
Forgiveness

Study 1 – The Process – Steve Hyndman

The following is a summary of the transcript of the Study prepared using the AI facility
ChatGPT – Open AI.

The full study can be viewed at the following URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E5H4uEnH8c4>

Forgiveness is one of the most fundamental concepts in the Bible, central to understanding God's character. It's an ongoing journey of faith and maturity, reflecting our relationship with God. At its core, forgiveness is deeply tied to the essence of God's love, as God forgives willingly and completely, forgetting the sins once confessed.

The Bible teaches that God forgives for His name's sake, indicating that forgiveness aligns with His purpose and character. God's name, Yahweh, means "I will be who I will be," signifying His desire to be manifested in a multitude of people, which necessitates forgiveness.

Jesus' teachings in Luke 6 emphasize loving enemies, doing good without expecting anything in return, and embodying mercy and forgiveness as God does. These principles illustrate that forgiveness is not just a divine attribute but a model for human relationships.

Forgiveness restores our broken connection with God caused by sin. Sin disrupts the harmony between God and humanity, as seen in the story of Adam and Eve's expulsion from Eden. Forgiveness, however, reconciles and reunites us with God.

Understanding sin is crucial to appreciating forgiveness. Sin creates a rupture in our relationship with God, but forgiveness repairs it. This process requires personal acknowledgment of sin without minimizing its magnitude, leading to true repentance and reconciliation with God.

The character of God is intrinsically linked to forgiveness. God's mercy, grace, patience, and kindness all point to His willingness to forgive. His justice ensures that He is faithful to forgive those who genuinely repent.

The Bible also addresses the complexity of generational sin, explaining that God deals with each person based on their own response to Him, not the sins of their ancestors. This underscores personal responsibility and the opportunity for each generation to choose a relationship with God.

Forgiveness among individuals reflects God's character. True forgiveness in human relationships is a manifestation of God's nature. It demonstrates mercy, grace, patience, and kindness, aligning us with God's attributes.

For forgiveness to occur, there must be an honest acknowledgment of sin. This involves owning up to our wrongdoings without rationalizing or blaming others. The story of Adam and Eve illustrates the human tendency to deflect responsibility, but true forgiveness requires transparency and humility before God.

God's call to "wash you, make you clean" (Isaiah 1:16-18) highlights His desire to cleanse us from sin and restore us to purity. This process involves repentance and the acceptance of God's forgiveness, transforming our scarlet sins into white as snow.

Forgiveness is central to understanding God's character and our relationship with Him. It requires a deep recognition of our sinfulness, an honest confession, and a willingness to embrace God's transformative forgiveness. Through this process, we reflect God's mercy, grace, and love in our interactions with others, fulfilling His purpose in our lives.

The restorative process in the Bible is a vital and consistent path required by God for the forgiveness of sins. It involves a journey through a metaphorical dark valley, symbolizing the difficult and introspective process one must undergo. This journey is not unique to any part of the Bible but is a universal theme that cannot be circumvented.

Forgiveness from God follows a precise and immutable method. This method is wholly free, emphasizing that no amount of human effort, works, penance, or financial contribution can earn God's forgiveness. God desires us to simply listen and have faith in His ability to provide and forgive. This principle is highlighted in the story of Abraham, where God intervenes as Abraham is about to sacrifice Isaac, underscoring that God Himself will provide the necessary means.

God's forgiveness is free because of two fundamental reasons:

1. Humans cannot afford forgiveness—it cannot be bought or earned.
2. God is love, and His nature is to forgive.

The story of the prodigal son illustrates God's intense yearning to forgive, a love so profound that it grieves Him when we struggle to accept His forgiveness. This sentiment is echoed in Isaiah 55:1, where God calls out to everyone, offering spiritual sustenance freely and urging people to listen and come to Him for eternal life and an everlasting covenant of forgiveness.

The forgiveness process is part of a deeper, healing journey that God understands we need. It highlights our true standing before Him, both before and after forgiveness, showing us the contrast between living in sin and living in God's grace. This process involves suffering and the consequences of sin, which serve as tools to teach and remind us of the gravity of our actions and God's desire for us to turn away from sin.

The process of forgiveness involves three key steps:

1. **Confession:** Acknowledging and confronting the horror of sin. Scriptures such as 1 John 1:9, Proverbs 28:13, and Psalm 32:5 emphasize the importance of confessing sins to receive God's mercy.
 2. **Repentance:** A heartfelt change of direction and perspective towards God's way. Paul's exhortation to King Agrippa in Acts illustrates the need for genuine repentance and performing deeds that reflect this change.
 3. **Conversion:** Turning away from sin and replacing sinful behaviors with righteous ones. This involves a complete transformation and adoption of new, godly behaviors.
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This process is not just about being forgiven repeatedly but about permanent transformation and growth in thinking like God. It aligns with God's ultimate purpose of filling the earth with His glory and creating new creatures in us. **God's forgiveness is an ongoing act of grace, cleansing us from sin while simultaneously transforming our minds and hearts.**

John's writings in 1 John 3 and 4 further illustrate this transformative process. **Abiding in Christ means being in a state where, from God's perspective, we are sinless because we are covered by Christ's righteousness.** This state brings confidence and peace, knowing that we are at work with God and He is producing good in us.

Ultimately, **forgiveness is not just vertical (between us and God) but also horizontal (between us and others).** Mutual forgiveness among believers is crucial because it reflects God's love and forgiveness. As we forgive one another, God's love is perfected in us, and His presence is manifest among us.

In summary, **God's method of forgiveness is a profound, multifaceted process designed to cleanse, heal, and transform us.** It requires confession, repentance, and conversion, and it leads to a state of abiding in Christ, characterized by mutual forgiveness and the indwelling presence of God's love.

Steve Hyndman
