

## **FORGIVENESS #14**

In message number 13, we considered an extensive overview of the series, then moved into final words of practical counsel concerning the matter of forgiveness. Having dealt three studies ago with councils to those of us who are in the position of being **the offender**, that is, what are we to do when we are the one who has sinned against a brother or sister. In our last study we began to look at three practical councils to those of us when we are in the position of being, not the offender, but **the offended**. That is, what do we do when we are sinned against? According to the Scriptures, you and I, until we are glorified, will constantly find ourselves in the roles of both the offender and the offended. This is assumed in the Lord's prayer. It is also assumed in apostolic directives to the churches, therefore, we ought to be clear in our understanding as to what God requires of us and what He is committed to do for us when we are the offended, and what we are to know and to do when we are the offended. So in the last study when we looked at some practical counsel to the people of God when they are the offended, we considered this one word of counsel, and it was this:

Tolerate nothing less in yourselves, than the Godlike disposition of forgiveness filling your heart by the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

There is never a time in any situation, no matter how grievously we have been offended, when we have the luxury of tolerating for one moment in our hearts, anything less than the Godlike disposition of forgiveness filling our hearts by the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Long before it may be right for us to confer forgiveness, the disposition of forgiveness must be present in our hearts by the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

### **END REVIEW**

What council does the Word of God give us, when we are the offended; when we have been the one sinned against?

Consider the final two words of practical counsel to us when we are the offended. In addition to that first word of counsel that we:

**COUNCIL #1 - TOLERATE NOTHING LESS IN YOUR HEART THAN THE GODLIKE DISPOSITION OF FORGIVENESS, FILLING YOUR HEART BY THE MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

Council number two is:

[5:10] **COUNCIL #2 - WE MUST PRAY FOR THE MORAL COURAGE AND SPIRITUAL GRACE TO OBEY THE CLEAR COMMANDS OF MATTHEW 18:15 AND LUKE 17:3.**

**Matthew 18:15** *"And if your brother sin against you, go, show him his fault between you and him alone: if he hear you, you have gained your brother. 16 But if he hear you*

*not, take with you one or two more, that at the mouth of two witnesses or three every word may be established."*

**Matthew 18:15** *"And if your brother sin against you . . ."* You are now offended. Your brother has sinned against you. You haven't spun a sin out of the stuff of your own hypersensitive psyche. Do you know what a hypersensitive psyche is? It is an unloving psyche. It makes sins out of stuff that are no sins. That's what hypersensitivity is. It is an unloving, demonic ability to make sins out of no sins. *"And if your brother sins against you . . ."* That is, he violates the law of God, he breaks that second command. There has been some manifestation that he has not loved you as himself and, in so doing, he has violated the law of God in such a way that the judgment of the ordinary, discerning believer will be carried, that indeed he has sinned against you. Because if he does not hear you, you are to take one or two more that, at the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word may be established. That is, every word charging this brother, laying before him the nature of his sin. Surely you cannot fabricate a sin before two thinking, discerning, Christians, if the sin is, "Well, someone is really ignoring me because he has a grudge against me."

"And how do you know that?"

"Well last Sunday he walked down the aisle, and just as he got to me, he looked away."

"O he did, did he? And that was the sin?"

"Oh yes, that was the sin."

And you go to the brother and come to find out, what happened is, that walking down the aisle he suddenly remembered that he promised his wife that he'd go get the kids out of the nursery, and he had forgotten. And in that moment of remembrance, he turned away to fulfill a promise to his wife. He did not sin against this person. This person spun a sin out of the stuff of their own imagination, self-centeredness, and hypersensitivity, and it's a wicked foul disease in a self-centered me-ism age. No, we're talking about when your brother has sinned against you. "If your brother sins against you."

Now what is the clear command?

Matthew 18:15 *"And if your brother sin against you, go..."* [Tell a trusted friend about it? No. Say nothing, and stew in your own foul self pitying spirit? No] *"Go, show him his fault between you and him alone: if he hear you."* [If you are able to get into his conscience and persuade him that he has indeed sinned against you, he owns that sin, seeks your forgiveness for that sin, and you confer forgiveness upon him, what has happened?] *"you have gained your brother"* –that sin that would have caused a breach, to some degree, causing you to lose your brother. That is, lose the open-faced, unimpeded, Spirit-suffused, relationship of love. You

have gained him back. And how they did happen? You did what Jesus told us to do. Convinced that your brother sinned against you, his own conscience either has not troubled him so that he has come to you. He has come to the altar, perhaps for several Lord's days and offered his gift, and his conscience has not smitten him concerning the thing that you believe was a real offense. He may not be willfully overlooking it or deliberately submerging it in silence. It may just be a blind spot. It has been real sin, but a blind spot. So you go and you helped him to see his sin. Because he's hungering and thirsting to be like Christ, and because he does not want to grieve the spirit, and because he has the disposition that we spoke about in the previous messages, he counts the smiting of a brother to be oil upon his head. He's grateful that you've come. You've shown him his offense and it's his joy to admit to his offense. His has a sense of grief and sorrow to say, *"My brother, my sister, the last thing I'd want to do is to offend and cause you grief, can you find it in your heart to forgive me."* You then, freely and joyfully, extend forgiveness, and the relationship is restored. This clear command is there.

Likewise in **Luke 17:3** *"Take heed to yourselves: if your brother sin, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him."*

**Luke 17:3** *"Take heed to yourselves: if your brother sin . . ."* Now again, it's real sin, not some phantom sin. I hope you remember that distinction, because it's crucial. It's real sin. *"If your brother sin"* or "sin against you," it's obvious that that's the implication because later on in verse four it says, *"if your brother sin against you, seven times in the day."* So it's assumed that the sin is not generic, it is specific, interpersonal sin. *If your brother sin, (that is, against you) rebuke him* [seek to bring his conscience to own the reality of his sin, feel the weight of the guilt of his sin, with a view to seeing him do what?] *"If he repent, forgive him."* If he expresses that he owns the sin, expresses grief and sorrow for the sin, seeks forgiveness, you are under a solemn responsibility to forgive him.

These two verses, if there were no others, make it abundantly clear that when someone sins against us, and the offenses is such that either we cannot, or should not, cover it with a blanket of love [1 Peter 4:8 *"...above all things being fervent in your love among yourselves; for love covers a multitude of sins;"* sins or moral offenses. There are some moral offenses that can be covered with a blanket of love, but some cannot, and ought not be covered, and where that is true, our responsibility is clear, if your brother sin against you, go, if your brother sin rebuke him, if he repent, forgive him.

Now granted, we must not go without a disposition of forgiveness filling our hearts as we saw last study. Granted, we must go prayerfully seeking to frame a gracious and a winsome way of telling a brother or

sister of his or her fault, or rebuking him for that sin, but brothers and sisters, go we must. Few commandments are more uncomplicated and clear in Holy Scripture than are these. *"If your brother sin against you go, tell him his fault between him and you alone."* If your brother sin rebuke him, if he repent, forgive him. I remind you of the words of Jesus,

**John 14:21** *"He that has My commandments, and keeps them, he it is that loves Me: and he that loves Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself unto him. 23 "Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love Me, he will keep My Word: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him. 24 He that loves Me not keeps not My Words: and the Word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's Who sent Me."* Or the words of John, in 1 John 2 *"Hereby do we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments, he that says I know Him and keeps not His commandments is a liar and the truth is not in him."* In the great commission Jesus said make disciples, baptizing them into the Name of the Triune God, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." It is not a nice suggestion. It is not an optional but desirable directive, it is King Jesus, saying, to you and to me, when we are the offended, the ones sinned against, if your brother sin against you, go, tell him his fault. If your brother sin, rebuke him.

If you don't do this, then the unresolved issue, will fester in the soul like an infection that will produce a kind of spiritual septicemia. When the infection gets in the bloodstream, and you become systemically sick, this is septicemia. The whole system is poisoned from the toxins going out from that infected area. If you go to the doctor and he discovers that you've got such an infection that's producing septicemia, he has to lance the infected area, and scrape out the bad stuff, irrigate it with anti-biotics, and then suture you up and send you home.

Without addressing that infection it could kill you, and what is true of the body with infections that produce physical septicemia, is true of the soul. When you are conscious that your brother or sister has sinned against you, and it is not an issue that you can or should cover with a blanket of love, and you are conscious that there is now, "an ought against" and you don't go, and you don't deal with it biblically, you've got an infection in your soul. And that infection will poison the whole inner life of the child of God. The going and the telling or the rebuking, is putting the scalpel to the infection. The owning of the sin, the seeking and the conferral of forgiveness, gospel forgiveness, is scrapping out the infection. The verbal affirmation of repentance and forgiveness and commitment to Christian love, that's the irrigating with the antibiotics, and the commitment to reestablish the fractured relationship, is the suturing of the wound. There is no other way to get rid of the

infection, of these interpersonal grievances, but to do what Jesus said, we are to do.

Remember when we covered that directive to those who are the offenders, that when conscience is awakened in some more intimate spiritual communion with God, if you come to bring your gift before the altar and there remember, in dealing with the God, conscience is awakened and the light of God's presence illuminates dark caverns of the soul, leave your gift before the altar, go, be reconciled to your brother, then come, and offer your gift. Why? It is only a healthy soul with the infection of interpersonal tensions created by sin, resolved by gospel dynamics, only such a soul can profit from the worship of the living God. So we must pray for **moral courage** and **spiritual grace** to obey that clear command.

We must ask the question, why is it so difficult to do this? Does anybody find it easy to go to another person and do this? Why is it so difficult, when what we should do, is so clear? Something are difficult because the way is not clear. In some things we say, if only God would give me light on what to do in this situation or that situation, I'd be able to do it, but were not sure what to do. So we have to cry to God that he would make His way plain before us, but this is plain.

If your brother sins against you, go, tell him his fault, between you and him alone. You don't need to know a word of Greek to know what that's saying. If your brother sin, rebuke him, if he repent, forgive him. Don't need to know a word of Greek to understand what that means. Why is it so difficult?

#### IT SO DIFFICULT FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS:

##### (i) THE HORRIBLE, UGLY REALITY OF INDWELLING SIN.

**Romans 7:21** "I [Paul] find then the law, that, to me who would do good, evil is present [with me]." My will, renewed by the Holy Spirit, is set upon doing the good. That's the testimony of every true child of God.

**Romans 7:22** "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:" but Paul says I find then, at the point of seeking to do good, when my renewed will, under the impulse of the Holy Spirit would move in the direction of the will of God as revealed in Scripture, when I would do good, evil is present. As John Owen so perceptively described it, "Never is indwelling sin **more active** then at the point when we would do the thing that is most good."

#### Illustration

How many of you, coming home from a busy day, mind exhausted, body exhausted and you say in spite of all that I didn't have time to read my Bible this morning, I'm going to read my Bible for 15 minutes before supper. You find all kinds of indisposition coming over you. Oh well it's a shame, it's a dishonoring to read the

Bible with a tired mind... But if you say to yourself, well I'm just going to look at the sports page or the TV or its equivalent, or page through a fashion advertisement magazine suddenly we are all alive and all alert. Even if we have a secular class we need to study for, or prepare for, we'll grab a cup of coffee and push ourselves. Why? **\*INDWELLING SIN IS NOT ACTIVATED** when you're going to read the sports page or flip through the advertisement magazine, or check out the TV or check emails... But when you're going to read the Word of God, that is going to bring spiritual dynamics to bear upon the withering and shrinking of the power of that sin, it cries out spare me, spare me.

Few things are more good in keeping a healthy soul, in keeping a healthy congregation, in keeping a healthy marriage, a healthy family, then dealing biblically with the issue of what do I do, when I am the offended. The word of God is clear. To do good means I go and I tell my brother. My brother may be my wife, my husband, my child, my pastor, a dear friend, it does not matter, if your brother, anyone within the household of God sins against you, go, tell him his fault. Why is it so hard?

**\*INDWELLING SIN BECOMES VICIOUSLY ACTIVE IN ANY ATTEMPT TO DO THAT WHICH IS GOOD FOR OUR SOULS.**

One man of God has described it this way, "As Christians we all have a **anti-God energy**, yet **remaining**, and **active** in our souls."

We have an anti-God energy, and that's indwelling sin. It is not latent, it is active, and powerful and **\*NEVER MORE ACTIVE THEN WHEN WE ARE CONCENTRATING UPON DOING SOME SPECIFIC GOOD.**

The second reason why it's so difficult and why we're so reluctant is because:

##### (ii) THERE IS A REAL DEVIL.

It's interesting because it's in this very context of dealing with interpersonal tensions, that the Apostle gives this warning in Ephesians 4, of neither give place to the devil. **Ephesians 4:25** "Wherefore, putting away falsehood, speak ye truth each one with his neighbor: for we are members one of another. **26** Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: **27** neither give place to the devil."

Here is an interpersonal tension that's creating anger and wrath. One of the ways to resolve it may be Matthew 18, Luke 17 and if we don't, what happens? We give place to the devil. The devil, the opposer, the one who delights when people have fractured relationships because that's the fruit of the intrusion of sin into the human race. There is a third reason why we are so reluctant to do it is because:

##### (iii) IT'S THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF OUR OWN SINS.

We are so often the offender that we say, whom am I to go to someone else and point the finger at them as the offender? And it's the sense of our own failures that

causes us to say, I can't go. If this brother or sister to whom I am going were to come to me every time I sinned, how can I go? It doesn't say if your brother sins against you (and you have been a sterling example of the most consistent Christian for six months then go.) It gives no qualifications. There are no parentheses. None whatsoever. If your brother sin, go.

Indwelling sin says, no. There is that anti-God energy in the soul. The devil would deceive us and bring us 1,000 specious reasons as to why we shouldn't go. The consciousness of our own sins hinders us, and the fourth reason why we are so reluctant to do it is because:

#### **(iv) IT'S THE FEAR OF BEING REBUFFED.**

Solomon said, **Proverbs 29:25** "The fear of man brings a snare; but whoso puts his trust in Jehovah shall be safe." So often when our feet would begin to move in obedience to Matthew 18 or Luke 17, the moment we start, the fear of man ties us up and we don't go. Nobody, unless they are sick psychologically likes to be rebuffed, and because we have not cultivated what we've addressed in the previous councils to the offenders, we've not made it plain that we are open and willing to be shown our sins. We don't make it easy for people to come, and we know, here's a brother, here's a sister that has not earned the reputation of being easy to be entreated and welcoming the pointing out of his sin. Nonetheless we still must go. If your brother sin against you, it doesn't say, parentheses, and he or she has the reputation of being very gracious in receiving those who point out his sin then go. It doesn't give the qualifications. You and I ought to be such people, but we aren't always that. It does not exempt us. If your brother sin, go. No qualifications, no parenthetical exceptions. The fear of man brings a snare and there's only one cure for the fear of man, and that's the fear of God.

Sometimes the offender is ignorant of their offense, and the best thing you can do is to go and tell them.

Some years ago a brother said, you're doing something that offends me. I said brother, please tell me. I don't have a clue of what I'm doing. The last thing I would do is knowingly offend you, and if I did offend you, the first thing I do is ask your forgiveness. He said, well you know when services are over and you go up and down the aisles and greet people, he said I'm offended when you interrupt my conversation with someone else. It gives me the impression that what you have to say is more important than what I'm saying. I said my brother, God is witness, my only motive in doing that is when people don't come through my door and greeted me, I'm a shepherd, I'm a pastor, and I want them to know that they are important to me. Important enough for me to make my way down the aisle, through the pews all around the place to let them know I'm delighted to see them. My only motive is to express my

love, but it was ill expressed as far as you're concerned, you found it offensive, I'll never do it again with you. I ask you to forgive me. You say that's ludicrous. No it isn't ludicrous. I was doing something that was an offense to him, and I was not aware of it. He was my friend by helping me to see it was offensive. [maybe he should have helped the guy see he shouldn't have taken offense PDF]

Some of you sitting here have come to me after I've preached, and said pastor, something you said in this sermon, I found very offensive. I don't think there is a one of you that would say, that you found me bristle and say, who in the world are you little peon. I'm the preacher, I've been preaching for 50 some years. No. I said, help me, where did I offend. In either I've tried to help you see that perhaps you shouldn't have taken offense, or more cases than not, I've said thank you, by the grace of God I won't do that again. There are many witnesses in this place, that before a service was over my conscience has smitten me that I've said something that probably, was unnecessarily offensive in the sermon, and before you were dismissed, I owned my sin and asked your forgiveness, but often, we don't know, and if we go, we're helping a brother or a sister that wants with all their heart to walk in holiness and integrity before God and before man. So dear brothers and sisters, I urge you, let us plead with God, that we may be given moral courage, that's what we need, and spiritual grace. What is moral courage? The courage to do what is right, no matter what we feel. This is what ought to be done. It is right that it should be done, and consequences be what they may, in dependence upon God's help and Spirit, I'm going to do it, and look upon every such situation in faith, that it will be a theater, to display the gospel at work. That's what happens when we go to one another as offender and offended, offended and offender, and we own our sin, and we ask forgiveness, and we extend forgiveness, what are we doing? We are giving a demonstration of the gospel. The gospel of sin and grace and forgiveness, and we are seeing the gospel percolate through our human relationships. That's what the church is all about [or at least should be all about]. It's not a company of perfect people. It's a company of people radically changed, but not perfectly changed. Who, as they await the full consummation of grace in the coming of the Lord Jesus, the gospel is what makes them tick, and makes them relate, and keeps them bound together in spite of the fact, that they are all still offenders, and offended because this gospel is for offenders and an offended God.

That keeps me from disillusionment and despair, and when you've got a tacky situation and you say, "O my, I am too old to get into these bees nests and hornets nests of tangled relationships, and I say no, Lord only the gospel can sort that mess out, then to see the gospel do it, it just makes you all the more confident in the

gospel. Then that encourages you to do it for a little while longer before you go to heaven. Seeing the gospel, working, in these things that cause people in the world to spend years with unresolved grudges.

I've read horror stories in some of the books I've read in preparation for this series, for instance, one husband and wife went 40 years not talking to one another and it all started over a bar of soap. You say that's a ludicrous. Some of you have things right now, that if you don't start dealing with them, they can grow into that kind of a ludicrous situation.

Consider the final word of practical counsel to us when we are the offended. In addition to that first word of counsel:

**(i) THAT WE TOLERATE NOTHING LESS IN OUR HEARTS THAN THE DISPOSITION OF FORGIVENESS:** council number two is:

**(ii) WHEN WE ARE THE OFFENDED, WE MUST PRAY FOR THE MORAL COURAGE, AND SPIRITUAL GRACE TO OBEY THE CLEAR COMMANDS OF MATTHEW 18:15 AND LUKE 17:3.** The third and final word of counsel is:

**(iii) PRAY FOR THE MORAL INTEGRITY, AND SPIRITUAL GRACE, TO KEEP THE FOURFOLD PROMISE AND COMMITMENT, OF BIBLICAL, FORGIVENESS.**

In a situation where you're the offended, you've been sinned against, you have gone to the one who has sinned against you, with a heart bursting with a disposition of forgiveness, prayerfully seeking God's wisdom to point out his or her sin in a gracious, loving, tactful, accurate, biblical way. You've gained the consent of their conscience that they indeed sinned against you. They sense that you've come, not to beat them because they sinned, but you went to win them, your whole spirit in dealing with them says, I want to win you, I want to win you my brother or my sister, and so they say to you, "I see my sin. Even now as I speak to you my heart is lifted up to God for his forgiveness, can you find it in your heart to forgive me, and you say to him or her, I am a forgiven sinner, and for Christ sake and because of His grace to me, I cheerfully, freely, unreservedly, forgive you for this, for that, and for the other, for which you sought forgiveness.

When you say those words, "I forgive you." What are you doing? Are you saying, I'm just going to forget the issue until it comes up again? Or I'm willing to just let bygones be bygones. What are you doing when you say biblically, I forgive you. As we saw in a previous study, when you freely, graciously, unreservedly extend forgiveness, that is you do what **Ephesians 4:32** says to do, "forgiving one another, even as, God in Christ forgave you..." you are making a promise, and a commitment. that has four prongs to it.

**a) YOU ARE MAKING A COMMITMENT AND PROMISE, I WILL NOT DELIBERATELY BRING THE FORGIVEN OFFENSE TO MIND, OR WILLFULLY ALLOW IT TO REMAIN IN MY THOUGHTS, SHOULD IT COME TO MIND AGAINST MY WILL.**

That's the commitment and promise you are making when you say I forgive you. When God forgives, what does He do? He wills not to remember our sin. Their sins and iniquities, will, I remember, no more. I have a blotted out as a thick cloud your sins. I have cast them behind My back. I have buried them in the depths of the sea. Forgiveness is a promise and a commitment on our part, not to deliberately bring the forgiven offense to mind, or willfully to allow it to remain in our thoughts, should it come to mind.

When we dealt with this originally, the illustration was that when it comes to mind in spite of ourselves by the law of association, certain things will happen, and we remember the thing that was the offense for which the person has sought forgiveness, for which we've extended forgiveness. We have a delete key in the soul, and we've got to push it. If we've got to push it 100 times a day we must push it, but we've also got a part in the computer of the soul, where we refuse to type in the keyword, and do a search for it. You can sit down and say I want to remember that offense of my wife against me, you can do a search for it, bring it to remembrance, relive it... No. Forgiveness says, I will never do a word search. I will never do a search for it. It's done. It's buried. It's out of sight. The internal computer, for that issue has crashed, never, never to get back online. And should, against my will, it be brought to my mind, I push the delete key. That is forgiveness. The word of counsel to us, when we are the offended and someone has sought our forgiveness, we must have the moral integrity, and spiritual grace to keep that commitment and promise, that we will not deliberately bring the forgiven offense to mind, or willfully allow it to remain in our thoughts. The second aspect of forgiveness is:

**b) I WILL NOT RAISE THE FORGIVEN OFFENSE WITH THE OFFENDER, EVER, \*\* UNLESS THE MUTUAL COMMITMENT TO EDIFICATION DEMANDS IT.**

**\*\* Added to the four prong promise of what is meant when we say I forgive you.**

In other words, if I have determined by the grace of God to forgive as I am forgiven, God never drags my sins up in front of me, to zap me with them again. He may remind me of my sins, to help me in my progress in grace. God says to the prophet Ezekiel, you shall remember your sins and be ashamed and never open your mouth when I have forgiven you of all your iniquities.

**Ezekiel 16:62** "And I will establish My covenant with you; and you shall know that I am Jehovah; 63 that you

may remember, and be confounded, and never open your mouth any more, because of your shame, when I have forgiven you all that you have done, says the Lord Jehovah."

There is a remembrance that is productive of sanctification. It may be that there is an offense that I've committed against my wife, and she has extended forgiveness, but it's in the interest of my sanctification to talk with her about that offense that I may learn how better to avoid it in the future. That's entirely different from my wife saying, "There you go again, that's what you did last week." Forgiveness doesn't do that. There is no, you're doing it again. "You always ..." fill in the blanks. Some of you live, with a "you always" husband or wife. That's a wretched existence. What you're doing is, you're saying, I've not truly forgiven. When the issue is forgiven, I am making a commitment and a promise not to raise the forgiven offense with the offender. Thirdly:

#### **c) I WILL NOT RAISE THE FORGIVEN OFFENSE WITH OTHERS.**

It's dealt with, and it is nobody else's business unless others were aware of it, and to testify of the grace of God that it has come to gospel resolution, but I never raise it, with a negative desire in my mind, or in my heart. And fourthly:

#### **d) I WILL NOT ALLOW THE FORGIVEN OFFENSE TO REMAIN AS A BARRIER TO A RESTORED RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ONE I HAVE FORGIVEN.**

The reason I went and told my brother his sin, is that I might gain him, that the new barrier removed relationship might be restored. Broken trust may take a long time to be restored, but face-to-face communion, in the context of forgiveness sought and extended, puts us in the context, of restored human relationships. Therefore when we look at that person we do not see the forgiven offense there, as a veil through which we must look, no. **We will**, not to remember it. Is dealt with. It is put behind us.

Since you and I will be not only the offenders, but the offended until we go to heaven, pray, for the moral integrity and spiritual grace, to keep that fourfold promise and commitment, of biblical forgiveness.

**WHAT IS MORAL INTEGRITY?** That's the uprightness expressed in determination to do what is right no matter how I feel. There may be times when everything you are experiencing, in your "feelings" the aftershock of the fracture of the relationship caused by the sin of another. And though they've owned this sin, and sought forgiveness, those aftershocks will reverberate in the soul, and it's in times like that, that if you're at the mercy of your feelings, you're going to go back on the commitments and promises of forgiveness. Inevitably. It's in those times when you've got to know what is to take your feelings, and smash your heel into them. My

soul feels the aftershock of the betrayal, of the disappointment, of the horrific sin committed against me, what do I do? I have made a promise and commitment to forgive. I will not be whipped around by my feelings. (2) God give me grace, and moral strength and integrity, to maintain the posture, of a forgiving sinner, to my forgiven, fellow sinner. It's in times like these the promises such as these found in Hebrews 4:16 become especially precious.

**Hebrews 4:12** "For the Word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart. **13** And there is no creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and laid open before the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do. **14** Having then a great High Priest, Who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. **15** For we have not a High Priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but One that has been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. **16** Let us therefore draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may receive [obtain] **mercy**, and may find **grace** to help us in time of need."

Have you, child of God, at least begun to learn the luxury, of dealing with God in such a way, that you're really comfortable with the fact that He knows all about you? I fear there are many Christians who've never gotten comfortable with the fact that, "God you know everything about me. You set Your love upon me in Christ, before the foundation of the world. You sent Your Son to die for me. You raised Him from the dead. You sent Your Holy Spirit, who in time, opened my eyes, drew me to Christ, gave me a new heart, enabled me to repent and believe the gospel, united me to Your Son, You've given me a new life in Him, and Lord You did all that knowing me through and through." And you get comfortable with the fact that God knows all that crazy rotten stuff that goes on in our hearts, and you just tell God. You say Lord, right now, I feel like retracting every single promise and commitment of forgiveness. I feel like being nasty. I feel like bring back that sin to that spouse, that son, that daughter... Lord you know me Lord, you know I feel as mean as the devil right now, but I've got no luxury to follow my feelings. Lord Jesus, give me of Your Spirit. Lord Jesus, give me timely help. I need help Lord. I'm committed, to stand by the commitment of forgiveness, but Lord I've got no strength. Grant me that strength. And you know what happens? You come to the throne of grace and you obtain, you just don't go there to get something dumped out in the ears of God, that we may obtain, get something. And what do we get? We get grace to help in time of need. **BEGIN TO LIVE THAT WAY**. You say, well I can't tell that to God that will offend Him. Don't you think He knows that already? He knows that plus a

lot more you don't know, for He has searched us and known us. He knows our thoughts from afar. Before they register in your head He knows them, and He knows them deeper, plus all of the various windings of them and what produced them and why we do them. He knows all of that. Learn the luxury of living comfortably before the eye of an all-knowing, all loving God who deals with you through a Mediator, even the Lord Jesus, Who is at His right hand, the High Priest touched with the feelings of our infirmities.

As you read the Gospels you see how honest Jesus was when dealings with the Father. Father, now is My soul troubled. What shall I say Father? Save Me from this hour? There is something in Me that wants to say, save Me, but no, to this end was I brought forth. Father, glorify Your Name. You see the honesty of our blessed Lord. Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me, nevertheless, not My will but yours be done. He prays again, O Father, if the cup cannot pass except I drink it, Your will be done. He's comfortable with transparency with His Holy Father. He calls upon us to know something of that. That's a purchased blessing for us, as the people of God. As we do, He will give us, not only the moral courage to obey, Matthew 18 and Luke 17, but He will give us the moral integrity and grace to keep that fourfold promise of forgiveness in all of our relationships to one another.

## **WHAT TWO THINGS SHOULD COME OUT OF THESE CONCLUDING COUNCILS?**

### **(i) AS WE REFLECT UPON THESE COUNCILS AND PRAY THEM IN, THE BEST WAY TO REMEMBER THAT IS TO PRACTICE THEM.**

There is nothing like practice to rivet the truth to the soul, to the understanding. In a previous study the challenge to husband wives was to go home and ask one another, am I, as the offender, am I evidently, passionately, longing to be like Christ enough that I am easy to approach about my sins, or am I prickly, defensive, self-justifying. I don't know how many of you did that. I did. Did you? If we begin to take these things seriously, practicing them, **they become part of a way of life**, and then it's not such a big deal to say the words, which for right now stick in your throat. I have sinned, will you forgive me? You've said the I'm sorry thing for so long, you feel awkward even saying the words I sinned. You've just been telling people for years how you feel, rather than saying how you judge yourself, and how you need the forgiveness of another, but you do it a dozen times, and lo and behold, because the thing is then resolved, you say this is wonderful.

I was snotty to my wife, and I went to her and said, honey I was snotty and that's sin, can you forgive my snottiness? You've knocked the ball right at her feet, in her court, and you're standing there waiting for her to hit it back over the net, and she may not be used to doing that because all you've done is coming in and

mumble, I'm sorry, I wasn't very nice. And she walks away saying that's interesting, it wasn't very nice, I know that, you don't need to tell me that. I hope you don't feel good about it, but when you say dear, I was snotty, that was sin, will you forgive me, she must now take the ball and say, yes, I do forgive you and then you have every right to say, now sweetheart, are you telling me you are making a fourfold commitment? You are willing, not remember this again, so that I'm not going to hear the next time I'm snotty, you're always snotty. Is that what you're doing dear? By God's grace, yes. Secondly dear, are you telling me that you're never going to raise this issue with me again? I'll try. And are you telling me that you're not going to speak about this when you get together with the ladies and you grouse about your snotty husband? Yes, God helping me I will. And dear, are you going to let our relationship be restored right now, and not go through a half a day of pouting and laying a guild trip on me to do some kind of emotional penance? Are you ready to wrap me up in a real hug, and plan a big one on me? Well? Come on dear, and she plants a big one on you.

So we've used a little humor but I think you see the strand of truth and seriousness behind that humor. Is that the way you're going to deal with each other? You can walk away and say hallelujah, the Gospels done something to two sinners living under the same roof. Look what the gospel did. Sin raised a barrier, the gospel has smashed it and wiped it away, and restored relationships because of Christ and His Gospel. I hope this becomes a way of life and your families.

Do you see the profound impact this can make on your marriage? Start dealing with your sinful tendencies and seek by God's grace to follow His patten in marriage, and you can have the closest thing to heaven on earth there is. Isn't that what you live for? To see God's truth take root in the hearts of God's people. We can talk about this negative aspect of the church and these Christians over here and these Christians over there, but we don't have to let each other down and be the source of disillusionment in our own homes. We can make this work by God's grace right in our homes. This can't be just some kind of interesting stuff, but it must be the stuff of our homes, our marriages, our relationship to one another. If you follow His Word in this area and seek by His grace to be obedient, you will have the greatest spirit of multi-leveled sustained love and unity with one another. If this is the way we deal with one another, according to these directives of the Word of God, that relationship will only deepen, and in a world where everybody has a grudge against one another and ill will against another, when people step amongst us, and sense the clean air of human relationships, sanctified by the gospel, by this, shall all men know, that you are My disciples, that you have love one for another. A love that turns the engines of the biblical directives to the offender and the offended,

and people stay around us long enough and they know we were sinners, but we don't allow the sin to fracture all the relationships like it does at the office or the neighborhood or with relatives. The difference with these people is the gospel. Then there's no doubt about what the gospel can do.

What is the second thing that should come out of these concluding councils?

**(ii) AFTER CONSIDERING THE SUBJECT OF FORGIVENESS FOR 14 MESSAGES WILL MAKE YOU LONG FOR HEAVEN.**

There are some things we're going to take to heaven with us. We've praised Him, and that's going to go on in a much better way when he get to heaven. We've worshiped Him. We've delighted in one another, but there will be no more owning of sin and extending forgiveness, when we get to heaven. Human relationships augmented to the most unimaginable, intimate, level. It will be glorious, and in that most augmented unimaginable level of interpersonal intimacy, never once will there be an against. Never once, forever and forever and forever, and we can talk till our heart's content, and never have our conscience smite us that we've spoken a hurtful or and offensive word.

We can look at one another, and never read into our looks anything negative. Think of the friendships. Never once feeling even a twinge of offense. It should make us long for heaven.

Is this the heaven you want? Where sin is forever dealt with, forever purged from every facet, every cell of your being, physically, spiritually, emotionally, mind, body, soul. If your heart doesn't leap within you saying, oh God that is the heaven I want, you're a lost man or woman, and you'll have nothing but the outer darkness and the weeping and wailing and the gnashing of teeth. Hatred between one sinner and another raised to its apex of intensity, to go on forever, and forever. It'll be just the opposite of the glorious restoration of human relationships by grace in heaven, there'll be the total absence of every a last vestige of even any common grace and kindness that makes human relationships in a sinful world tolerable, and you'll be given over and shut up to all the horrific expressions of hatred, and ill will, and jealousy and venison bitterness. God help you if that's what you want. What madness would make you want that? If you can say whatever else I want, I don't want that, then give yourself no rest until you know this Christ of Whom we've spoken. In whom there is forgiveness, in Whom there is a renewal of the nature, a changing of all that disposition that drives you to selfishness and bitterness and suspicion and ill will. Go to Christ. He welcomes sinners. Go to Him as you are. Let not conscience make you linger, nor of fitness fondly dream, all the fitness He requires, is to feel your need of Him. Go to Him and ask Him to forgive you and

cleanse you and wash you and grant you the graces of faith and repentance.

**(2) random**

The progression in Romans one is that the more people deny God the more he denies them. The more he denies them the more they continue in a downward slide and move away from him and his good holy and just 10 Commandments. The more they move away from his good holy and just 10 Commandments the more depravity, the more destruction of male-female as image bearers of God, the more Satanic inroads make into society, the more the ravages of sin propel a society in just the opposite of obeying his good holy righteous and spiritual 10 Commandments become. He says honor father and mother and you have father – male, and mother – female, altered to man man, or female female. Instead of having children raised in a home where there is a good lack of tension, coldness, distance and ill will because the Gospel has made inroads and because there is forgiveness and repenting of sin according to a standard – the 10 Commandments – and love doesn't get snuffed out but flourishes, and children can grow in that environment and become, as much as possible, healthy productive individuals who have the capacity to love and by that I mean biblical love, Romans 13 love, the stuff that makes for great family life and relationships and then spills over to influence the workplace or society, even if a society inadvertently followed some of the basic premises of the 10 Commandments and sticks to that as a guideline as normative, you'd have a relatively productive society. You would minimize sins ravages.

Instead of the sanctity of private property, people working and producing, people producing according to their abilities and gifts, you have just the opposite which always leads to an atheistic bent that wants to crush out God, the 10 Commandments, with all of its light, and freedom, and prosperity, and goodness.

Life becomes less sacred and so people are treated with no inherent dignity.

Self-righteousness, mistreatment, or a seeming prosperity works for a while and your promised cradle-to-grave care, free college education, free healthcare, go to your job, give us your money, we'll take care of you, and you almost want to believe that if there wasn't Satan, if there wasn't evil, if it wasn't God, if that philosophy didn't militate against God and His 10 Commandments, you could almost believe it would work, but that philosophy is driven by an evolutionary-based, system of thought, modern psychology which has made inroads into every area of life, politics, education, the home, even sad to say, the church, and it's a lie and it's a trap because they package tyranny as freedom and people don't have the sense to realize that



is just the opposite of what God lays out for a free, moral, responsible society. It seems easier not to follow God's rules and gravitate towards the path of less resistance, but the price to pay if you sow the wind, is that you reap the whirlwind. Satan is a master deceiver and his anti-10 Commandments always lead to an atheistic state which will crush the true guardians of liberty and justice, which are the Bible believing Christians. Equipped with His commandments and the gospel our homes should be the places of most loving order, freedom, a minimizing of mistreatment and a way to rectify mistreatment, a place of warmth, closeness, a great lack of tension, coldness, distance and ill will, first Corinthians 13 love.

Take your choice. You want God's laws and God's orders and all the ramifications of that, or do you want the world's laws and the world's orders or Satan's lies packaged as freedom. We must have virtue taught in the home, in the schools, in the church, and in society. The only manual for a virtuous home, church and society is the Bible. Without it we have no light. Without it with the will we have? What will we have that will take what we think is a good idea and direct our thoughts to say no, that seems like a good plan, but it will only lead to destruction. What we have to do, when someone comes with a seeming good idea, is that we say no, that violates the sanctity of one of God's 10 Commandments. That will not lead to life and liberty, that will only lead to deception, destruction, and death. If you don't follow God's way of dealing with sin in your life, and you continue to go down the road of self absorption and living in an altered state of reality, that progression will lead to the worst possible state. Ultimately it leads to hell. To be married to a person in that state is like a living hell. Nothing resolved, nothing settled, no growth, no change, according to His light and His goal, only living in your own little dream world that no one or nothing can penetrate. If we don't submit to God, how can the state of our being encased in our own stupidity and self-deception ever be resolved? Without husbands knowing the Word and living the Word, how can there be order in the family? Without wives knowing the Word, and living the Word and submitting to the Word via their husbands rule, how can they ever move from an altered state of reality and self absorption to the truth when that they should be? Motherhood and homemaking is God's tool to give society people who will rule in the ways that mirrors a loving family. Motherhood and homemaking in the context of a husband who is, and who is doing what he should be doing, give society people who raised in that context, are able to safeguard from enemies, and raise a society of people who can basically, govern themselves. Govern themselves because they have the light of the 10 Commandments and God's rule and a good example from the home and loving support which negates or minimizes violations or criminal activity of God's 10 Commandments. Stealing, murder, sexual sins like

rape, covetousness, which propels the latter, is held to a minimum. Those people who refuse to follow this rule and threatened a free self-governing society are then held to a minimum in places where they can't damage other people.

Where this isn't done, you have these damaged people running the governments and education which leads towards socialism, and then you have the slide to atheistic communism which has Satan as its head with his dream of eclipsing the church and everything that is good and true and loving and light and spiritual and holy and just. Take your pick. Husbands love your wives. Wives submit to your husbands. Older women teach the younger women to love their husbands and their children. Love throws a blanket over sin. Love, lovingly, goes to the husband or wife and points out sin to redirect that life according to a set rule and order set out by God, which rather than encasing the person in self absorption and an altered state of reality, \*frees the person from that state to be gloriously, what they should be.

It doesn't say wives be discontent with what you have. It doesn't say wives disrespect your husband. It doesn't say husbands live for yourselves, do what you want. God's order or not. Which do you think is harder in the end?

The present administration offers a fair system for everyone. But when you look at their policies, they redistribute wealth – violation of you shall not steal, they won't even ban partial abortion – sanctity of life, and so their whole system is bondage packaged as freedom that leads to death.]

It is not always the things that seem to meet immediate need that are meeting the most need

- I. You shall have no other gods before Me.
- II. You shall not make idols.
- III. You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain.
- IV. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.
- V. Honor your father and your mother.
- VI. You shall not murder.
- VII. You shall not commit adultery.
- VIII. You shall not steal.
- IX. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
- X. You shall not covet.