

Biblical Reconciliation: Going Beyond Peace-Making

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3 FORGIVENESS TOWARD RECONCILIATION

Two essential qualities are necessary for complete reconciliation and restored unity in a conflict. The attitude and practice of Christ-like forgiveness and humility. When these two qualities are absent there will never be true reconciliation but only a truce. God desires more than a cessation of hostility. He wants His Body to be perfectly unified. This is possible, no matter what the disagreement may be, if there is a knowledge and desire to achieve Christlikeness in all the parties involved.

A. What is forgiveness?

The primary Greek verb translated "forgive" (*aphiemi*) means "to send away" or "to release." So in reference to sin it means "to pardon." But forgiveness has also rightly been described as a promise, because when God forgives, He promises that He will never hold our sins against us (Jeremiah 31:34).

So, the best definition of forgiveness is ***a promise of pardon.***

(1) God's forgiveness

(2) Our forgiveness

- (a) "I will not remind you of this sin (unless it would be absolutely necessary to do so for your good)."
- (b) "I will not mention it to anyone else (unless it would be absolutely necessary...)."
- (c) "I will not allow my mind to dwell on it."

We are commanded to forgive, so we are sinning if we refuse to make that promise. Therefore forgiveness is a matter of obedience rather than feeling.

It is also sin for us to break our promise after we make it, and we can keep it regardless of how we feel.

b) Whom should we forgive?

(1) The attitude of love: willing to forgive

(a) Mark 11:25

(b) Luke 23:34

(c) Matthew 6:12-15 and Luke 11:4

(2) The transaction of forgiveness

(3) Other issues related to whom we forgive

(a) Confronting vs. "covering"

(b) Apologizing vs. asking for forgiveness

(c) What about forgiving God?

(d) What about forgiving unbelievers?

(e) What about forgiving dead people?

(f) What about forgiving ourselves?

c) How should we forgive?

(1) Immediately (Luke 17:3)

(2) Repeatedly (Luke 17:4)

(3) Lavishly (II Corinthians 2:5-8)

(4) Why should we forgive?