Must I Forgive Those Who Do Not Repent?

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INTRODUCTION

- It's an important question. Because it has a lot to do with our relationship with God, whether we forgive others.
- But in none of these passages that I've just shown you is it clarified whether there's a condition on their part of repentance, of asking for forgiveness, or something like that.

1 Arguments for Answering Yes

Matthew 6:14–15; Acts 7:60

- Our forgiveness from God depends on whether we forgive others, as we saw in Matthew 6, 14 and 15.
- And so the prayer of Jesus being fulfilled. Not immediately when he said this from the cross, but when they responded in repentance.
- Then falling on his knees, he cried out with a loud voice. Lord, do not hold this sin against them.
- Whenever you do not forgive someone, and you are harboring feelings of anger, bitterness, maybe even of hatred, then you are trapped in a downward cycle of depression.

2 Arguments for Answering No

Luke 13:3; Luke 17:3–4; 1 Corinthians 5:2–6

- First of all, God doesn't forgive unconditionally. And we are told to forgive like God forgives.
- Be on your guard. If your brother sins, rebuke him. And if he repents, forgive him.
- You see where that could be wrong. Ignoring sin can be wrong.
- If we don't deal with it and we ignore it, then we are enabling that individual to become a leavening influence in the whole congregation.

3 How We Define and Understand Forgiveness

- Part of the answer, and part of the problem of must I forgive those who do not repent, lies in how we define and understand what forgiveness is.
- Because we are never permitted to harbor bitterness in our heart, even for our enemies.
- To regard the offender as if the sin never happened. To receive the offender back in good standing.
- If we define forgiveness that way, I don't think any of us could honestly say that, yes, we must forgive people who do not repent every time.

4 We Must Always Be Ready to Forgive

- It's never too late for them to apologize.
- Too little too late. I'm sorry. That is not a Christ-like attitude.

- We must always desire for that person to turn to God and gain the forgiveness from God, which is ultimately what matters for him or her.

5 When the Repentance Occurs, Forgive Freely

2 Corinthians 2:6–8; Luke 17:4

- And when the repentance occurs, now I'm referring to the person coming to you and saying, I'm sorry of what I've done to you. We must forgive freely.
- So that on the contrary you should rather forgive and comfort him. Otherwise, such a one might be overwhelmed with excessive sorrow.
- It is not our place to judge someone's heart. That is God's place.
- Whose forgiveness are we to emulate and imitate? God's.

6 Four Things We Must Not Do

Ephesians 4:26–27; Ephesians 4:31; Romans 12:14–21

- Number one, we must never remain bitter and angry.
- Secondly, we must not take vengeance.
- Thirdly, we must never hate our enemies.
- Fourth, we must never regard an erring brother as an enemy.

> THE CHALLENGE
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> **I want you to draw your own conclusions. I don't want you to have an opinion on this because that's what the preacher said.**

MY NOTES