath indicates great reward. Rev. 2:10
 - iv A believer who cannot forgive is unable to manifest "love" (which is a mental attitude) towards other members of the royal family. Gal. 5:22, cf. Gal. 5:13, Eph. 4:2
 - v A believer who has not forgiven can expect divine discipline. cf. Lk. 6:38-39
 - vi The believer who declines to forgive another may be exploited by Satan. 2Cor. 2:11
- 5) Additionally, believers who refuse to forgive are often the cause of dissensions and strife in the local church.
 - (1) Again, the believer who refuses to forgive is out of fellowship and therefore is being influenced by his old sin nature.

- (2) Rarely will this believer keep his mouth shut. Instead, he often "feels" compelled to verbalize his side of the complaint to other members of the local body.
- (3) Commonly, "his side" of the complaint consists of a litany of complaints against the believer(s) who offended him.
- (4) Do not give such a one an audience! Admonish him to forgive as it is in his best spiritual interests. cf. Eph. 4:31, Col. 3:8, 1Peter 2:1
- (5) Believers are not to be verbally combative or disputatious (Gal. 5:26, Phil. 2:14). Gal. 5:26 reads: **Let us not become arrogant, provoking one another, and envying one another.** *Provoking* here means *to provoke or challenge in a hostile sense; to call out to fight*. Phil 2:14 reads: **Do all things without murmurings and disputations.** *Disputations* means, *a verbal exchange that takes place when conflicting ideas are expressed, to dispute, argue*.
- (6) It is possible that the believer with a complaint may have an absolutely valid complaint. However, his failure to forgive and subsequent verbal sinning are the problem, not the solution. Forgiveness is the solution. cf. Gal. 5:15 James 5:9
- (7) Such a one is divisive and doesn't contribute to the unity of the local church. Cf. 1Cor 12:25. Unity in the local church is important because of our corporate witness before God. In politics, we do not need to be unified. It is possible to have people in Congress who will never see eye-to-eye on anything; and, under such circumstances, nearly nothing gets done. However, in the church, it is the pastor-teacher who has the authority and he provides the leadership (Heb. 13:13, 17). These disputes are distractions.
- (8) Pay careful attention to and separate from believers who are divisive. cf. Rom 16:17

7. Conflict resolution and forgiveness.

- 1) Personal conflicts are very common among believers, as has been noted with regards to Paul vs. Barnabas. Acts 15:36-39, Col. 4:10, 2 Tim. 4:11
- 2) The believer is expected to resolve conflicts according to the principles of sound doctrine and not allow complaints to fester (cf. Hebrews 12:15).
- 3) If the offending party is unwilling to come to terms with what they have done, to apologize, to admit that what they did was wrong, to forgive you, etc., the believer does not have the freedom to withhold forgiveness.
- 4) Rather, believers are commanded to forgive others even if there is no formal apology (e.g. "I'm sorry" or "I apologize") or recognition of the offense.
- 5) In other words, it is not a matter of both being willing to meet half-way. There are times when you must forgive the other believer, even if he makes no pretense about forgiving you, admitting that he is wrong, etc.
- 6) This does not mean that you must spend a lot of time with people that you have had a falling out with. Maybe you will and maybe you won't. What you do not do is harbor mental attitude sins toward them or gossip about them or malign them.

- 7) Did Christ wait for a formal apology from the Romans before He forgave them? Absolutely not (cf. Lk. 23:34ff).
- 8) In the case of ongoing offenses among believers in the local church, the offended believer should attempt to personally address the one who committed the offense against him.
 - (1) Again, forgiveness must be extended regardless of the severity of the offense.
 - (2) At this point, the offended believer must determine whether or not it would be profitable to proceed. In certain scenarios, it may be more beneficial to let God alone deal with the offending party (cf. Psalm 35:1ff 1Cor. 6:7).
 - (3) A believer must recognize that he will experience a certain amount of undeserved suffering in phase II. Cf. Gen. 26:20-22 1Peter 4:19
 - (4) Do not be frivolous or petty in initiating this process.
 - (5) It is not an outlet for revenge or to settle a personal vendetta. Carefully examine your motives (cf. Deut. 32:5 Prov. 20:22).
 - (6) Pray for guidance in determining the right opportunity to address the offending party.
 - (7) This initial attempt at reconciliation is to be done in private (Matt. 18:15 cf. Lev. 19:17).
 - (8) In addition, this tends to alleviate quarrels, disputes, slander, etc. spreading to other "uninvolved" members in the body. Do not allow other believers to meddle in the situation (cf. Prov. 26:17, 1Tim 5:13).
 - (9) The private discussion allows the offending believer an opportunity to correct his thinking and behavior.
 - (10) An exhortation in private may be just the catalyst needed to wake up the offending believer.
 - (11) Remember, God gives you ample time to correct your old sin nature activities so you too allow time for another believer to make corrections.
 - (12) If he listens and makes the appropriate adjustments in accordance with Divine viewpoint, then the conflict is resolved.
- 9) If the offending believer refuses to cease his old sin nature activity after the private exhortation, then the attempt to resolve the issue enters another phase.
 - (1) Now the offending party forfeits privacy regarding the ongoing old sin nature.
 - (2) The offended believer should continue to pray for wisdom and give careful consideration to the offenses.
 - (3) He must then enlist the aid of one or two witnesses to confirm the facts regarding the situation and confront the errant believer again (Matt. 18:16, cf. Deut. 19:15, 1 Tim. 5:19).
 - (4) The goal is to get the believer to correct his thinking and conduct.
- 10) If the errant believer refuses to change his actions after the second confrontation, then the process of resolution escalates even further.

- (1) At this point, the matter is brought before the church leadership (i.e. P-T and deacons, Matt. 18:17).
- (2) Clearly this is not a forum for trifling matters.
- (3) An investigation will ensue and binding decision will be rendered according to the facts (Matt. 18:18).
- (4) The errant believer is given another opportunity to change his OSN thinking and behavior.
- (5) It may involve a public reprimand (1 Tim. 5:20).
- 11) If he refuses to listen to the leadership of the church, then the local body is to remain aloof from him and in certain severe cases he is to be removed from the assembly (Matthew 18:17 "And if he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax-gatherer.", 2 Thessalonians 3:14 "And if anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of that man and do not associate with him, so that he may be put to shame. 15 And yet do not regard him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother", cf. 1 Cor. 5:1,
 - (1) Forgiveness must be applied but fellowship must cease until the errant believer amends his conduct.
 - (2) Furthermore, members of the local church are not to abuse or persecute this believer. Remember to be humble as you too may be vulnerable to temptation (cf. Gal. 6:1).
 - (3) He is not an enemy. Rather, he is a fellow member of the royal family with equal rights and status by virtue of his union with Christ.
 - (4) However, his manner of life is not in compliance with Divine standards (cf. Jer. 7:23, Colossians 1:10 "so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.").
 - (5) Ideally the errant believer will make a recovery (cf. James 5:15).
 - (6) Some believers persist in their defiance of God and never change their conduct. Severe divine discipline is in store for them (Heb. 6:4-8).
8. The psychology of forgiving others: All of your life you will be treated unjustly and unfairly. People will cheat you, lie to you, and do wrong to you. The wrongs that some people will do is beyond imagination. However, it is imperative to the believer to be able to forgive them, set those wrongs aside, and move ahead with your life. These are people for whom Jesus Christ died. Jesus Christ did not look upon your enemy and decide, "Yeah, I agree, that Charlie Brown is one bad hombre; I will not pay for his sin on the cross." Jesus died for the sins of Charlie Brown just as He died for your sins. Therefore, Jesus is able to forgive Charlie Brown. If God can forgive Charlie Brown, then we must be able to forgive him as well. Now, this does not mean that you will pal around with Charlie Brown or include him on all of your dinner party guest lists, or whatever. But you need to forgive him and put his wrongdoing completely out of your mind. You do not need to discuss it with anyone, re-explain the circumstances to anyone, or anything else. You just move on with your life.

- 1) Forgiveness does not mean you get all weird. If it is a criminal act, you can forgive the criminal, but you may still be a part of the prosecution which seeks justice from him.
 - 2) You may have someone who has screwed you over in some kind of a business deal and you have forgiven him. However, when someone comes to you and asks about a reference, this does not mean that you gloss over this person's past deeds. When you are giving a reference, it is up to you to be honest and forthright. Here is a place where your motivation is key: if someone asks you about Charlie Brown seeking a reference; and you have this leap of joy in your heart, "Oh, wow, I can really stick it to Charlie Brown." That attitude means that you have not actually forgiven Charlie. In giving an honest evaluation of Charlie Brown, you may want to try to view things from his point of view. He may have honestly felt that he was justified in what he did to you. When you are giving an evaluation of someone, it needs to be as honest and as objective as possible. "Okay, Charlie Brown did cheat me out of \$500 in a business deal, but he may have felt justified because of the following circumstance..." and you describe the circumstance.
 - 3) Let's say someone has committed a criminal act against you. It does not matter how heinous the act is, you still forgive them. The act may be so heinous that they will receive the death penalty for what they did. However, your life needs to go on, as best as you can, with them a distant blip in your rear view mirror, as having been forgiven. If you feel like you cannot move on until their execution, then you have not forgiven them.
 - 4) Now, let's say that a smaller criminal act was committed—you are burglarized by a friend of family member under the influence of drugs. You do not seek revenge and they may or may not be punished by the law to the extent that you think that they ought to be punished. However, you still must forgive them for what they have done. However, this does not mean that you need to go out of your way to associate with them or to be nice to them.
 - 5) God does say that we are to separate from some believers, and those who have cheated us, hurt us, used us as a stepping stone to advance their careers, can be forgiven and then let alone. Life is too short to spend in a conflict with them; life is too short to relive that conflict over and over again. Life is too short to do anything but move on ahead.
9. Conclusions concerning forgiveness.
- 1) Due to the perfect sacrifice of Christ and the exercise of saving faith, believers are exonerated from the guilt of all sin.
 - 2) After the salvation adjustment to the justice of God, the believer is cleansed from sin via the confession of personal sin to God the Father.
 - 3) Believers are instructed to be ready and willing to forgive anyone who sins against them. Mark 11:25 **"And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone."**
 - 4) We are to be especially ready to forgive fellow members of the royal family.
 - 5) Regardless of the gravity of the offense or the number of occurrences.

- 6) Lack of forgiveness on the part of believer will bring his spiritual growth to a standstill. Matthew 6:14-15 "For if you forgive men for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions." When your lack of forgiveness is brought into your thinking, that puts you out of fellowship.
- 7) Due to the perfect sacrifice of Christ and the exercise of saving faith, believers are exonerated from the guilt of all sin.
- 8) After the salvation adjustment to the justice of God, the believer is cleansed from sin via the confession of personal sin to God the Father. Psalm 32:5 I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I did not hide; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD"; And You forgave the guilt of my sin. Selah. Psalm 51:2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin.
- 9) It may be hard to forgive at times, but take comfort in knowing that as you forgive you are in obedience to God.
- 10) Additionally, you are doing your part in trying to be at peace with all men. Romans 12:18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.
- 11) The believer who readily forgives the offenses of others will reap blessings in time and eternity.

The lion's share of this doctrine originally came from:

http://gracebiblechurchwichita.org/?page_id=1133 This doctrine required a lot of revising *cleaning up*, so to speak; however, the bulk of it was left intact.

The complete Doctrine of Forgiveness can be found here (HTML) (PDF).

The Abbreviated Doctrine of Forgiveness

Word Cloud for the Doctrine of Forgiveness

