

PEACEMAKING AND PRESUPPOSITIONS

Resolving Conflict in the Run of the Life with Gospel Wisdom



1

A TWO-TIERED PROCESS

Attitudinal Forgiveness: Release the Offense to God

- A heart posture; A disposition of forgiveness toward the offender
- Acts 7:60; Lk. 23:34
- Does not require the offender asking forgiveness (Rom. 12:18)

“When we strive against all thoughts of revenge; when we will not do our enemies mischief, but wish well to them, grieve at their calamities, pray for them, seek reconciliation with them, and show ourselves ready on all occasions to relieve them. This is gospel forgiving.” Thomas Watson



2

HOW DO I “DO” THIS IF I’VE BEEN HURT?

- Remember that our suffering, like our victories, is not our own.
- Remember the sufferings and injustice done to Christ *who is with us*.
- Realize that continued bitterness will only hurt you—it will only *deceive* you into feelings of strength in your anger.
- Pray for the offender’s good—whatever God decides that looks like.
- Recall that one day, you will be publicly vindicated, not just “saved” from your sin.
- Understand that forgiveness does not mean you never re-experience the pain or righteous anger resulting from an event—it means you don’t carry it around with you in life, and when you are caused to remember such things, you think about them through the lens outlined above.
- Distinguish between, “I have no desire to have a relationship with you” and “I have no desire to have a relationship with the current version of you.”



3

FOUR PROMISES OF FORGIVENESS

- I promise I will not dwell on this incident any longer
- I promise I will not bring up this incident and use it against you in the future.
- Because we have been reconciled, I promise not to talk (gossip) to others about this incident.
- I promise I will not allow this incident to stand between us or hinder our relationship moving forward.

WHAT ABOUT CONSEQUENCES?

- True forgiveness does not mean that sin does not have consequences.
- Occasionally, because of the personal, relational nature of the offense, total relational restoration may be extremely difficult—but not impossible.
- Wisdom in context is required to understand or determine the consequences of an offense—mercy with no consequences is always in the option pool (think Jean Valjean).
- Generally speaking, after true reconciliation no consequences should be relational.



4

HAVE I FORGIVEN?

- Do you hope the best for the person who offended you? Do you hope they prosper and that the Lord blesses the work of their hands?
- Do you find yourself frequently returning to this offense in your mind and marinating in it? Does this become particularly acute when you see this person?
- Do you tend to label this person in your head as, “the person who did X?”
- Do you continue to bring the offense up in conversation with the offender or others as a “reminder” after you have extended “forgiveness?”
- Despite your extension of “forgiveness,” do you feel a strong aversion to restoring the relationship to what it was (or better) before the offense *that doesn't stem from practical concerns?*



5

A TWO-TIERED PROCESS

Transacted Forgiveness: Relational Restoration

- Requires the offender asking for forgiveness (Matt. 18:26-27)
- Completes the cancellation of a relational debt provided genuine forgiveness (1 John 1:9)
- Transacted forgiveness cannot happen without attitudinal forgiveness



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