

FORGIVENESS AND BIBLICAL UNITY

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I. Quiz

This quiz is taken from a book entitled Unpacking Forgiveness by Chris Brauns.

True or False:

1. Where deep wounds between people are concerned, forgiveness can be accomplished in a moment.
2. Personal happiness and joy result when people live out what the Bible teaches about forgiveness.
3. Most Christian pastors and counselors agree about what forgiveness is and how it should take place.
4. Reconciliation occurs properly only when certain conditions are met.
5. Jesus said little about how people should resolve interpersonal conflict.
6. A willingness to forgive tells you something about a person's salvation.
7. Good people get to the bottom of all their disagreements.
8. There are times when it's wrong to simply forgive.

II. Forgiveness – Judicial versus Parental

- This gift of God's forgiveness – both judicial and parental - becomes the **reason** and **pattern** for how we are to forgive others
- Ephesians 4:32 & Colossians 3:12-13

II. **Three Questions about Forgiveness**

1. *Does our sense of justice always need to be satisfied before we can forgive someone?*

- From Christ, Old Testament, and New Testament authors:
 - i) We are to forgive others because God has forgiven us, and we are to do this time and time and time again in obedience to Christ Jesus our Lord.
 - ii) We are to avoid personal retaliation for an offense against us, and also be willing to suffer wrong for the sake of Christ. Both of these imply that we are forgiving those who offend us.
 - iii) Christ taught that our forgiveness is to be unconditional and without limit! Unconditional forgiveness is the very **foundation of unity** in marriages, friendships, and relationships of all sorts.

2. *Are we to turn the other cheek, as Christ taught in Matthew 5:39, in all situations? Are we to forgive unconditionally in all cases?*

- For the majority of offenses, forgive unconditionally, but not when there is the potential for harm to someone other than

yourself. These include:

...i) *When there is a situation in which you witness an offense against someone else, **you are to confront** the offender. Justice does not permit you to cover a sin against someone else.*

...ii) *When ignoring an offense might hurt the offender, then confrontation is then required.*

...iii) *When a sin damages the church.*

...iv) *When an offense results in a broken relationship.*

The offended party should forgive the offender from their heart, but **complete** forgiveness should be conditional. Reconciliation should also be sought.

3. *Is it enough to forgive someone from our hearts, or should we also try to restore the broken relationship?*

- We should forgive, but we are not to forgive unconditionally in the case of a sinfully broken relationship.
- How should that reconciliation be done?

...i) The lives of Peter, Paul, and Joseph have much to teach about reconciliation.

Credits: I want to acknowledge the influence of John MacArthur's book, The Freedom and Power of Forgiveness, on my thinking as I composed this talk.

I also want to thank Philip DeCourcy for his willingness to share his material from his sermon series, *Mending the Fences*, which is available on his church's website at [kindred church.org](http://kindredchurch.org)