

The Foundation of Forgiveness (Part 1)
Why is there such a thing as forgiveness?
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Introduction: It is not uncommon for another to ask: "Will you forgive me?"

A. Why do we do this?

1. It goes back to the creation and design of mankind. (**Gen 1:26-27**)
2. If this was an accident of evolution then why don't animals ask forgiveness?
3. God has placed many things within us that are uniquely of His nature. (**Ecc 3:11**)

B. God placed within each of us is a need to seek God. (**Acts 17:26-28**)

1. Forgiveness is rooted in that relationship!
2. The sin of Adam brought sin into the world and thus a separation of men from God. (**Rom 5:12**)
3. That separation from God also produced alienation of men in every relationship.

1. The need of forgiveness is rooted in God's character

A. Many wish to create a "god" in the image of man.

1. The problem with many is that they see God in light of man's weaknesses or try to create a God from their own imagination. (**1 Sam 15:29; Isa 55:8-9**)
2. It is important that we see God as He has revealed Himself.
3. If we deny or fail to understand one aspect of His Character then it affects everything we know about God or even what we believe!

B. Consider the perfect holiness of God in three verses.

(**1 Sam 2:2; Isa 40:25; Hosea 11:9**)

1. What does it mean for God to be holy? (**Hab 1:12-13**)

"In the New Testament, the words holy, holiness, sanctify, and sanctification all come from the same Greek word "hagious," which means "sacred, (physically) pure, morally blameless, consecrated, innocent, modest, perfect, clean, pure."

2. God will not abide with sin! (**1 Jn 1:5-6; Isa 59:1-2**)
3. We must deal with sin before man can have fellowship with God!
4. God provides a way for a sinful man to have fellowship with the Holy God. This always involves forgiveness! (**Lev 20:26; Isa 6:4-6**)

C. Consider the absolute consistent wrath of God. (**Rom 1:16-18**)

1. One denomination eliminated the hymn "In Christ Alone" because of this line: "Till on that cross as Jesus died/the wrath of God was satisfied."
2. God wants us to know about His wrath. Why? So that we would seek forgiveness! (**Ps 85:2-3**)

Wrath - ὀργή - as a vigorous upsurge of one's nature against someone or something anger, wrath, indignation:

A. J. Robertson - "God's anger (thumos) is his vehement fury or boiling rage. His wrath (orge) is his settled indignation or his settled anger. In other words, in God's anger the emphasis falls on the emotional, boiling intensity of it. And in God's wrath the emphasis falls on the controlled, settled, considered direction and focus of its application. But we dare not draw a hard line between them, God's

anger is never out of the control of his wisdom and righteousness, and his wrath is never cool or indifferent, but is always a wisely directed fury. The wrath of God is never less than a perfect judicial decree, but is always more than a perfect judicial decree because it is always full of right and fitting fury.”

3. God does not want us to face His wrath! (Jn 3:16, 36; Jn 8:24)
4. God wants us to know what He is like so that we might change! God has let us know that He cannot change! (Mal 3:6; James 1:17; Heb 13:8)
5. Redefining or denying sin does not help us! Please listen to God. (Col 3:5-7)

II. Forgiveness is defined by the character of God. (Ex 34:6-7)

A. What makes God attractive to us? (Psa 36:7, 40:10-11)

1. God's wants us to know that He powerfully wants to forgive us.
2. God wants us to know that He does not give up on us! Satan will lie about God.
3. David knew this and poured out his heart to God. (Psa 51:1)

B. What extraordinary lengths God took to provide forgiveness! (Rom 5:6-8; Mt 26:39)

1. Why did Jesus hang on that cross for hours? Could not a quick death have been sufficient for a sacrifice?
2. God does not want us to doubt where we stand with Him.
3. Consider the complete sacrifice that Jesus made. The greatest of my sin will never be greater than the sacrifice God made. (1 Jn 2:1-2)
4. Also understand that Jesus now appears before God on our behalf.

III. Forgiveness is given by the conditional promises of God.

A. God through His promises teaches us how to “call upon” His name. (2 Pt 1:3-4)

1. All of God's promises have three elements: His grace, His power, and His word.
2. God gives us freely that which we could not do. This is always a gift of God's grace. Nothing is earned! Consider the walls of Jericho. (Josh 6:2; Heb 11:30)
3. God's power is manifested by His authority (His name). We need God to act!
4. As with God's character, I dare not change His conditional promises! (Jer 6:14)

B. Jesus offered a conditional promise to all men. (Mk 16:15-16; Mt 28:18-20)

1. How was this commission fulfilled? On Pentecost Peter promised that “whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” (Acts 2:21)
2. How did Peter tell men to do this? He gave a specific conditional promise that men would respond to by faith! (Acts 2:38-39)
3. This would be offered to every man forward that would seek salvation. This very promise was made known to Paul who received it “by faith!” (Acts 22:16)
4. When you “call upon the name of the Lord” in baptism you are doing so “by faith” and not as an act to “earn salvation” and thus to “be able to boast!”
5. Forgiveness comes to those who have “faith in the working of God” when they are baptized. (Col 2:11-13)

C. This same principle continues throughout the Christian life! (1 Jn 1:6-9)

Conclusion: Is the forgiveness of God in your foundation?