

FORGIVENESS

Lesson 8

Why do I need forgiveness?

How do I get forgiveness?

Do I need to forgive?

Can I get to Heaven if I won't forgive?

Consider our need to be forgiven by God. Perhaps you say, "I haven't done anything to God, so why do I need forgiveness from Him?" Though we did not "ask" to be born, yet we were born into God's world. God has some expectations of those using His world: these are simply spelled out to us in the ten commandments which you may read in Exodus 5. All of us has broken these simple laws, and thus we end up on the wrong side of God who is allowing us to use His world and who has offered to allow us into His Heaven when we leave this world. Remember, if you are not allowed into God's Heaven, you must spend the rest of eternity in the awful place of eternal fire called Hell where you will be away from God and all decency forever. In **Matthew 25:41** we read "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his angels." Yes, my friend, we do need God to forgive us.

Since God has been wronged, He must decide how the forgiveness will take place. Certainly you must repent (change your mind) of your wrong doing, which God calls sin. But repentance alone will not bring forgiveness. God has a penalty for all sin and that penalty must be paid:

Romans 6:23 states "For the wages of sin is death." You must give up your life to pay for your sins. What an unwelcome thought. But God has made another way to be forgiven: Jesus Christ, the holy Son of God died on the

cross and paid the awful price of death for all of our sins. All that we need to do now to obtain God's forgiveness is to believe that that is God's genuine offer and accept it for ourselves. **Romans 6:23b** says "But the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Forgiveness is a free gift of God to all. If you have not yet done so, my friend, accept Christ and His forgiveness now: you will be forgiven.

But forgiveness from God is only the beginning. There is a need to forgive and be forgiven by other people. Whenever you have two or more individuals in close contact, the need for forgiveness will soon become evident. A misunderstanding will arise. Someone will be hurt. Words of anger will be thrown about, and tears will flow. Forgiveness is needed. If someone has wronged you, the Bible commands you to go to that person and confront them. In **Matthew 18:15** we read "Tell him his fault between thee and him alone, if he shall hear thee thou hast gained thy brother." We are never to hold a grudge or seek vengeance over a wrong done to us even if the individual will not repent and ask our forgiveness. In **Romans 12:19** we read "Vengeance is mine I will repay saith the Lord." God has promised to repay them for the wrongs that they have done to you, and He will do it more fairly than you would and more severely than you ever could. And just think, if God repays them they can't blame you for doing it, and they won't think about retaliating against you. God has a stern warning for all those who are unwilling to forgive. Read **Matthew 6:15** "For if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Imagine that you are about to go to sleep, and you remember a sin between you and God. Of course, you should ask His forgiveness right then, but if you have been unwilling to forgive someone else, God will not grant you forgiveness for that sin. If you are

already saved, this will not make you lose your salvation (since it can't be lost), but it will damage your daily fellowship with God and might cause you not to sleep well at night. Since God has fully forgiven us, He expects us to freely and willingly forgive others. One question that might bother you is - what if they are not sorry for what they have done to me, do I still have to forgive them? Yes, you must have a spirit of forgiveness that longs for things to be made right between you. **You must not hold grudges** because they won't say they are sorry for what they did to you.

But what if you have offended someone else. The Bible clearly says in **Matthew 5:24** "First be reconciled to thy brother." Whatever you might try to do for God will be hindered if you have offended someone and are unwilling to make it right. That might mean paying back money or making a public apology if you publicly offended that individual, but whatever it takes to make things right will be well worth your time and effort. God **will** be pleased.

If you have any questions for us, you may contact us at bmason6@bellsouth.net or you may call one of our counselors at 864-498-1943

