

Total Forgiveness

Introduction

Christianity is unique in the religions of the world because of these three truths:

1. Its founder is alive and well.

- a) All other leaders are dead.
- b) Only Jesus Christ is still alive.

Revelation 1:18 [NIV] *“I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.”*

2. All good that takes place is initiated by God.

- a) The truth or falsehood in religion is determined by who initiates what you do.
- b) With Christianity alone God takes the initiative.

John 6:44 [NIV] *“No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day.”*

James 1:18 [NIV] *“He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.”*

3. Total forgiveness is given to us by sheer grace

Ephesians 2:8-9 [NIV] *“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-- and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God, not by works, so that no one can boast.”*

- a) Other religions offer forgiveness, but on the basis of good works.
- b) Christianity alone offers forgiveness by the death of God’s Son.

Romans 5:8-9 [NIV] *“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through him!”*

This subject of total forgiveness is to be understood in two ways:

1. Objectively: our forgiveness in Christ.

- a) What are the benefits of Christ’s death, with particular reference to forgiveness of sins?
- b) To what extent are we forgiven of all our sins?

2. Subjectively: our forgiving others.

- a) What is the fruit of our being forgiven, with particular reference to forgiving others?
- b) To what extent must we forgive others?

What then is total forgiveness?

1. The Lord has totally forgiven us of all our sins.

- a) Total forgiveness: as though we had never sinned.
- b) This forgiveness is given to us on the basis of Christ’s death on the cross.

2. We must forgive others of all they have done to us.

- a) Total forgiveness: as though they had done nothing wrong.
- b) Our forgiving others is on the basis of God’s goodness to us.

Why is this study important?

1. It reminds us of God's goodness to us.
Psalm 103:10-14 [NIV] *"...he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him; for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust."*
2. It reminds us of what God has done through his Son.
3. It reminds us of the benefits of being justified by faith.
4. It reminds us of our responsibility to others in the light of God's forgiveness.
5. The art of forgiving others can provide the greatest spiritual break-through you have ever known.

The Objective Side:

God Has Totally Forgiven Us In Christ

The benefits of Christ's death can be summed up like this:

1. Forgiveness of sins.

Colossians 1:14 [NIV] *"...in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."*

- a) This is the immediate consequence of justification by faith.
 - 1) Justification: being made righteous.
 - 2) It is 'forensic', legal, that is the way God sees us in Christ, **not** the way we may feel.

- b) This is ours by faith alone (not works).

Ephesians 2:8-9 [NIV] *"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith, and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God, not by works, so that no one can boast."*

- 1) It is available to all.

Romans 3:22; 5:15 [NIV] *"This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference," ... "But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many!"*

- 2) It is applied however by faith.

Romans 3:26 [NIV] *"...he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus."*

2. Imputed righteousness.

Romans 4:3 [NIV] *"What does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."*

- a) Imputed: put to the credit of.

- b) All that Jesus was and did for us is transferred to us:

- 1) His sinless life is put to our credit as though we were without sin.

Romans 4:8 [NIV] *"Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him."*

- 2) His blood assures us that the Father does not hold our sin against us but sees us 'in Christ'.

Ephesians 1:7 [NIV] *"In him [Jesus Christ] we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace"*

3. Eternal life.

John 3:16 [NIV] *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."*

- a) 'Eternal life' is used more than one way in the Bible.
 - 1) It is the very life of Jesus Christ himself.
1 John 1:1-2 [NIV] *"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched, this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us."*
 - 2) It is knowing the Father.
John 17:3 [NIV] *"Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent."*
 - 3) It is endless duration in God's Kingdom.
Mark 10:29-30 [NIV] *"I tell you the truth," Jesus replied, "no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age (homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields, and with them, persecutions) and in the age to come, eternal life."*
- b) But the main way eternal life is understood in the present study is summed up: we will be in The Kingdom of God, not hell, after we die.

To what extent are our sins forgiven?

1. Sins of the past.

- a) Sins committed before we were converted.
Romans 3:25 [NIV] *"God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished"*
Hebrews 8:12 [NIV] *"For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."*
- b) All of them are washed away.
Revelation 1:5 [NIV] *"...and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood,"*

2. Present sin.

- 1 John 1:7-9** [NIV] *"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."*
- a) The blood continues to cleanse our sins; but on the condition:
 - 1) That we walk in the light.
 - 2) That we confess them.
- b) What is forfeited if we don't walk in the light?
 - 1) Fellowship with the Father.
 - 2) Our future reward in the Kingdom of God, our superstructure, our character development is of gold, silver, precious stones, or wood, hay and straw.
1 Corinthians 3:12-15 [NIV] *"If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames."*

3. Future sins.

- Romans 8:33-39** [NIV] *"Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died, more than that, who was raised to life, is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered*

as sheep to be slaughtered.” No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

a) Because we are ‘in Christ’ by faith our position is as secure as His.

1) Jesus Christ cannot lose His place in the Godhead.

2) So we cannot lose our place in Him.

John 10:28 [NIV] *“I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand.”*

b) God loves us as much as He loves Jesus.

John 17:23 [NIV] *“I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.”*

What about chastening or being disciplined?

1. Chastening/disciplining: enforced learning.

a) **Internal chastening:** the warning of the Holy Spirit.

b) **External chastening:** when God steps in from without.

c) **Terminal chastening:** when no further repentance is granted.

Hebrews 6:4-6 [NIV] *“It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age, if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance, because to their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace.”*

It could mean a premature death.

1 Corinthians 11:30 [NIV] *“That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep.”*

2. Question: If God totally forgives us why does he chasten us?

Answer: Because he loves us.

Hebrews 12:6 [NIV] *“...because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son.”*

a) Chastening is **not** God ‘getting even’.

Psalms 103:10 [NIV] *“...he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities.”*

b) Chastening is God treating us as sons.

Hebrews 12:7-8 [NIV] *“Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons.”*

1) A parent disciplines his child *because* he loves the child, not because he is holding a grudge.

2) Disciplining is given to improve us.

Hebrews 12:10-11 [NIV] *“Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.”*

3. Chastening is given to us not because we haven’t been forgiven but because we have been forgiven.

a) It is the proof of forgiveness, the proof of sonship.

b) Not to be chastened is an ominous sign that we **haven’t** been forgiven! Most likely because we have not confessed the sin or we have not yielded to our Creator in that part of our life, we resist His intervention.

The Subjective Side:

Our Forgiving Others

There is yet another benefit that comes by Jesus' death on the cross, we are given the Holy Spirit.

Romans 8:9 [NIV] *“You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.”*

1. The Holy Spirit is a person who, as it were, took the place of Jesus in the lives of the disciples.

John 14:16 [NIV] *“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you forever...”*

2. The Holy Spirit is a person who is also very sensitive.

Ephesians 4:30 [NIV] *“And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.*

a) He can be grieved, or quenched.

1 Thessalonians 5:19 [NIV] *“Do not put out the Spirit's fire;”*

b) The result of grieving the Spirit is a diminishing of fellowship with God.

1 John 1:7 [NIV] *“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.”*

1) The grieving of the Spirit does **not** forfeit eternal salvation.

2) The grieving of the Spirit forfeits clear thinking, presence of mind.

3. The chief way we grieve the Holy Spirit is by bitterness and an unforgiving spirit.

Ephesians 4:31-32 [NIV] *“Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.”*

a) Bitterness always seems justified at the time we feel and show it.

b) For this reason we seldom are conscious of grieving the Holy Spirit when we do it; we realise it later, to our regret.

What should flow mostly from our being forgiven of all our sins is gratitude

Romans 6:22 [NIV] *“But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life.”*

1. Sanctification can be called ‘the doctrine of gratitude’.

a) We live lives of holiness not in order to ensure a place in The Kingdom of God; we've already got that by grace through faith.

Ephesians 2:8-9 [NIV] *“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith, and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God, not by works, so that no one can boast.”*

b) We live holy lives out of gratitude: *‘Thank you, Lord, for saving my soul.’*

2. One of the greatest proofs of gratitude is that we forgive others as we have been forgiven.

a) When I know of how much God has forgiven me I can well afford to forgive you!

b) But when I don't forgive you I have shown my ingratitude to God for forgiving me.

1) Not to forgive is a sign of self-righteousness.

2) Not to forgive is to imply I am better than you; I would never do what you have done.

c) And yet when I carefully examine what I have been forgiven of I will see that I have no right whatever to condemn another.

Matthew 7:1-2 [NIV] *“Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”*

3. God hates ingratitude.

Romans 1:21 [NIV] *“For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.”*

- a) When we are conscious that all our sins are forgiven, we will be thankful.
- b) This forgiveness leaves us without excuse when we don't forgive others.

Moreover our forgiving others is a command.

Ephesians 4:32 [NIV] *“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.”*

1. It is put in the Lord's Prayer.

Matthew 6:12 [NIV] *“Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.”*

- a) When we pray it we claim to have forgiven others!
- b) Could it be that the Lord's Prayer has made liars out of us?

2. It is put as a summary of the Lord's Prayer, as if being the main reason the prayer itself was given:

Matthew 6:14-15 [NIV] *“For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins”.*

3. Forgiving others is the central theme in the Parable of the Unmerciful Servant.

Matthew 18:21-35 [NIV] *“Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?” Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times. “Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt. “The servant fell on his knees before him. ‘Be patient with me,’ he begged, ‘and I will pay back everything.’ The servant's master took pity on him, cancelled the debt and let him go. “But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii. He grabbed him and began to choke him. ‘Pay back what you owe me!’ he demanded. “His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.’ “But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. When the other servants saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed and went and told their master everything that had happened. “Then the master called the servant in. ‘You wicked servant,’ he said, ‘I cancelled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?’ In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. “This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart.”*

4. It is possibly what lies behind praying in faith.

Mark 11:24-25 [NIV] *“Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.”*

The Proof Of Total Forgiveness:

Keeping No Record Of Wrongs

1 Corinthians 13:5 [NIV] *“It [love] is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.”*

The story of the life of Joseph is a good example of total forgiveness being expressed.

Just to remind you of the story of Joseph.

Because of jealousy Joseph was sold by his brothers to the Ishmaelites who took him to Egypt and sold him to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's officials. Joseph served his master faithfully and because of resisting the sexual advances of his master's wife, her resentment at his rejection of her caused Joseph to end up in prison.

In prison Joseph found favour in the eyes of the warder and helped fellow prisoners but was in the end betrayed by them also.

Joseph had every reason to feel bitter for what had happened to him.

Eventually God gave him favour in the eyes of the Pharaoh and he rose to be second in command in Egypt.

While in prison a change of attitude and character took place in Joseph's life. The vain boasting youth turned into a caring mature man who was free of any pride or bitterness.

The way that Joseph responded to his brothers is a very good example of forgiveness for us all to emulate.

Events had caused Joseph's brothers to travel to Egypt for grain to prevent their families from starving in a time of famine.

Joseph was unrecognisable to his brothers when they came before him asking to buy grain. He was dressed like an Egyptian and spoke their language, not his native tongue.

Joseph used his God-given position to humble his brothers but then showed great mercy and forgiveness.

Others are kept from the knowledge of our sins

Genesis 45:1 [NIV] *"Then Joseph could no longer control himself before all his attendants, and he cried out, "Have everyone leave my presence!" So there was no one with Joseph when he made himself known to his brothers."*

1. When God forgives us we are assured that our sins will never be held against us.

Hebrews 8:12 [NIV] *"For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."*

- a) Nobody will ever know what it is we have been forgiven of.
- b) God washes our sins away so that at the Judgement Seat of Christ there is no record of our sins.

2. We are commanded to forgive others as God has forgiven us!

Ephesians 4:32 [NIV] *"Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."*

- a) This means we will shield others from knowing what a person has done to us.
 - 1) We protect the identity of that person who has hurt us, just as Joseph kept all in Egypt from knowing what his brothers did to him.
 - 2) We refuse to let anybody know who hurt us, or what it was they did.
- b) The proof we **haven't** forgiven: we tell what we know about the person who hurt us.

Others are relieved of any fear due to their sins

Genesis 45:3-4 [NIV] *"Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph! Is my father still living?" But his brothers were not able to answer him, because they were terrified at his presence. Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Come close to me." When they had done so, he said, "I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt!"*

1. When God forgives us he wants us to know his love not his wrath.

Romans 5:1 [NIV] *“Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ...”*

God doesn't want us to be afraid and so He puts us at ease.

1 John 1:9 [NIV] *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”*

2. When we totally forgive others we will not let them fear us.

a) We will put them at ease.

b) The proof we **haven't** forgiven: we want them to worry over what they have done, and fear that we might expose them.

We are encouraged to forgive ourselves as opposed to being forever sorry for what we have done

Genesis 45:5 [NIV] *“And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you.”*

1. When God forgives he forgets.

Jeremiah 31:31-34 [NIV] *“The time is coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them,” declares the LORD. “This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time,” declares the LORD. “I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbour, or a man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,” declares the LORD. “For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.”*

a) It doesn't mean He doesn't know our past, of course He knows.

b) But it is forgotten in the sense of having been dealt with.

We are enabled to save face

Genesis 45:8 [NIV] *“So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God. He made me father to Pharaoh, lord of his entire household and ruler of all Egypt.”*

1. When God forgives He gives us a future and says, ‘As for the past leave it to me’

Romans 8:28 [NIV] *“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”*

a) He causes the past, however bad, to work together for good.

b) It can begin to seem as if that is the way it was supposed to be!

1) **Caution:** The fact that something works for good doesn't mean it was right at the time.

2) But God can make it seem that way, to let us save face!

2. When we have totally forgiven others we will let them save face.

a) We will refuse to let them feel guilty: we will show we are no different from them, given the same circumstances.

b) The proof we **haven't** forgiven: we want the person who has hurt us to lose face. Something Christ never does.

The keeping no record of wrongs continues on and on

1. God gives us an eternal salvation.

Hebrews 5:9 [NIV] “...and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.”

- a) God doesn't just forgive us once; He keeps on doing it.
- b) God doesn't later change His mind and decide, after all, what we did was so bad it must be reported.

2. When we have totally forgiven others we will do it on and on and on.

Matthew 18:21-22 [NIV] “Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?” Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.”

- a) It is not enough that we do it once. Or twice.
- b) The proof we **haven't** totally forgiven is that we later give in and break all of the above principles.

What if *God* did that?

What If We Don't Forgive Others?

What is NOT true is that we lose our salvation

We are sealed to the Day of Redemption which will occur at the Second Coming

Ephesians 4:30 [NIV] “And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”

Matthew 6:9-15 [King James] “After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”

Matthew 18:23-35 [NIV] “Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt. “The servant fell on his knees before him. ‘Be patient with me,’ he begged, ‘and I will pay back everything.’ The servant’s master took pity on him, cancelled the debt and let him go. “But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii. He grabbed him and began to choke him. ‘Pay back what you owe me!’ he demanded. “His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.’ “But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. When the other servants saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed and went and told their master everything that had happened. “Then the master called the servant in. ‘You wicked servant,’ he said, ‘I cancelled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn’t you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?’ In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. “This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart.”

To lose one's salvation is NOT the meaning of the above scriptures.

What do they mean?

1. We lose fellowship with the Father.

The reason for the Lord's Prayer is precisely that we might enjoy fellowship with the Father.

It is **not** a prayer for salvation; if it were there would be no need to repeat it.

Why repeat it? For abiding fellowship with the Father.

Once we violate the principle of total forgiveness of others God ceases to forgive us, for what we just did!

It doesn't mean he resurrects an old skeleton.

It means that the very thing we just did, which was a sin, is standing between us and God and must be confessed to receive forgiveness.

2. God may discipline us and deal with us in a severe manner.

Matthew 18:32-34 [NIV] *“Then the master called the servant in. ‘You wicked servant,’ he said, ‘I cancelled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn’t you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?’ In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.”*

a) When you know you have been graciously forgiven and graciously dealt with, but refuse to be gracious to another, God may chasten us.

James 5:9 [NIV] *“Don’t grumble against each other, brothers, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door!”*

b) His disciplining can be most severe; it could be God will let us get caught for something He has protected us from receiving punishment.

3. God may discipline us, to teach us a lesson on self-righteousness and pointing the finger!

Conclusion

When we as believers totally forgive another person the consequences are wonderful and indescribable. The Holy Spirit flows through us.

Galatians 5:22-23 [NIV] *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.”*

It makes us aware of the Holy Spirit's ongoing inner purifying of our hearts.

1 Timothy 1:5 [NIV] *“The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.”*

As this happens, we are becoming more like Jesus and His forgiving nature.

Luke 23:34 [NIV] *“Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.’ And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.”*

1 Peter 2:23 [NIV] *“When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.”*

However, if we don't totally forgive one another we become spiritually impoverished, even if we feel good by 'getting even'.

In fact, we are only hurting ourselves when we don't totally forgive.

To those of us who find it difficult to forgive others but harbour resentment and bitterness, God says, 'Let me handle it'.

Romans 12:19 [NIV] *“Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: ‘It is mine to avenge; I will repay,’ says the Lord.”*

Seeking to take revenge ourselves on those who have hurt us is only bringing pain to us and them.

Let God deal with them in a way that will be beneficial for everyone in the end.

Our response must be total forgiveness.