

Our State of Theology – 9g(4)b

The Holy Spirit: The Fruit of the Spirit – Forgiving Others

- How do we handle it, when someone sins against us?

Luke 17:3–5 (NIV84)

- ³So watch yourselves. “If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him.
⁴If he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times comes back to you and says, ‘I repent,’ forgive him.”
⁵The apostles said to the Lord, “**Increase our faith!**”
- This is the only time that the apostles asked for an increase in faith. These men were not just *disciples*, they were *apostles*. They did not ask for increased faith in working miracles, healing the sick, raising the dead, but an increase of faith *to forgive*.
 - This clearly show us that forgiveness for repeated offenses does not come naturally. It must be gifted to a person through the Holy Spirit.
 - Not only do we need faith that God forgives, we must also exercise faith to forgive.
 - Jesus’ model of forgiveness is to forgive every time someone calls on His name.
 - Are we to imitate Jesus’ model of forgiveness?
 - Is there someone in your life that you refuse or can’t forgive?
 - What are the consequences of holding unforgiveness in your heart against someone?

Matthew 6:1–15 (NIV84)

- ¹“Be careful not to do your ‘acts of righteousness’ before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.
²“So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full.
³But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,
⁴so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.
⁵“And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full.
⁶But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward

you.

- ⁷And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words.
⁸Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.
⁹“This, then, is how you should pray: “ ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
¹⁰your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
¹¹Give us today our daily bread.
¹²Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.
¹³And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.’
¹⁴For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.
¹⁵But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Matthew 6:12 (AMP)

- ¹²And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven (left, remitted, and let go of the debts, and **have given up resentment against**) our debtors.
- Think about this prayer. You’re asking God, the Father, to forgive you the way you forgive others.
 - Without forgiveness, a person cannot be forgiven (Matt 6:14–15). **Forgiving others** is not a precondition for justification; it **is simply an ever-present fruit of justification**. True salvation always results in forgiveness of others. When a person is substantially lacking in forgiveness, there is cause for doubt that the person is a forgiven believer.¹
 - **Matthew 5:7 (NIV84)**
⁷Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.
 Citizens of God’s kingdom are blessed and receive mercy because they themselves are merciful.²
 - This prayer for forgiveness is not a prayer for forgiveness that we prayed when we first believed on the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation.
 That request involves the acceptance of Christ’s death as the one sufficient sacrifice for our sin—past, present, and future—and **it is something that is done once for all**.

¹ Douglas Mangum, ed., *Lexham Context Commentary: New Testament*, Lexham Context Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2020), Mk 11:25–26.

² John F. MacArthur Jr., *Matthew*, vol. 1, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1985), 394.

The Holy Spirit: The Fruit of the Spirit – Forgiving Others
nothing. We should treat no one, whether young or old, whether weak in mind or weak in body, as if he has no value.⁵

- If this prayer for forgiveness was referring to our initial forgiveness, then we can have no real security before God.

We cannot say, as Paul does, that “he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus” (Phil. 1:6).

We cannot say with Jeremiah that God will “remember our sins no more” (Jer. 31:34).

We cannot say, “As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us” (Ps. 103:12).

All these verses would be meaningless if that kind of forgiveness was meant.

- The Lord is not speaking of the forgiveness we receive in the first moment of our salvation.

He is speaking of forgiveness that comes later, that comes repeatedly, a forgiveness that restores a broken relationship with God.³

- In the government of God as Father over His own children, our forgiveness of daily offences depends upon our attitude toward those who offend against us.

If we refuse to forgive our erring brethren, God will not grant us that restorative forgiveness for which we plead when conscious of sin and failure.

This has nothing to do with that eternal forgiveness which the believing sinner receives when he comes to Christ. It is the Father’s forgiveness of an erring child, which must of necessity take into account the attitude of the failed one toward other members of the family.⁴

Matthew 5:21–24 (NIV84)

²¹“You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’”

²²But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother (neighbor) will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, ‘Raca,’ is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell.

- The terms *raca* and *fool* are not quite identical.
Raca (ῥακά) expresses contempt for someone’s mind. It means “Stupid idiot! Dummy! Moron!”
Fool (μωρός) expresses contempt for someone’s heart and character.
- *Raca* insults the brains; *fool* insults the heart. Together, they imply that someone is worthless, good for

²³“Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you,

²⁴leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.

- Reconciliation is the preventative of breaking the sixth commandment (“Do not murder”).

The message here is that the hot temper and harmful tongue need to be dealt with quickly before they stir up further troubles.

This action will stop murder in the bud and in the seed, when it is easy to stop it. Let the work of a hot temper and harmful tongue go unstopped and you will soon have a full grown tree that may produce the horrible deed of murder.⁶

Hebrews 12:14–15 (NIV84)

¹⁴Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.

¹⁵See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.

- We must *make every effort* to not allow unforgiveness to fester within our hearts. When unforgiveness is allowed to take root in our hearts, it will produce a root of bitterness which grows, causes trouble and defiles many.
- How? The words that spring from a heart made bitter through unforgiveness will be words that malign the person with whom they have a grudge or resentment against. Many times, those words are spoken in the form of *gossip*. The hearer will be polluted or poisoned in their mind of that person, and so, the poison spreads.

Gossip is something that goes in one ear and out the mouth.

The gossip will never tell a lie when the truth will do more damage.

Dr. J. Arnold Fair: Destructive gossip is giving detrimental information to any person who is not directly a part of the problem or solution of the problem.

- There is a story that is told of three preachers that

³ James Montgomery Boice, *The Sermon on the Mount: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2002), 196.

⁴ H. A. Ironside, *Expository Notes on the Gospel of Matthew* (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1948), 65.

⁵ Daniel M. Doriani, *Matthew & 2*, ed. Richard D. Phillips, Philip Graham Ryken, and Daniel M. Doriani, vol. 1, Reformed Expository Commentary (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2008), 144.

⁶ John G. Butler, *Analytical Bible Expositor: Matthew* (Clinton, IA: LBC Publications, 2008), 84.

gathered together to form a support group. After several weeks of building confidence in one another, they began to share the burdens of their hearts and darkest secrets.

One preacher confessed he had a problem with gambling and would lose his concentration on his message when he would look down at the offering plates full of money.

The second preacher admitted that he was an alcoholic and dreaded being found out by his church family and how it would hurt the church.

The third preacher quickly spoke up and said, “My problem is gossiping and I can’t wait to get out of here!”⁷

Deuteronomy 29:18 (NIV84)

¹⁸Make sure there is no man or woman, clan or tribe among you today whose heart turns away from the LORD our God to go and worship the gods of those nations; **make sure there is no root among you that produces such bitter poison.**

- The initiator of the poisonous root may eventually get over their differences with whom they had an ought against, but the words they spoke to others about that person still lingers in the minds of the hearers and continues to work defilement in their hearts.

Matthew 18:15 (NIV84)

¹⁵**“If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over.**

- This act alone would prevent many a problem!

Exodus 23:1 (NIV84)

¹“Do not spread false reports. Do not help a wicked man by being a malicious witness.

Proverbs 20:19 (NIV84)

¹⁹A gossip betrays a confidence; so avoid a man who talks too much.

James 4:11 (NIV84)

¹¹Brothers, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against his brother or judges him speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it.

⁷ Rod Mattoon, *Treasures from Proverbs*, vol. 4, Treasures from Scripture Series (Springfield, IL: Rod Mattoon, 2013), 292-293.

Psalm 15:1–5 (NIV84)

¹LORD, who may dwell in your sanctuary? Who may live on your holy hill?

²He whose walk is blameless and who does what is righteous, **who speaks the truth from his heart**

³**and has no slander on his tongue, who does his neighbor no wrong and casts no slur on his fellowman,**

⁴**who despises a vile man but honors those who fear the LORD, who keeps his oath even when it hurts,**

⁵**who lends his money without usury and does not accept a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things will never be shaken.**

- The Biblical concept of *truth-speaking* is not so much factual accuracy as trustworthiness.⁸
- The word “slander” literally means “to spy out,” in the sense that one goes looking for things in the life of another to use against them.⁹
- Slandering refers to spreading damaging gossip, that is usually untrue or unverified; it will destroy or bring great harm to the person slandered.¹⁰

Psalm 66:18 (NIV84)

¹⁸**If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened;**

- Ceremony, regular attendance at worship, and giving will never produce a clear conscience. If we are at odds with others because of our actions and are unwilling to do anything about it, attendance at a worship service is an exercise in hypocritical futility. We need to first attempt to make things right.
- Sometimes the reason our prayers are hollow is because we have offended another brother or sister and are not willing to do anything about it.¹¹

Isaiah 59:1–2 (NIV84)

¹Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear.

²**But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.**

- The Lord’s eyes are too pure to look on evil (Habakkuk 1:13a).

⁸ Eric Lane, *Psalms 1-89: The Lord Saves*, Focus on the Bible Commentary (Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2006), 80.

⁹ Sam Storms, *Biblical Studies: Psalms* (Edmond, OK: Sam Storms, 2016), Ps 15.

¹⁰ Allen P. Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms 1-89: Commentary*, vol. 1, Kregel Exegetical Library (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic, 2011–2013), 391.

¹¹ R. Kent Hughes, *The Sermon on the Mount: The Message of the Kingdom*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2001), 103.

Matthew 18:21–35 (NIV84)

²¹Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?”

²²Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.

²³“Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants.

²⁴As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him.

²⁵Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.

²⁶“The servant fell on his knees before him. ‘Be patient with me,’ he begged, ‘and I will pay back everything.’

²⁷The servant’s master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.

²⁸“But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii. He grabbed him and began to choke him. ‘Pay back what you owe me!’ he demanded.

²⁹“His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.’

³⁰“But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt.

³¹When the other servants saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed and went and told their master everything that had happened.

³²“Then the master called the servant in. ‘You wicked servant,’ he said, ‘I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to.

³³“Shouldn’t you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?”

³⁴In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.

³⁵“This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart.”

- The servant owes roughly 150,000 years’ worth of wages. The Greek text’s reference to 10,000 talents represents the largest number used in ancient calculations and the highest monetary unit at that time (one talent was equivalent to 15 years’ worth of wages).

- *a hundred denarii*: Equal to 100 days’ wages.¹²
Just as “*seventy times seven*” represents a limitless number of times, **ten thousand talents** represents

- Notice that the king did not throw the servant to the torturers because he failed to pay what he had owed. That which provoked the king to wrath was not how the servant had managed the king’s money but how he had managed the king’s mercy.

He had failed to be a good steward of the king’s grace. The only way this servant had continued to enjoy freedom and life was by the grace of the king. But when the king forgave him all that he owed, the servant showed no grace, no mercy for other people.

The king was not willing to put up with that.

- Having been forgiven so greatly, we must be ready to forgive always. If someone offends you and then apologizes, and you withhold your forgiveness, you need to change your ways.¹⁴

- The point of the parable is not that God’s forgiveness, once granted, will be revoked if a follower of Jesus refuses to forgive his brother or sister.

Rather, refusal to forgive is symptomatic of a person who fails to grasp the impossible depth of his debt and the infinite magnitude of God’s mercy.¹⁵

- As chastening for his sin, the unforgiving slave was **handed over to the torturers** (*not executioners*) until he should repay all that was owed him, that is, until he had a change of heart and forgave his offending brother.

- Jesus is not speaking here of the forgiveness that brings salvation, saying that God only saves those who are forgiving. That would be works righteousness.

He is speaking of people forgiving each other *after they have experienced God’s free grace*.

- Those who are saved, transformed, given a new nature in Christ, and have the indwelling Holy Spirit *generally* will manifest that changed life by having a *forgiving attitude*.

But there will be times when we fall into the sin of unforgiveness, and this instruction is for those times.

- Jesus was speaking to the Twelve, who not only were believers but apostles. All believers, no matter what their position or accomplishments in the church might be, are held **accountable to forgive every offense against them committed by fellow believers**, for the

¹³ John F. MacArthur Jr., *Matthew*, vol. 3, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1985), 147–148.

¹⁴ Robert Charles Sproul, *Matthew*, St. Andrew’s Expositional Commentary (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 555–556.

¹⁵ R. C. Sproul, ed., *The Reformation Study Bible: English Standard Version (2015 Edition)* (Orlando, FL: Reformation Trust, 2015), 1705.

¹² John D. Barry et al., *Faithlife Study Bible* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012, 2016), Mt 18:24, 28.

The Holy Spirit: The Fruit of the Spirit – Forgiving Others
we may share His holiness” (v. 10).

very reason that they themselves have already been forgiven an incalculable debt by God.

[Christians] are expected to *reflect* God’s forgiveness because they have *experienced* God’s forgiveness.¹⁶

Hebrews 12:1–11 (NIV84)

¹Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.

²Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

³Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

⁴In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.

⁵And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons: “My son, do not make light of the Lord’s discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you,

⁶because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son.”

⁷Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father?

⁸If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons.

⁹Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live!

¹⁰Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness.

¹¹No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.

- God does not chasten His children out of hatred but out of love. “the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son” (Heb. 12:6). He does not chasten them to drive them away but to bring them back to Himself and to His righteousness. “He disciplines us for our good, that

- It is natural that God’s “discipline [does not] seem pleasant at the time, but painful; later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it” (v. 11).
- When believers forget their own divine forgiveness by God and refuse to extend human forgiveness to fellow believers, the Lord puts them under such **torturers** (the word can refer to inquisitors) as stress, hardship, pressure, or other difficulties until the sin is confessed and forgiveness is granted.¹⁷
- Let’s end with these Scriptures exhorting us to forgive.

Matthew 5:43–48 (NIV84)

⁴³“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’”

⁴⁴But I tell you: **Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,**

⁴⁵that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

⁴⁶If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that?

⁴⁷And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that?

⁴⁸Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Ephesians 4:30–5:2 (NIV84)

³⁰And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

³¹Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.

³²Be kind and compassionate to one another, **forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.**

¹Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children

²and **live a life of love**, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Colossians 3:12–14 (NIV84)

¹²Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

¹³**Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.**

¹⁶ John F. MacArthur Jr., *Matthew*, vol. 3, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1985), 154–156.

¹⁷ John F. MacArthur Jr., *Matthew*, vol. 3, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1985), 155.

¹⁴And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

1 John 2:3–6 (NIV84)

³We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands.

⁴The man who says, “I know him,” but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

⁵But if anyone obeys his word, God’s love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him:

⁶Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.

- *Selah.*