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# THE BLESSED LIFE

## Part 7 - Forgiveness

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It is actually really easy to get hurt or to hurt others. We can be hurt by someone saying something or not saying something or by someone doing something or not doing something. We can be hurt by people we know and love, and we can be hurt by total strangers.

Getting hurt is real and it happens often. Some people in this room may have been abused, cheated, threatened and endangered. While others have been offended, rejected or ignored. We can all be wounded, or wound others by our interactions with one another, we all deal with hurt on some level.

Because hurt happens, forgiveness also needs to happen.

### What is Forgiveness?

***Forgiveness is not reconciliation*** – forgiveness does not mean you are or need to be in a relationship with someone.

***Forgiveness is not healing.*** While forgiveness opens the door to healing, it does not heal the wound.

***Forgiveness is a choice.*** No one can make you do it. It can't be forced on you. It is a choice of your will.

***Forgiveness is repeatable.*** Sometimes we can need to forgive time and time again.

***Forgiveness is an act of our own heart.*** It's not dependent on it being two-way.

But probably one of the most important things about forgiveness is that God asks us to forgive. He asks us to do it.

## **The Petition and the Declaration - Matthew 6:12-15**

The Petition – Lord, forgive us our debts.

The Declaration – As we also have forgiven our debtors.

*For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins. Matthew 6:14-15 (NIV)*

So, is this a matter of salvation? No, we are saved by grace. For this to be a matter of salvation, it would mean salvation by works (Ephesians 2:8-10). Forgiving others is a grace of the Holy Spirit. We are working by the Spirit when we forgive.

## **The Sermon on the Mount – Matthew 5:38-42**

The Sermon on the Mount introduces us to Jesus' character, and we see Him use some very powerful examples of justice and forgiveness.

### **The Slap**

A slap across the face would have been something a child or slave would have experienced regularly, and sadly, women as well. These were far different social norms to what is acceptable today. Jesus wasn't condoning domestic violence; He was using it as an illustration for forgiveness to invert the power differential. When someone hit someone else, instead of choosing to get even or seek revenge, they could choose to forgive. Hitting back only keeps the hurt in circulation.

### **The Coat**

There may have been people who had issues with finance and poverty and what was owed. People wanting your property as payment – literally the shirt off your back. People commonly only wore two articles of clothing, so to give your coat as well would have left you in a very vulnerable position, maybe even naked and ashamed. But once again, the person taking from you is made aware of your vulnerability. So, while it seems like they are taking advantage, really, you are making them aware of their actions, exposing your vulnerability and their greed.

## **A Mile**

The third example spoke to a real and present issue with the Roman military. A Roman soldier was allowed to ask you to carry your equipment for one mile, but no more. So, by walking two miles, you first put the Romans at risk. They were not allowed to ask you to walk that far, but you could do it of your own accord or generosity, demonstrating humility and once again, taking the power back. This reaction reflected God's generous nature. Don't plot revenge; humbly serve.

## **Pride vs Humility**

What do we see Jesus choose? Jesus was betrayed, gossiped about, abused, rejected, ignored and hated. But He chose forgiveness (Luke 23:34-35).

We can forgive others because we have been freely forgiven.

**Forgiveness is a humble choice of our heart.**

## **Discussion Questions**

1. Have you been hurt in your life?
2. Has it been hard to forgive, or have you found it easy? What are some of the things that stop you from forgiving?
3. Is there anything from the list of 'What forgiveness is' that you find hard to accept?

4. Do you feel comfortable praying the petition to God to forgive you without also praying the declaration that you will forgive?
5. What would it look like if you forgave all your debtors?
6. Have you ever had a turn-your-cheek moment where you responded to hurt with humility?
7. What is the outcome of going into conflict with Pride versus going into conflict with Humility?
8. Who is God putting on your heart to forgive?

**If this message has brought up hurt for you that you need to walk through, please feel free to call our LifeCentre or counselling ministry to begin the journey of healing.**

**church@riverlifechurch.org.au**

**07 3378 3595**

**If you are currently experiencing or are at risk of domestic violence, please contact DV Connect**

**<https://www.dvconnect.org/>**

**1800 811 811**