

# Biblical Dynamics of Human Relationships 8

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[ 0 : 00 ] If, as is the case, and I think it is, that what the Apostle Paul is referring to in this passage of forgiveness relates to a letter that he had written earlier that we commonly call 1 Corinthians.

And in chapter 5 of 1 Corinthians, the Apostle takes the Corinthian assembly to task because they had been willing to tolerate a man's involvement in an illicit sexual way with his stepmother.

And the Apostle soundly criticized them for their toleration of that kind of behavior, saying that such activity is not even permitted nor allowed among the pagans.

And this is what you are putting up with. You are to discipline that man, and you are to drive him from the assembly with the intent that he eventually will repent of his sin, confess, acknowledge his sin, and be restored.

And if this passage in 2 Corinthians is addressing that, and I think that it is, Paul is telling them that conditioned by the man's repentance, you are to extend forgiveness to him.

[ 1 : 21 ] Because if you do not, of course, you would be exercising hardness of heart in refusing to forgive. And hardness of heart in refusing to forgive is just as culpable and as damaging as hardness of heart in refusing to repent.

So when someone acknowledges their sin, repents of their sin, and apologizes, you ought to be ready to forgive them.

That is very, very important. And he even goes on to say in this passage, just read, that if you do not forgive such a one, Satan can use that unforgiveness to his own advantage.

Because what that does then, of course, is build confusion and discouragement in the one who is seeking forgiveness, but is not receiving it.

And it causes them to be neutralized spiritually. That is the way Satan uses these things against us. So, we are spending more time on forgiveness because of its critical nature.

[ 2 : 33 ] Forgiveness is the only biblical remedy for guilt. Forgiveness is the only biblical remedy for guilt.

Guilt, unresolved or expiated through forgiveness, is emotionally, spiritually, and perhaps even physically debilitating.

If it is not resolved, it can have a very negative effect on the individual's psyche, on their emotions, even on their physical health.

Matter of fact, I would like to return to that passage that we utilized earlier. It is in Psalm 32. And if we will repair to that for just a moment, I should like to remind you of a couple of the verses that are there.

Psalm 32, when David is expressing extreme penitence regarding his sin. Guilt is the emotional and spiritual pain that we experience from having violated a moral standard.

[ 3 : 51 ] Guilt impacts the conscience, and the conscience that is beleaguered will not give us peace. And this is what Psalm 31 is about, or Psalm 32, and verses 1 through 5.

How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. David's talking about himself. It is as if he's saying, I know what I'm talking about.

Oh, how blessed is the man whose sin or transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. I know the incredible relief and release that comes from such sheer mental, spiritual, emotional exhaustion that we spend when we are wrestling with guilt.

It plagues us and dogs us and hounds us and will not let us go. David continues by saying, when I kept silent about my sin, my body wasted away.

And what he's saying is, guilt was eating me alive. It was really doing a job on me. I kept silent about my sin, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long.

[ 5 : 15 ] Is he talking about weight loss? I think he is. I think he is. We have all known people who have gone through extreme emotional difficulties may or may not have been associated with guilt.

But it is not unusual that a significant weight loss is experienced. And sometimes people, just to look at them, they look haggard and spent as if they have been living in great difficulty.

And the pounds do come off. I don't recommend that. I don't recommend that method for dieting, however. My body wasted away through my groaning all day long.

For day and night, thy hand was heavy upon me. My vitality was drained away as with the fever heat of summer.

And what was the turnaround? How did I put an end to this? What was the rescue?

[ 6 : 19 ] I acknowledged my sin to thee? David saying, I came clean.

I fessed up. I fessed up. I took responsibility. And as he did so, he could just feel the imponderable weight taken off his shoulders.

The release that comes from that. My iniquity I did not hide. I said, I will confess my transgressions to the Lord. And thou didst forgive the guilt of my sin.

Oh, what an incredible experience. Guilt. Guilt. Guilt. Guilt unresolved produces fear.

Fear is the dread of discovery and or punishment. In fact, it will often prompt us to lie about a committed deed so as to avoid punishment.

[ 7 : 25 ] This all goes way back to the three-year-old in the cookie jar. When they stand there and mom peeked around the corner and saw him with her own eyes take that cookie out of the cookie jar and devour it.

And later when she confronts him, were you in the cookie jar? No. Because he had already been told not to get in it. It will ruin his dinner. But he thought he was sneaking around behind her back and she was peeking around the corner watching him.

But he denied it. Why did he deny it? Guilt was getting to him and he knew that punishment was in the offing. So he tries to lie out of it.

We do that. We lie to protect our own hide. To protect our ego. It is a natural defense mechanism. It is an unwise one. And it's one that scripture condemns.

But it's one that we often utilize, don't we? Someone has said, you never have to teach a child how to lie. It's standard operating equipment.

[ 8 : 29 ] It comes with them. It is just born in us. It's part of that old sin nature. What we have to do, of course, is teach them to tell the truth. Living in guilt and fear is punishment in itself.

And it can be paralyzing. We have all heard the testimonies of people who have committed some crime. And before they could be arrested, they escaped to another venue.

They're in another state or maybe even in another country. Sometimes people commit a crime. And then when they think they're going to be found out, they hightail it out and head for Texas or California or someplace like that.

And the next thing they know, they are talking with a friend on the telephone back in their hometown where they used to say, yes, an arrest warrant has been issued for you.

Yes, the authorities are looking for you. And they're trying to locate this individual. And every time they go out into public, they are ill at ease.

[ 9 : 39 ] They are always looking around. And every time they see a police officer, they're wondering, does he have a fix on me? Is he looking for me? Are there wanted posters out with my picture on it?

And it makes one very, very uncomfortable and ill at ease. I remember reading some accounts of some Nazi war criminals who fled Nazi Germany right before the war ended.

And they knew that charges would be brought against them. And as of course they were, the Nuremberg War Trials. And there were some of the main instigators in the Nazi cause that were hanged by the authorities.

And others served long prison terms. But many of them escaped. And this prompted a man by the name of Simon Wiesenthal to enact a personal kind of program.

That labeled him as the world's number one Nazi hunter. And he would pursue these people, run them down, trace them, find them in Brazil or Argentina.

[ 10 : 47 ] And then there were even some occasions where they had Mossad squads, which is the equivalent of the Israeli CIA, go into that foreign country and kidnap that individual.

Completely, of course, against the law of the locals. Because you can't go into a foreign country, kidnap someone in that country and escape with them back to Israel. But they did it. And they did it on more occasions than one. And brought them back to Germany or to Israel to stand trial. And many of them went on to recount how that for years they were always looking over their shoulder, thinking that a Nazi hunter might be zeroing in on them. And in the case of several of them, one was. And some of them were brought back to justice. Imagine living under that kind of guilt and that kind of fear. That is a form of punishment in itself. Guilt induces its own kind of punishment. Nothing works like forgiveness.

[ 11 : 58 ] Is there anything wrong with that statement? Think about it. Nothing works like forgiveness when it comes to resolving guilt.

Yes, there is something wrong with it. It is a statement that can be vastly improved. And is far more theologically correct than to say nothing works like forgiveness.

It ought to be altered. Nothing works but forgiveness. That's the only thing that does work. To be forgiven means to be released. To be discharged. To be set free. To have it written off.

It is treated as if it no longer exists. And we pointed out to you that all believers need and should have a forgiving spirit or a forgiving attitude based upon God's great forgiveness for us.

[ 13 : 19 ] How can we not? And we have talked about people who have wronged us who have not apologized. And we can glibly say, well, I forgive them anyway.

No, you don't either. You cannot. Because forgiveness is a transaction. And a transaction requires the involvement of two parties. But what you can do, and what you should do is, you should have in place, at all times, a spirit or attitude that wants to forgive.

And that is eager to forgive. That is the only Christian thing to do. But you cannot actually activate forgiveness if there is no acknowledgement of wrongdoing.

If there is no apology. It's like saying to someone that someone owes you money.

They owe you \$100. And they pay you \$100. And then you say to them, well, I just want you to know that I forgive the debt.

[ 14 : 34 ] What? You can't forgive the debt. I just paid the debt. There's nothing to forgive. How can you say you forgive me? I don't owe you anything.

Well, in order for a transaction to occur, there has to be give and take. There has to be buy and sell. There has to be apology and forgiveness. You cannot forgive someone who will not acknowledge that they have wronged you.

You can have a forgiving spirit, which means you are prepared to forgive them. You want to forgive them. You would really like to forgive them. But they do not make it possible if they will not acknowledge the wrong.

Forgiveness is a gift that we give to the one who offended us, having duly apologized, seeking our forgiveness.

If the offender refuses to apologize and does not give us the opportunity to forgive, we must still be eager and willing to do so, should they ever come around to repentance and apology.

[ 15 : 41 ] That's the transactional nature of it. There is a one-sided attitude of forgiveness, but there is no one-sided actual forgiveness.

This may seem like a technical point that is minor, but I assure you there is nothing minor about it. The offense has to be acknowledged.

The apology has to be given, and a request for forgiveness has to be issued before forgiveness can actually be extended and it is a transaction.

Otherwise, the offense remains unresolved. The wound from the offense, whether a dart, an arrow, or a spear, remains in place and healing is prevented.

Both the offended and the offender continue to pay an unnecessary price of a cooling, distancing relationship.

[ 16 : 51 ] The offender is suffering from a hardened heart that Christ warned about in Matthew 19.8. A hardened heart is a stubbornness of mind that refuses to repent, refuses to acknowledge guilt, and refuses to apologize.

That's a hardened heart. The offender does that when they refuse. The offended may harden his heart by refusing to forgive when the offender does repent, apologize, and ask for forgiveness.

And this is what Paul is talking to the Corinthians about. He says, listen, this man who was involved in an illicit relationship with his stepmother, when he acknowledged that sin, repented of that sin, apologized to the congregation for that sin, you have an obligation as a congregation to forgive him, to embrace him, to receive him, to restore him.

Because if you don't, that's a hardening of heart on the part of the congregation. You then become part of the problem. And sometimes people can be wounded very, very deeply so that they feel that they cannot forgive.

Yes, you can. What you really need to be dealing with and what you need to be concerned about is an attitude that says, I won't forgive you.

[ 18 : 32 ] I can't forgive you because you hurt me too deeply. No, they didn't. That is simply your ego talking. That is your flesh talking that says, I have been wounded so deeply.

You have hurt me so badly. I just can't forgive you. That's cop-out talking. And God will make a way more than available to anyone who has a will to forgive.

And if you have been hurt very deeply by someone and you think that you cannot forgive them, I can encourage you to the extent that you can appeal to God for the grace that is needed in extending that forgiveness to that person and God will provide it.

Our problem is, we don't want him to. We want to go on nurturing the offense. We want to go on harboring the hurt.

We want to be able to call it up anytime we think we need it and replay it. And that is tragedy. In an earlier message, I spoke about false guilt regarding my own mother.

[ 19 : 54 ] And this was something, of course, that was very up close and personal because it sapped her of some of the richness and enjoyment that she could have had for her whole life.

But something very, very powerful robbed that from her when she was just a child, no more than about eight or ten years of age.

When we're talking about false guilt, I realize that false guilt is actually an oxymoron. Because if one's guilt is not based upon something for which one is truly responsible and accountable, then it isn't true or real guilt at all.

So false guilt is actually an inadequate term. But the effect and the consequences of this unfounded guilt are the same as if the guilt were true and real.

This was an event that happened many, many years ago. My mother was born in 1916. And this event occurred around 1924 or 1926.

[ 21 : 20 ] And she took the guilt that she did not deserve that saddled her and weighed her down for her entire life, from the time she was 10 or 12 years old, 8 or 10 years old, until the time she died at the age of 79.

And what happened took place down in southern Ohio around 1924, 1926.

And my mother was about 8 or 10 years of age. I can't remember for sure. But she told me all about this. More than once, she relived it and recast it.

And I could see the pain in her eyes and hear the sadness in her voice as she recounted this. And I tried with everything I could to talk her out of it.

But I think it was to no avail. I don't believe I was ever really successful in causing her to see the wonderful forgiveness that God had provided and could extend to her, even in a situation like this.

[ 22 : 39 ] She was in probably the third or fourth grade. And they had a custom that prevailed considerably in elementary school back in those days, whereby there were certain days in the school year when students were encouraged and invited to bring their younger brothers or sisters to school with them and just let them have a little taste of school and what school was like and associate with the kids and to be in the classroom.

And it was a pretty heady experience for kids at that time when the little one was probably about four years old and dreaming of the time when he or she would be big enough and old enough to go to school like their big brothers or big sisters.

And here they had to be home with mom all day long and nobody to play with. And the siblings, older siblings were off at school. Well, on these special occasions, kids were invited to bring their younger brothers or sisters to school.

And my mom went to her mother, my grandmother, and said, and I honestly don't remember whether it was Jenny or Marilyn, because both of these young girls died at a very early age, which was not terribly unusual back in that day.

And she went to her mother and said, I want to take Jenny to school with me tomorrow. Is that okay? And her mother says, no, I don't think so.

[ 24 : 12 ] I don't want Jenny going to school with you tomorrow. There's just too much stuff going around. Well, my mom was just totally disappointed. And she was begging and pleading and she would come back an hour later and ask her if she would change her mind.

And finally, my mother wore her mother down. And she said, all right, okay, you can take her tomorrow. Tomorrow. So she was just as happy as a lark.

And she dressed little Jenny up in her best Sunday go-to-meeting clothes. And they went off to school together. And she was her big sister and was going to show her off and show her around and everything.

And I'm sure she was just a darling little sister. And they had a great day. It was wonderful.

Everything went the way it was supposed to.

And two days later, Jenny came down ill. What's the problem? Diphtheria.

[ 25 : 20 ] Which in many cases was a death sentence because lots of children never survived diphtheria. And little Jenny's life hung in the balance for about three days and three nights and high fever and everything that went with it.

And finally she died. And upon her death, my grandmother turned to my mother and said, You should have never taken her to school.

I should have never let you do that. Why did you insist on taking her? Do you realize you killed your sister?

Now when you get that kind of a charge, as an eight or ten year old, and it is lowered on you by the ultimate authority figure in your life, you buy it.

It doesn't make any difference that she shouldn't have bought it. She bought it. And so would any normal eight or ten year old.

[ 26 : 40 ] If my mother says it's my fault and I killed my sister, then it must be true. And she lived with that for her whole life.

I could have had another little sister. But it was all my fault because I was the one who insisted that she accompany me to school.

And it's my fault that she's dead. She blamed herself until her 79th year when God saw fit to take her home.

And she took that to her grave. And I well recall hearing of another instance similar to that. Playground. Two brothers.

Younger brother and an older brother. Younger brother was about 10, 11 years old. Something like that. And the little brother, little shaver, little kindergartner, about five years old.

[ 27 : 45 ] And they were out in the school playground. And big brother was swinging. The little brother. You know, the school swings. And swinging, swing.

And the boys had a habit. The older boys had a habit of seeing how high they could go. You know, boys kind of adventuresome like that and stupid.

Want to see how high we can go. And when we get up to the peak, can't get any higher, then we jump out. We're playing paratrooper.

You know, just like the guys in the army. You just jump out of the swing. And they had great fun doing that. And of course, they could handle it. Every now and then, somebody would end up with a sprained ankle.

But that's just part of the price you pay for the fun of the adventure. And all the bigger kids were doing it. And this eight or ten-year-old was swinging his little brother and swinging him.

[ 28 : 45 ] And the little brother was saying, higher, Johnny, higher! And he'd push him higher, higher, higher! And he'd push him higher. And they were just having a great time. And the little brother decided to imitate his big brother.

And of course, when they got up to the peak, he let go. He dropped out, landed, lost his balance, hit his head against a large rock, fractured his skull, put him in a coma.

A week later, he died after never regaining consciousness. And the word was, it was big brother's fault.

He shouldn't have done it. He should have had more sense than to push him like that. And when he fell out and hit his head against the rock, my bad, my fault, I was responsible, I was in charge, I fumbled the ball, my fault, my little brother, is dead.

Well, it wasn't his fault. And it wasn't my mother's fault either. And you know, both of these cases could have been wonderfully resolved.

[ 30 : 13 ] No, there would have still been tremendous sadness. No question about it. Great sorrow on the part of everybody. But a healthy dose and understanding of the sovereignty of God could have made all the difference in the world in both of those situations.

And they just didn't have it. God has a perspective. And his perspective takes everything into consideration.

And he knows what he is about and what he permits and what he ordains. And God could have prevented both of those incidents. But he didn't.

Why didn't he? Didn't he care? Didn't he know what was going to happen? Why didn't he step in and prevent that?

For the same reason that he doesn't step in and prevent a whole lot of tragedies that we see. God has a big picture. He knows what he's doing. And he does not override our volition or our ability to make decisions.

[ 31 : 19 ] He doesn't give us volition and then yank it away from us whenever we're going to be hurt by it. He allows it to go its full course. And when it does, in a fallen world, people get hurt.

And people die. And sometimes it is another person's fault because they acted irresponsibly.

But you cannot charge an eight or ten year old child, either my mom or the older brother, with the death of their younger sibling as if they were intentional or deliberate or anything of a kind.

It's just a fluke of fallen nature. Things like that happen. No, we don't see any rhyme or reason for it. We can't see what God might possibly be about in allowing something like that to happen. And this, by the way, is one of the principal reasons that some reject the whole idea and the concept of God altogether.

[ 32 : 24 ] Because they just cannot conceive of a God who is really in charge and a God who really loves allowing these terrible things to happen. What kind of a God is that anyway? Well, it's a God who is able to measure every single thing that we don't even know about.

And he knows what he's doing and what he ordains and in what he permits. And what he wants us to do in the midst of it is believe him and trust him.

That's when you'll find out what your trust is really worth. that's when you'll find out if this thing called Christianity really has any substance to it or if it's just another belief system.

No doctrine, no sovereignty, no resolving, just living with incredible pain and guilt that neither of them really owned or were responsible for.

We all know that kids do childish irresponsible things. And do you know what? That's okay. It's part of a kid's job description to do childish irresponsible things.

[ 33 : 53 ] What would you expect a child to do other than be childish? It is when they grow to a certain level of maturity that more and more responsibility is added to them and become more and more accountable.

Now if that had been a 16 or 18 year old brother pushing like that, he probably would have exercised more wisdom. But even so, who can account for the placement of that rock at the right place or the wrong place depending on how you look at it?

And he didn't even know his little brother was going to jump from the swing. But what do little brothers want to do more than anything else? Be like their big brother and do what he does.

And that's what he did. And he too lived the rest of his life with the thought, my little brother is dead and it's my fault.

I killed him. I killed him. It's all my fault. that is false guilt.

[ 34 : 59 ] It is guilt that does not belong there. But the point I want to make is even if they are not justified in carrying the guilt, buying the guilt, absorbing the guilt, even if it doesn't really belong to them, it still does the same job on them as if it did belong to them.

It still impacts them and affects them emotionally, psychologically, and maybe even physically, just as if it were real and true.

Well, let me address this too. Both the act of forgiving others and the act of forgiving ourselves are a mere confirmation of our flawed humanity.

Just the fact that we have need to apologize to one another just demonstrates we are what we are.

Just the mere fact that we have occasion to repent of our actions and attitudes is just a confirmation that we are what we are.

are. And forgiving others and being forgiven by others is just a confirmation of our flawed humanity. We all have the deep need to forgive and be forgiven.

[ 36 : 34 ] and why is it that in both of those cases my mother and this other brother neither were ever able to forgive themselves.

there are lots of people who are lugging around things that they should be free of and clear of. They are burdened down, weighed down with guilt because they cannot know they will not forgive themselves.

I've heard people say you perhaps have too. I know God has forgiven me but I cannot forgive myself.

Why do you suppose anyone would be willing to do that? To harbor that guilt and nurse it and not release it.

[ 37 : 51 ] and remind themselves over and over and over it is my fault. I am guilty. I am guilty.

Well, one reason is because in a morbid sort of way it is their effort to punish themselves through the anxiety and the emotional energy that they are using in absorbing this guilt and refusing to let it go and holding it over their own head it is their way of inflicting ongoing punishment on themselves which they feel they deserve.

So it is like a perpetual beating up on themselves and beating down themselves because they deserve that kind of inner turmoil and lack of peace and everything that goes with it because that's just how rotten they are and all the while they are using that refusal to forgive themselves as a means of punishing themselves in an attempt to pay or atone for what they did they are putting themselves through the emotional ringer of not releasing it not letting it go or they could say in essence and this is kind of like what it boils down to I know God has forgiven me but I cannot or will not forgive myself is tantamount to saying

God has his standards for forgiveness but mine are higher than God's can you imagine such arrogance could anybody really believe that yes multitudes do God has forgiven me because I've read in his word and he promised and he said he's forgiven me and I am thankful for it but I just can't forgive myself I won't forgive myself and that could be nothing but spiritual arrogance speaking and saying my standards for forgiveness are higher than God's I could meet God's standards for forgiveness and he forgives but I can't meet mine which is supreme arrogance and the only thing that you can do with a situation like that is realize the reality of it and the truthfulness of it and have a little self talk to the extent that

I know God has forgiven me and I have repented of this and I have apologized to whomever I wronged in it and I know that I do not deserve to be forgiven either by God or by myself but that's what grace is all about and I am so grateful for God's forgiveness I am going to extend it to myself and I am going to forgive me I am a flawed human being who have sinned and I acknowledge the error of my way and the sinfulness of my action I repent of it and I forgive me it's a transaction that needs to be carried out in the lives of a lot of people doesn't mean that you're just irresponsible or off the hook or of no consequence or concern even with the forgiveness from

[ 42 : 08 ] God and from yourself there will still be in place continuing consequences that are not erased that's just the cause and effect law that's the way it works so what do you do with those you just live with it you cannot change the consequences and God doesn't remove the consequences you just live with it and it is a kind of ongoing reminder and it can be a powerful preventive from repeating the offense but all in all at the base of the whole thing whether from God or from yourself it's all of grace it's all of grace and it is an absolutely wonderful thing before I leave the subject of forgiveness I do want to mention this one thing because this goes on a lot what about one person apologizing for another no you cannot do it don't even attempt well there are some cases

I stand corrected there are some cases where it is appropriate for you to apologize for someone else and that is if you are out in public and your three year old acts up as sometimes three year olds want to do and they create a scene or they do something that is embarrassing or whatever it is perfectly appropriate for you as a mom or dad to apologize for the youngster because the youngster is a youngster and they are just being a kid and being a kid and by the way they've got your genes in them and that enables them to act up and create a scene or be embarrassing in a public place like that and you just think when I get this kid home I'm going to kill him and you can apologize for their behavior in a situation like that because they are irresponsible they're irresponsible and they are supposed to be irresponsible as part of being a kid so it's appropriate for you in that case to apologize for someone else but if your brother-in-law has too much to drink at a party and he makes

a fool of himself and goes with the old lampshade routine on his head as a hat and goes around being obnoxious and everything you don't apologize for him he needs to apologize for himself believe me he feels no pain when somebody else apologizes for him the only way to render an acceptable social apology is to do it in person for the responsible person to actually render the apology and husbands and wives should not try to apologize for each other or one another they owe the apology themselves now there is a great deal more that could be said about this but other things

I'm going to reserve for next week and we've got ten minutes for Q&A; if anybody has any or I'll let you go early and you can hit the Baptist buffet earlier than usual it's up to you Ruth Ruth in the back could we have a microphone please well I just wondered what part self-esteem played in that being able to forgive oneself self-esteem a person with low self-esteem just thinks they're so rotten you know they can't even forgive themselves well self-esteem has been a real hot topic for the last several years now I do think that it is important to be able to feel good about yourself but you need to be able to feel good about yourself for the right reasons and that is nothing nothing enables you to feel good about yourself more than knowing you have done the right thing not always the easy thing but when you do the right thing you are able to feel relaxed and at ease with yourself and and and maybe it sounds boastful but

I I don't take it that way but it is a kind of relief when you know you've done the right thing and you leave the results and the consequences with the Lord it might sound like it is self congratulatory but better to be self congratulatory for having done the right thing when you know it's the biblical thing to do rather than be self condemning for knowing you did the wrong thing it's a virtual movement that has taken the nation by storm and it's even been married to political correctness and a lot of other nonsense that's going on in our culture and a great deal of emphasis has been placed on how important it is to make little Johnny feel wonderful about himself even if his behavior is atrocious and even if he continually comes up with wrong answers he's supposed to be given an A for effort because he thinks two and two equals five well don't hurt his feelings by telling him he's wrong because you might be assaulting his self esteem so tell him well you came close

Johnny that's good enough you know well that's nonsense that's just pap but it goes on a lot other comments or questions John talked about forgiveness as an attitude I would assume that means you want to treat somebody as forgiven too even though they've never like you said completed a transaction right absolutely it not only affects the way you feel about them but the way you act toward them because if you don't then of course what you're doing is holding a grudge and you are being you are being unforgiving for their unforgiveness and you can actually compound the problem and I'm not suggesting that we should treat them in such a way as to communicate the idea that nothing is wrong or that there's nothing that needs to be repaired but we ought to extend kindness and courtesy to them even if we do not inwardly feel as warmly toward them as we would like we should not mistreat them and we should not demean them or deride them that's important attitudes are so important because actions flow from attitudes what what you are thinking inwardly tends to work its way outward in behavior and actions so scriptures remind us to guard our thoughts your thought life is very very important as a man thinketh in his heart so is he are there other comments or questions up here in the front

[ 50 : 15 ] Dave Ruth has a comment wait for the microphone Ruth otherwise they may not be able to hear you I think it would be easier to forgive one another if we remember what Jesus said about forgiving one another as I have forgiven you that would make it easier that's true and his forgiveness is fully freely forever and that's the way we are to forgive others we are actually what we're doing and bear this in mind we're just one wounded sinner who is forgiving another offending sinner and we just happen to be the recipient of the wound and tomorrow shoe may be on the other foot tomorrow you may be the offender and the other person the offended and by the way we go through life husbands and wives especially because they have such immediate access to each other we increase the potential for offending and being offended by living together as we do we're always available you don't have to reach out far to find somebody to offend and what you say or what you do because they're right there what we need to remember is we are all flawed people forgiving other flawed people it makes life so much more enjoyable and so much less stress when we look at it that way thank you

Ruth you're right in the back Terry has a question all the way back we're going to get you some roller blades Dave you may need to think about this one for a little bit and you may not be able to

answer it all today during last week's sermon you made a great distinction between Matthew and how that was a different dispensation and our present dispensation then you went to 1 John and you said that it applied to us today as well as prior because it's a principle and I would be very interested to have some type of an explanation as how do we know if we're looking at the Pauline epistles today as dealing with the body of Christ and then 1 John applies to us because of principle how do we distinguish and how do we know when those principles apply to us today even though they may have been written to someone else yeah you're right that is a very good question and I'm really glad that we're just about out of time but you're right what

I talk about I talk about some of these things and the first John 1 9 thing is one of them where I would call it an abiding principle I think it is a principle that is applicable in any and all dispensations and then why is it that the incident in Matthew is not also an abiding principle that's a good question and I would say just off the top of my head please don't take this as a final answer but this is just something for you to think about I think that the incident that our Lord described in the Sermon on the Mount is very much relegated to the first dispensation or to the first covenant the old covenant and being very Jewish with the system of atonement sacrifice and all of that in place which of course is not today but I think that's just the tip of the iceberg and that's a really good question and I appreciate you asking it

I will give it more thought and try to get you a better answer next week but I really appreciate these kind of questions because it demonstrates to me that my congregation is really thinking and I like that and that helps keep me on my toes as well anything else before we dismiss may we stand please loving father the forgiveness you have extended toward us is just absolutely inexpressible and we look forward to being able to in an ongoing way extend our eternal thanks and gratitude to you for it we believe you have set in motion through the act of forgiveness through our Lord Jesus Christ something that will give us cause for praise and adoration throughout the entire eternity to come we bless you and we thank you for it again and again in Christ's wonderful name amen