

Forgiving a Person in Your Heart

by William MacDonald

To forgive a person in your heart, follow a specific order of rebuking the brother, involving witnesses, and bringing the matter to the assembly, and forgive sincerely even if they repeat their sin.

Scripture: Matthew 18:15-17, Matthew 18:23-35, Luke 17:3-4, Ephesians 4:32

Topics: "Forgiveness", "Reconciliation"

Description

William MacDonald emphasizes the importance of forgiving others from the heart as the first step in the process of reconciliation. He outlines a biblical approach to forgiveness, starting with internal forgiveness before addressing the wrongdoer directly, and encourages maintaining privacy throughout the process. If the offender does not repent, the steps escalate to involve witnesses and the assembly, but forgiveness must always be ready to be extended upon repentance. MacDonald reminds us that our own forgiveness from God should motivate us to forgive others, regardless of the frequency of their offenses.

Transcript

“And be ye kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.” (Eph. 4:32 NASB)

There is a definite order to be followed in connection with Scriptural forgiveness. If we would follow this order we would save ourselves a lot of headaches and heartaches.

The first thing to do when you have been wronged is to forgive that person in your heart. You don't tell him yet that he has been forgiven, but by forgiving him in your heart, you leave the matter between the Lord and him. This prevents your gastric juices from turning into sulphuric acid, and saves you from other horrible physical and emotional disorders.

Next you go to the brother and rebuke him (Lu. 17:3). Instead of blabbing to others about how you have been wronged, “Go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone” (Mt. 18:15). Try to contain the problem as much as possible, that is, try to keep it as private as you can.

If he does not confess and ask forgiveness, then go to him with one or two witnesses (Mt. 18:16). This provides adequate Scriptural testimony as to the offender's attitude.

If he is still unbending, then you take the matter to the assembly, accompanied by the witnesses. If he refuses to listen to the judgment of the assembly, then, of course, he is dis-fellowshipped (Matt. 18:17).

But if at any point during this process, he repents, then you forgive him (Lu. 17:3). You have already forgiven him in your heart, but now you administer forgiveness to him. Here it is important not to gloss over the matter. Don't say "Oh that's alright. You really didn't do anything wrong." Rather say, "I very gladly forgive you. Now the whole matter is closed. Let's get down and pray together."

The shame of having to confess and repent may deter him from wronging you again. But even if he repeats his sin and then repents, you must forgive him. Even if he does it seven times in one day and repents seven times, you must forgive him--whether you think he's sincere or not (Lu. 17:4).

We must never forget that we have been forgiven millions. We must not hesitate to forgive others for what amounts to a few dollars, figuratively speaking (Mt. 18:23-35).

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/william-macdonald/forgiving-a-person-in-your-heart/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net