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## Are ALL Sins Forgivable?

**Matthew 6:14:** (NASB) *For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.*



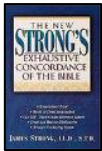
Everybody sins, and anybody who cares about the fact that they sin asks for forgiveness. What does forgiveness mean? Is the way we forgive each other different than the way God and Jesus forgive? Are there sins that are NOT forgivable? What are they? How do we avoid them? What about being the person who SHOULD forgive, but perhaps does not want to forgive? Is forgiveness more of an emotional experience or more of an intellectual one? For such a common subject, forgiveness sure does evoke a lot of questions! Stay with us as we look into forgiveness, the Bible, our culture, and our experiences.

### Questions for consideration:

1. What does it mean to "forgive?"
2. Can we forgive in the same way God and Jesus forgive?
3. Are there any unforgivable sins?
4. Is forgiveness an emotional experience or an intellectual experience?
5. Shouldn't you have to be sorry to be forgiven?
6. Is there an even better forgiveness than just making a sin irrelevant?

#### 1. What does it mean to "forgive?"

**Merriam/Webster Dictionary:** Forgive: *transitive verb* 1: to give up resentment of or claim to requital for <forgive an insult> 2: to cease to feel resentment against an offender



#### Four key New Testament words regarding forgiveness:

**Forgive:** Strongs #863 - to send forth, away

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

**Forgiveness:** Strongs #859 - freedom, pardon

This word is never used in connection with us forgiving one another. It is only related to the pardon granted through Jesus' sacrifice.

**Forgive:** Strongs #630 - to free, relieve, release, dismiss, let die, pardon, divorce

This word is broadly used but rarely actually translated as "forgive."

**Forgiving:** Strongs #5483 - favor

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

The following are two stories demonstrating situations in which forgiveness can be invited or can be left out.



**Introduction to Ken Turner's story, *The Power of Forgiveness by Ken Turner*, [crossroadconnexions.org.au](http://crossroadconnexions.org.au)**

- Sixteen years after the murder of his daughter, Ken Turner still grieves her loss after her killer walked free.

We want to rely on the justice system, but what if it fails us? Where does forgiveness fit in?



**Intro to Chris William's story, *My Burden was Made Light*, [putonthearmoroflight.com](http://putonthearmoroflight.com)**

- In February of 2007, his pregnant wife, second oldest son and only daughter were killed in a car crash by a drunk teenage driver.

**Mark 11:25:** Regarding forgiveness, the basic premise we will work with is the definition of "sending away." When you send something away, it still exists, although it is no longer relevant to your life.



## 2. Can we forgive in the same way God and Jesus forgive?

An example of God's forgiveness:  
Psalms 103:8-3

🔊) **Wailing in grief, *My Burden was Made Light*, [putonthearmoroflight.com](http://putonthearmoroflight.com)**

- *Chris watched his wife die;*
- *He heard himself wailing and grieving their loss in a sort of out of body way.*

To properly execute forgiveness, one has to have the proper attitude: Isaiah 53:3-7:

These scriptures are a prophetic description of Jesus literally carrying our sins, difficulties and tragedies. He was unjustly tried, unjustly convicted, unjustly tortured, and unjustly put to death. What Jesus did here is vastly different than what we can do towards each other.

🔊) **Forgiveness is stronger than revenge, *The Power of Forgiveness* by Ken Turner, [crossroadconnexions.org.au](http://crossroadconnexions.org.au)**

- *Ken forgave the murderer very early on;*
- *He knew the consequences of a non-forgiving heart;*
- *Forgiveness is more powerful than revenge - it provides personal freedom from anxiety, hatred, etc.;*
- *Forgiveness does not let the other person off the hook - it is for yourself.*

*(Note: We find out at the end of this story that the man murdered again and subsequently took his own life. Although Ken Turner forgave the man, Ken did not excuse him from the consequences and pursued him through the courts.)*

**Jesus forgiving:** Matthew 9:2-6: Jesus had the authority to make the sins of others lose their relevance. 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. We acknowledge what happened but are not controlled by it.



## 3. Are there any unforgivable sins?

This text prepares us for *never* having to worry about an unforgivable sin: Ephesians 4:26-32

🔊) **Cameron's Dad, *My Burden was Made Light*, [putonthearmoroflight.com](http://putonthearmoroflight.com)**

- *The police department called and told us that they had our son Cameron and Cameron had been driving intoxicated and was in an accident; although he was okay, three other people had been killed.*

This next text goes even beyond grieving God's holy power and influence. The Pharisees had just accused Jesus of casting out demons by the prince of demons, which was about as far from reality as could be. Matthew 12:31-32: Forgiveness means that the sin is put away from you. This particular sin -blasphemy or speaking against the Holy Spirit - is not forgivable. It doesn't mean that there is zero hope, it means that you, if you are going to recover from it, have to do all of the work and go through all of the effort. There is punishment involved. Jesus warned the Pharisees that they were treading on thin ice. Let's explore this further after introducing another story.

In our next true story, we look at Corrie Ten Boom, a Christian thrown into a concentration camp for hiding Jews. Corrie befriends a fellow prisoner who is bitter and vengeful towards those who put her in the camp.

🔊) **Live to Hate! *The Hiding Place* (1975)**

- *Prisoner: "The only way to live here is to hate!"*
- *Corrie: "Hate can put you into a worse prison than this!"*



- *Prisoner: "I live to get the swine who betrayed me!"*

There is so much dramatic injustice in the world. Is all of that forgivable?

Hebrews 6:4-6: This is a very strong statement that goes even further than what Jesus said in Matthew 12:31-32.

There are MANY qualifications here listed for committing an unforgivable sin:

- ✓ Enlightenment and experience: You had to have been enlightened and have experience with that enlightenment.
- ✓ The Holy Spirit's indwelling: You had to be a partaker of the Holy Spirit.
- ✓ An understanding of God's Word: You've had a grasp and understanding of God's plan.
- ✓ Abandoning ALL of these things: Meaning you have consciously rejected Jesus' ransom on your behalf.

There is a lot required in order to commit an unforgivable sin, which means that all others are forgivable.



**Observations so far:**

- 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!
- Jesus could make the sins of others lose their relevance to themselves.
- Committing an unforgivable sin is to consciously reject the favor of God's spirit, enlightenment, and experience and to reject the ransom price that Jesus paid on your behalf.

#### 4. Is forgiveness an emotional experience or an intellectual experience?



*I needed to let this go, My Burden was Made Light, putonthearmoroflight.com*

- *When I did feel anger, I didn't direct it at the person who did this, I directed it at the Savior.*
- *I didn't understand how it had happened, but I did feel and sense that I needed to let this go.*



Matthew 5:43-45: Is this emotional or intellectual? Perhaps we can't start loving our enemies until we make an intellectual decision to do so and then grow into something more. With forgiveness, we have to work on the decision making process rather than how we feel.

1 Peter 2:21-24: What was Jesus' example? To love without thought of it being returned; To give without reciprocation; To suffer without retaliation; To rely entirely on the Righteous Judge.

Back to our story, Corrie is remembering what she learned from her now dead sister while they were prisoners.



*God is deeper than any pit! The Hiding Place (1975)*

- *We must tell people that no pit is so deep that He is not deeper still. They will believe us because we were here.*

Matthew 6:9-15: Emotional or intellectual? Forgiveness is not just emotional. We have to *choose* to forgive people first. If our foundation is based on feelings, we will crumble because these change over time. If our foundation is based on our principles, we will have strength. Forgiving someone does not release them from the consequences of their actions, it releases us from the consequences of their actions.

#### 5. Shouldn't you have to be sorry to be forgiven?

Our next story is about Linden Harris, an Episcopal Priest who served near Ground Zero when the 9-11 attack happened.



*Garden of Forgiveness, The Concept, Journeyfilms.com*

- *We hope to present a meditation garden where people can go and reflect on the possibility of forgiveness;*
- *We do not in any way excuse horrific acts by evil people or terrorism;*



- *We want to invite people to decide intentionally to opt out of that cycle of violence and revenge.*

Compare [Luke 17:3-4](#) and [Luke 6:27-31](#). Why in one set of Scriptures we are specifically required to forgive our offender and in the other we are not? The first set is regarding your brother, the second regarding your enemy. The first shows communication, the second shows persecution. The first specifically says to forgive, the second says to love, bless and be humble. When there is responsibility on the part of the offender, then yes, there is a give and take. But when there is not in terms of your relationship with them, we have to be as magnanimous as possible.

So again, the provocation to forgive not only comes from the selfless and sacrificing examples we are given, but it can come from someone's recognition for their need of forgiveness (such as in the second text). It can come from our own desire to lift up those who may have hurt us, for their own good.

 **Chris and Cameron meet, *My Burden was Made Light*, [putonthearmoroflight.com](http://putonthearmoroflight.com)**

- *He walked in and had a big smile on his face. I had no smile because I was facing the man that I had done this to. He gave me a handshake - he was completely willing to talk about what happened that night. He wants me to let go what had happened - to pick a date and to move on completely. There's no way to explain it...*

We risk setting up a god greater than God by having that "unforgivable event" become our idol. We need to rather put it in perspective and have those circumstances just be an event.

#### 6. Is there an even better forgiveness than just making a sin irrelevant?

 **Public Reaction, *The Concept*, [Journeyfilms.com](http://Journeyfilms.com)**

- *"It's absurd - we should not forgive the people who did this to us;"*
- *"It's overdue - forgiveness is what we're supposed to do;"*
- *"If we don't show a little forgiveness we are no better than the terrorists;"*
- *"Some people have so much anger inside of them they will never forgive those who did this to them, especially people who lost close loved ones."*

Forgiveness is hard because it involves so much emotion. [Hebrews 9:22](#): This is an entirely different word for forgiveness that literally means to erase the event:

**Forgiveness: Strongs #859 - freedom, pardon**

It is only used relating to Jesus' sacrifice as it signifies a permanent removal of sin, rather than just a removal of the relevance of sin. The forgiveness Jesus brought us by his death on the cross was a step higher. [Colossians 1:21-23](#) **Jesus explains his role in the pardoning of sin:** [Luke 4:16-18](#): The release here is not just an opening of the prison door and letting them out. This is opening the door and providing a full pardon - an opportunity to go on and live without the previous consequences of sin. We are not capable of giving this kind of forgiveness.

[Luke 4:19-21](#): Jesus announced that unconditional release for all sinners had arrived and would begin to be implemented with his sacrifice.

 **Cameron's response, *My Burden was Made Light*, [putonthearmoroflight.com](http://putonthearmoroflight.com)**

- *The fact that he forgave me has become more significant because I know he has a relationship with Jesus Christ.*

The greatest repayment for Jesus' sacrifice in Chris' life that he was capable of giving was to give this young man his forgiveness. [Acts 3:19-21](#): There is a period of restoration of all things that will come from the presence of the Lord. We aren't wiping someone's sins away when we forgive them, we just push them away from us. The redemption of Jesus through the ransom wipes the sins away. He pardons us, takes us out of the prison house of sin and death and pays that price. Now that's forgiveness! Forgiveness is hard but necessary. When we learn it and apply it, not only from an emotional standpoint but from the foundation of choosing forgiveness, our lives can change. We can also change the lives of those that perpetrated a sin against us.

*So are all sins forgivable?  
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions,  
Think about it...!*