



▶ WHAT DOES PRAYER DO?



▶ IS MONEY THE ROOT OF ALL EVIL?



▶ WHAT ARE ANGELS?

February 19, 2012
Study 4

Sunday Morning

Discovery study

SEARCHING, SHARING, AND STUDYING REAL ISSUES OF FAITH TOGETHER WITH THE BIBLE AND DISCUSSION

"If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one." Matthew 18:15

How can I forgive?

"Can we truly forgive those who have caused us harm? Our head tells us we should forgive that person but our heart tells us otherwise. Why is it so difficult to forgive someone? It is easier said than done. How can we ask someone to forgive a person when he/she was the victim of abuse or neglect? Matthew 6: 14-15 says

For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins. (NIV)

As followers of Jesus Christ, we are told we must forgive others, particularly those who have hurt us personally. This is easier said than done. What if they don't feel they need to be forgiven? Or what if forgiving them wouldn't change anything? If we choose not to forgive that person, are we committing a sin?

How do we forgive when our hearts are not in it? Well, this is where faith comes in. When we place our trust in God with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we may find a way deep inside ourselves to forgive that person. Once we do, there is a sense of liberation on our part as well. We are no longer holding grudges or chained down due to long years of bitterness, anger and depression. Don't forget Jesus forgave tax collectors and prostitutes, and even forgave his best friend Peter, for betraying him.

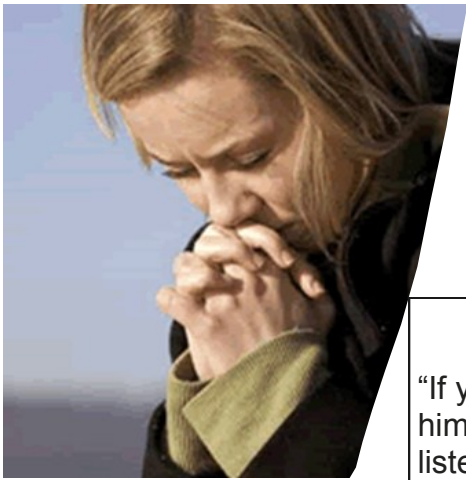
Still now, we may be shaking our heads and saying to ourselves, "not so and so", "never in a million years". Don't forget, when Jesus was on the cross he forgave the people who killed him.

Joanne Lee



Seventy times seven....

"Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times." Matthew 18:21-22 (NIV)



Asking Questions that Matter

We are called to participate in God's forgiveness as a gift". Thomas Long

Further Reflection

"If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

"I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

"Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them."

Question for Reflection:

Is forgiveness compulsory for Christians? If so, why? If not, why?

Is there someone you just can't forgive? How is that refusal to forgive put barriers and pain in your own life?

Are some sins worse than others? Are there unforgivable sins?

"As there is no sin so small but it deserves damnation; so there is no sin so great that it can bring damnation upon those who truly repent."

Westminster Confession BC 6.084

"All people fall short of God's standards and need salvation. God's way to salvation has been revealed in Jesus Christ.

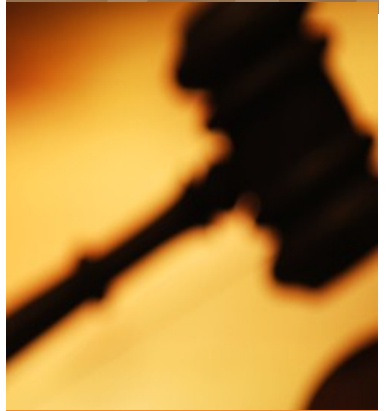
Through the death and resurrection of Christ our sins are forgiven.

Salvation means life, forgiveness, healing, wholeness.

It comes from God's grace received through faith in Christ alone."

2.5.7 Living Faith: A Statement of Christian Belief (Presbyterian Church in Canada)

COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY



"In a word, live together in the forgiveness of your sins, for without it no human fellowship, least of all a marriage, can survive. Don't insist on your rights, don't blame each other, don't judge or condemn each other, don't find fault with each other, but accept each other as you are, and forgive each other every day from the bottom of your hearts..."

— Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Letters and Papers from Prison

"Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her..." John 8:7