



## Pastor David's Weekly Devotional

Last week, we looked at the unbiblical saying “God helps those who help themselves.” This week, I want to expose the unbiblical nature of the common maxim, “To forgive is to forget.” At the outset, it is important to stress that this common expression is not found any place in the Bible. Nowhere in Scripture do we find that forgiveness is tantamount to forgetfulness, or that forgetfulness is the evidence of forgiveness. This understanding is important for two reasons.

First, it is wrong to tell someone (or to tell yourself), “If you still remember the offence, that means you have not truly forgiven the offender.” The notion that a person can truly forget being seriously wronged or severely abused is terribly ignorant and potentially hurtful (some people would love nothing more than to forget being maligned, mistreated, or molested). This unbiblical saying has caused people a lot of unnecessary pain and shame. Furthermore, to teach this as a biblical truth or command is both irresponsible and indefensible.

Second, true forgiveness is much more than mere memory loss. True forgiveness is not forgetfulness but treating the person “as if” you have forgotten. In many ways, this is far more difficult. The biblical definition of “forgiveness” is to release the offender/abuser of any just (or seemingly just) retribution. That is, the person who has truly forgiven will not retaliate or seek revenge. Biblical forgiveness is not merely emotional or mental; it is a genuine decision, willful act, to be merciful and gracious. This is clearly not the same thing as simply not remembering the offense, and it certainly does not preclude restitution or protecting oneself from further mistreatment or abuse. So, while it is not right to say, “To forgive is to forget” it is right to say, “To forgive is to act as if you have forgotten.”

We are called to forgive others, in the same way and to the same degree, as God has forgiven us: “*as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive*” (Col.3:13; see Matt.6:12, 14-15; 18:21-35; Mk.11:25; Lk.6:36; 17:3-4; Eph.4:32). True forgiveness is costly. God forgave our sins through the sacrificial (costly) death of His one and only Son. For we “*were bought with a price*” (1Cor.6:20), “*which He obtained with His own blood*” (Acts 20:28), through “*the precious blood of Christ*” (1Pet.1:19). This is one reason why Christians should be the most forgiving people on the planet, for they have been forgiven more than anyone on the planet. Refusing to forgive others constitutes hypocrisy in one’s heart, revealing that they have not truly come to terms with their own sinfulness toward God and therefore have not truly experienced the Lord’s forgiveness. The hard truth is this: no one has ever sinned against us to the number or degree that we have sinned against God.

In defense of the expression “to forgive is to forget” many would argue that “the Bible teaches God forgets our sin when He forgives, and so we also should forget the sin when we forgive.” While the Bible indeed states that God “*blots out your transgressions*” and “*will not remember your sins*” (Is.43:25), and He will “*remember their sins no more*” (Heb.8:12; 10:17), this does not mean that God forgets our sins. Rather, it teaches that God will not recall our sins to mind. Obviously, since He is omniscient (all-knowing), God cannot literally forget our sinful actions and choices. But He has graciously promised not to remember our sins, meaning that He is deliberately choosing not to hold our sins against us (Ps.130:3-4; Is.53:6). The point is that when God forgives, it is as if He has forgotten – graciously not treating us as our sins deserve (Rom.6:23). Thus, “*as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us*” (Ps.103:12).

Together in and for Christ,  
Pastor David  
(10/05/26)

**Scripture Readings for the Week** (Monday – Sunday ~ Week #40):

*Numbers 29-32; 2 Chronicles 11-15; Psalm 117-118; Proverbs 28; Jonah; Acts 3-4; Hebrews 5-7*

**Recommended Reading:**

*“The Freedom and Power of Forgiveness” by John MacArthur*