



Focus on Forgiveness

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Forgiveness does not change the nature of sin, but, it can lead to a change in the nature of the sinner.

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Separating Penalty from Consequences

Perhaps the most confusing aspect of forgiveness is the fundamental difference between the penalty and the consequences of sins. People often reject any notion of forgiveness because they incorrectly believe that forgiveness means relieving the guilty person of having to face the consequences of his or her sin. Nothing could be farther from the truth!

Jesus paid for the penalty of sins. His death did not change the nature of sin. God no longer needs to establish justice against us, nor do we need to execute justice against those

who sin against us, because Jesus has already been punished in every guilty person's place. God's anger has been satisfied and ours can be, too.

However, sin is still sin. Sin is still destructive. The "wages (consequences) of sin is" *still* "death."

To emphasize this truth, the Apostle Paul wrote, "Do not be deceived. God is not mocked. Whatever a man sows, this is what he will reap."

For this reason, we who have already been forgiven by God must also be saved from our practice of sin. We need to repent, turn away

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Kindness or Severity?

Love can cause people to want to turn away from their sin, but love takes many forms. "Tough love" firmly administers the painful consequences of sin in order to bring about repentance, but people also

respond to *unexpected* kindness (Romans 2:4). Withholding certain consequences can also lead to repentance.

So which form of love should you use in your

situation? Every situation is different. Forgive, pray and ask God to show you how to give people the best opportunity to repent.

How Practicing Forgiveness Changed My Life

“I found peace and love... that replaced my turmoil.”

The following is a real testimony from someone who attended a forgiveness seminar.

When I attended my first Forgiveness seminar, I had no idea how I was going to forgive my brother. His absence from our family was always on my mind, and I had mixed feelings about him. I thought I loved him, but hated his behavior (his lack of interest in

his own daughter and his family in general).

I was hoping to find a quick "fix" in this seminar, but I found so much more. I learned how to transform my anger and resentment into love.

At first, it was very hard to admit how much he had hurt me. When I went through the seminar and workbook (and it took more than once), I found

peace and love in my heart that replaced my turmoil. I don't want revenge. I want love for my brother.

Although I still don't have my brother in my life the way I want, I have an open heart ready to receive him when he reaches out. I have to be patient; it will happen in His time, not mine.

—Lyn

Our New Exhibit Display

This is our new display. We use it at conferences and churches.

Rich Wallace is our graphic designer and we

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Penalty and Consequences (continued from page one)

from our sins and let God change us. If we do not, then we will keep receiving the consequences of our sins.

In exactly the same way, we can forgive the people who sin against us (personal forgiveness) and be free of our anger and the desire to “get even” when we remember that Jesus

died for them, too. However, the consequences of their sins continue until they repent and stop sinning. Even then, many of the consequences they initiated will continue throughout this life. Actually, you have very little to no control over *most* of the consequences of other people’s sins.

Never withhold forgiveness because you think someone is going to “get away with it.” Getting away with sin is impossible. Instead, forgive (Jesus was executed for that sin) and lovingly use the consequences, over which you have control, to if possible, help bring the offending person to repentance and life.

Family Update

Here is an end of the school year update on our children; one out of college, two in college, two in high school and one in junior high. Work, summer school, summer camps, missions trips and swimming will keep them all busy!

From left to right—Rebecca, Mandy (girlfriend), Steven Jr., Michael, Nichole, Emily, Spencer (boyfriend), Christopher and Brianna (girlfriend)



Identify Your Substitute for Forgiveness

Have you wondered why practicing forgiveness is so challenging?

One reason is because forgiveness is not *natural* to human beings. People naturally develop substitutes for forgiveness—coping mechanisms. We act out our coping mechanisms

spontaneously without even thinking.

They get in the way of practicing real forgiveness. If you want to develop a lifestyle of forgiveness then you need to discover your substitute. See your workbook.

What do you do instead of forgiveness?

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Upcoming Seminars

July 22

Alum Rock Covenant Church

San Jose, CA

(408) 258-7488

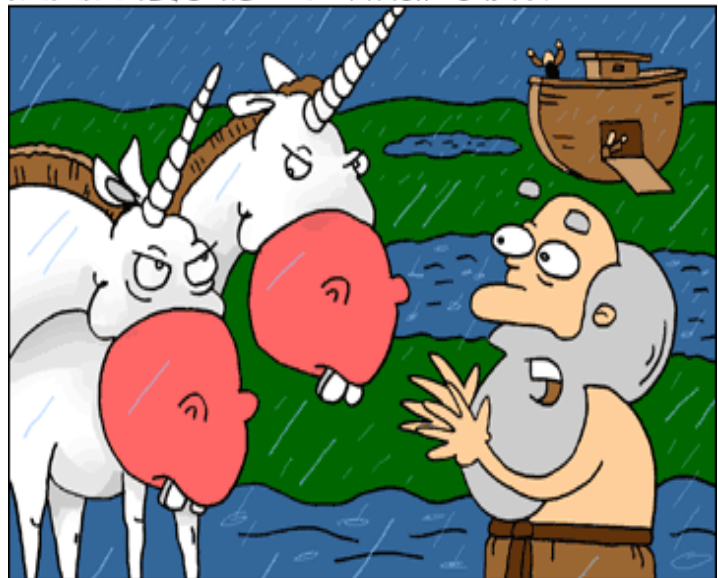
August 5

Hillside Covenant Church

Walnut Creek, CA

(925) 934-1110

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Thanks to Shirley M. Gross (See Genesis 6-8)

05-16-2001

**YOU GUYS REALLY NEED TO HURRY UP AND
WORK OUT YOUR DIFFERENCES**