



What if it's Not Your Fault?

Hebrews 8:12: (NASB) *For I will be merciful to their iniquities, And I will remember their sins no more.*

We all know what it is like to be wronged, and we all know what it is like to do wrong to someone else. We also have all probably experienced being accused of or assumed to have done wrong when in fact we are entirely innocent - in that circumstance anyway! Is it right or just to ask for forgiveness when we are *not* in the wrong? What are the guidelines of this whole forgiveness thing anyway?

To forgive is to make someone's sin against us lose its relevance in our life. We aren't always thinking about it.

Forgiveness releases us from damaging emotions: Proverbs 14:29 Proverbs 25:23
Ecclesiastes 7:9 Proverbs 19:11

 **Become more grateful, Fred Luskin, PhD, shiftinaction.com**

- *We developed a forgiveness training based on four very simple trainable skills: First: Become more grateful. Practice that religiously, relentlessly. Open your heart all the time to what you have so that you recognize what the open heart is. That is a central practice of forgiveness because the opposite is what we do, which is: the world didn't give me enough, therefore I'm entitled to complain. You want to focus on the fact that the world did give you enough and there's nothing to complain about, to balance that out.*

Gratefulness is a trainable skill. **Forgiveness is founded in a humble heart that is truly drawn to a godly perspective:** 1 Thessalonians 5:14-18: This is a way to apply gratefulness. It should be constantly in front of us like "refrigerator art!"

What about asking forgiveness when we did not do anything wrong? Does doing this fit in with godliness or is it just a way to avoid trouble? Romans 12:9-19

 **Will you forgive me, How to Forgive, Corrie ten Boom (Christian holocaust survivor)**

- *It was some time ago that I was in Berlin, and there came a man to me that said Miss ten Boom, I am glad to see you. Don't you know me? Suddenly I saw that man who was one of the most cruel overseer guards in the concentration camp. And he said I am now a Christian, I have found the Lord Jesus. I read the Bible and I know that there is forgiveness for all the sins of the whole world also for my sins. I have forgiveness for the cruelties I have done. But then I have asked God's grace for an opportunity that I could to ask one of my very victims for forgiveness, and Frauline ten Boom, will you forgive me?*

How does repentance work?

 **Manage the Stress, Fred Luskin PhD, shiftinaction.com**

- *Second: It's a stress management approach. You have to calm down your nervous system. You just have to do that, otherwise the stress chemicals will cause your thinking to become very limited and very narrow and very hostile. So if you don't manage the stress of the unforgiveness, it's very hard to get past it.*

What about the responsibilities of those needing forgiveness? Once there is repentance, is it a "free lunch" afterwards? If we repent of a wrong doing, is that the end of the story?

The concept of repentance is shown in three primary words in the New Testament:

Repent: Strong's #3338 *metamelomai*; to care afterwards, i.e. regret

Repent: Strong's #3340 *metanoeo* to think differently or afterwards,
i.e. reconsider (morally, feel compunction)

(Compunction = uneasiness of mind due to feelings of remorse or guilt; twinge of conscience)

Repentance: Strong's #3341 *metanoia* compunction (for guilt, including reformation); by implication reversal (of [another's] decision)

Matthew 27:3 **Let's get a better sense of how repentance works:** Matthew 21:28-32: This word means just simply changing direction, doing something different. It is not a life-altering experience, nothing deep. There can be forgiveness where there is no repentance, which we will review later.

Strong's #3338 ("lighter" word): an emotional change/has reference to particulars/signifies nothing but regret - even amounting to remorse.



Strong's #3340/3341 ("deeper" word): a change of choice (directional, not necessarily emotional)/ Has reference to the entire life (much more transformative)/ That reversal of moral purpose known as repentance (The difference here can be characterized as emotional vs. actual change)

Matthew 3:1-2: John the Baptist's message was: Make a heartfelt change in the way you live! Stop, turn and then progress. Acts 17:30-31 Acts 5:31

So should you ask for forgiveness if you did not do anything wrong? Is that being hypocritical? We will get to that more shortly, but sometimes our words or actions do not come across well. It is okay to ask for forgiveness for the pain and misunderstanding we might have unintentionally caused.

 I could not, *How to Forgive, Corrie ten Boom (Christian holocaust survivor)*

- ...and I could not. I remembered the suffering of my dying sister through him. But when I saw that I could not forgive, suddenly I knew I myself had no forgiveness! Did you know that Jesus has said that? When you do not forgive those who have sinned against you, my Heavenly Father will not forgive you your sins! I'm not ready for Jesus...because I have no forgiveness for my sins! But I was not able, I could not! I could only hate him!

The basic premise we will work with regarding forgiveness is the concept of sending something away. When you send something away, it still exists, though it is no longer relevant to your life. Therefore, to forgive is to make someone's sin (or perceived sin) against us lose its relevance in our life!

There are four key New Testament words regarding forgiveness:

Forgiveness: Strong's #859, freedom, pardon

Observation: This word is *never* used in connection with us forgiving one another - it is *only* used in relation to the pardon granted through Jesus' sacrifice.

Ephesians 1:7: We can't pardon - take away the sin itself - but we can make the sin irrelevant to our daily life.

 Change the story you tell, *Fred Luskin PhD, shiftinaction.com*

- Third: ...Changing the story that you tell. How many people are attached to that story that paints them as helpless victims of something unpleasant? That story is probably the worst thing we do to ourselves, not the events that happened to us. A story of helplessness creates a helpless immune system, creates nervous system deregulation, and creates all sorts of patterns in the brain for thinking. That's what happens. When you change the story to something else, you give your body different pathways to function in and you give your mind different pathways to open to.

Forgive: Strong's #863, to send forth, away

Observation: This word very broadly used - covers Godly and human forgiveness. It is this word that most clearly reflects our forgiveness of one another.

Matthew 18:21: Jesus was telling Peter here in effect to just stop counting! Send the wrong away from you. Don't let it permeate and overtake your life.

Forgive: Strong's #630 to free, relieve, release, dismiss, let die, pardon, divorce

Observation: Broadly used but rarely translated "forgive."

Matthew 27:17 Luke 6:37

 Forgive and be forgiven, *How to Forgive, Corrie ten Boom (Christian holocaust survivor)*

- And then I took one of these beautiful texts...Romans 5:5: "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us." And I said, thank you, Jesus...God's love through the Holy Spirit was given to me. Thank you, Father, that your love is stronger than my hatred and unforgiveness. That same moment I was free. And I could say, Brother, give me your hand. And I shook hands with him and it was as if I felt God's love streaming through my arms. You have never touched the ocean of God's love as when you forgive your enemies. Can you forgive? No. I can't either. But He can...

Forgiving: Strong's #5483, favor

Observation: Broadly used in the sense of having a big heart, not taking away sin.



Philippians 1:29

Context of God's forgetting: Jeremiah 31:31-34 Regarding forgiveness, the basic premise we are working with is the definition of sending away - when you send something away, it still exists, though it is no longer relevant to your life. Therefore, to forgive is to make someone's sin against us lose its relevance in our life!

 **Did world owe you different, Fred Luskin PhD, shiftinaction.com**


- *Fourth: We teach certain simple arguments on whether or not the world owes you anything different. Prove that there really was an error and you didn't deserve what you got. Prove that. And so these simple skills are trainable, but I have to say I still don't know actually how to teach forgiveness. I can teach these skills, and they tend to make people more available to forgiveness, but there is still something more ethereal or consciousness or spiritual or grace, or something that still has to fill that human space beyond just those skills, and I don't fully know what that is.*

We can choose to live a forgiving and repentant life. **Did you ever notice how much of the Lord's Prayer is about forgiveness?** Matthew 6:9-15: *Forgive us our debts*: that which we owe - not money - but our sins and transgressions committed that take us out of balance with God. It is applied to us as we apply it to others. When forgiven by God, do we undergo just an emotional change or an *actual* change? Have we actually changed direction? Being forgiven and forgiving ought not to be like a New Year's Resolution. Peace is not merely emotional, it is truly transformative.

 **Introduction, Renee Napier Story with Matthew West**

- *Over the past few years, I've been on this journey writing songs inspired by the real life stories people send to me. This one story in particular had a profound impact on me. It hit me kind of hard. It's about a woman who did the impossible and made me ask myself if I could do the same. Renee had four kids. Two of her daughters were twins. One twin was coming home from the beach one night with her best friend when their car was struck by a drunk driver named Eric, a 24-year old kid. Meagan lost her life. Eric killed both girls that were in the car. Renee lost her daughter in an instant. Next thing she knows, she finds herself in a courtroom watching this young 24-year old man get sentenced to 22 years in prison.*

Ephesians 4:25-32: If we hold onto an unforgiving attitude it WILL affect us physically and emotionally, as our thinking and life will be continually shaped by its clear and powerful influence. Because we are affected physically and emotionally, we WILL be affected spiritually and that will directly detract from our ability to follow Christ. Philippians 1:21: Remember, to forgive is to make someone's sin against us lose its relevance in our life! The event still happened and the results of the event are still intact, but the relevance of the act against us has been diminished. **God's forgiveness:** Hebrews 9:22: God can erase our sins. We can't do that - we can simply "send the sin away" from us. How is it that God can remove our sins literally and pardon us? God, through Jesus, satisfied justice. A "life for a life" provided true forgiveness. Luke 4:16-21: The release here is not just an *opening* of the prison door...it is a full pardon - an opportunity to leave the prison - to go on and live without the previous consequences of sin. That is the forgiveness that God can give. It is complete and it is overwhelming. The secret to forgiving one another starts here! You have been forgiven for something great, so it should be easier for you to forgive others for something smaller.

 **Something missing, Renee Napier Story with Matthew West**

- *Renee wrote to me and said I now had a mission that I never would have chosen. What she meant by that was in the years that followed, she began traveling around to schools, churches and different functions speaking on the dangers of drunk driving. As the years progressed, she felt like something was missing from her presentation. And that's when God put it on her heart that she had not forgiven this man who took the life of her daughter. So, she reached out and did the impossible. She reached out to Eric in prison and said I forgive you.*

With our forgiveness to each other, is repentance required from someone who sins against us? Well...yes and no! The Scriptures answer that question two different ways. **Here is a text that shows the part repentance *should* play:** Luke 17:3-4: So, I should never forgive unless there is repentance on the part of the person who sinned against me, right? **But here is a text that says love unconditionally:** Luke 6:27-31: Hmm...there is no thought of repentance here. We are to have a forgiving attitude regardless of what the other person is doing. So, what is the difference?



Luke 17:3-4 **Repentance Required:** Regarding "your brother," who knows better/ Shows communication/ Specifically says to forgive and be humble

Luke 6:27-31 **Repentance Not Required:** Regarding "your enemies" - those of the world who don't know any better/Shows persecution/Says to love, bless and be humble

We should hold those of the brotherhood to a higher standard than we do those of the world. It is for our good and their good to do that. We ought to communicate because they might not realize what they have done. Where communication is available, repentance is appropriate. So again, the provocation to forgive can come from (first text) someone's recognition for their need of forgiveness, namely a brother in Christ for they should know better, and (second text) regarding those still in the darkness of the world, from our own desire to lift up those who may have hurt us, for their own good.

 **Tell a few and become new, science and forgiveness, Fred Luskin PhD, shiftinaction.com**

- It turns out that people recover from difficulty better if they limit the number of people they complain to. What's really effective research-wise is to choose 1, 2, 3, maybe 4 people who you share how difficult things are and keep your mouth shut to the rest of the world about that aspect of it. But get real support from those four people whose care and support is essential. So it turns out that people who tell a small number of trusted people, the research says they get through it. People who tell nobody and don't have support, they have the hardest time, but right behind them are the people who are blabbing to everybody how tough it is!*

There is great wisdom in this advice! The more you talk about it, the bigger the problem becomes in your own mind, the worse the story becomes, and the harder it is to recover. Finally, we all need to live with an attitude that allows forgiveness to pass TO us as well as pass THROUGH us! If we can apply the forgiveness of God through Jesus to us, then it gives us the power, wisdom and maturity to have it pass *through* us to those around us. **An example of God's forgiveness:** Psalms 103:8-13

 **Power of forgiveness, Renee Napier Story with Matthew West**

- The ripple effects of that act of forgiveness are still being felt today. That young man's life has absolutely changed because this woman forgave him. He said I can't even forgive myself and she forgave me. Eric said he found his eternal salvation as a result of this act. One by one all of Renee's family members followed her lead and they reached out and expressed forgiveness to Eric, so much so that now they describe Eric as part of their family, like a son to Renee. The story doesn't stop there, though. Renee went to court along with her family and she was able to have Eric's sentence cut in half, from 22 years to 11 years. This blew me away. The reason she did it was so that Eric could have a second chance at life so he could join her in the presentations. She told me that now she shares not only about the dangers of drunk driving but about the power of forgiveness.*

Forgiveness, whichever end of it you are on, gives us the ability to "stir one another up." **Forgiveness passing to us:** Hebrews 10:19-25 **This is God's perspective on forgiveness through Jesus:** Matthew 5:43-45 Because you have been forgiven, you surely can be forgiving to those around you. Just let it go! Forgiveness is the kind of thing that will change your life. It is a hard lesson that we need to continually revisit because we are imperfect human beings. We may know it is the right thing to do, but we hold that anger and resentment. Apply the forgiveness you have been forgiven. What a massive gift! It will give you peace and peace is transformative.

***So what if it's not your fault...?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!***