

Christian Study

Lesson 223

Be Light

Focusing on Church beyond Sunday

How Can I Know and Understand What the Bible Means?

FORGIVE YOURSELF

Have you forgiven yourself? Have you really forgiven yourself? It is not uncommon for Christians to have questions about forgiveness. Forgiveness does not come easy for most of us. Our natural instinct is to fall back under the pressure or to shrink back physically or emotionally in self-protection when we've been injured. We don't naturally overflow with mercy, grace and forgiveness when we've been wronged. Thinking about forgiving ourselves could be a concept hard for most people. Some of us would say, "I have not done anything wrong to myself or I have not committed any offence to anyone." Others would say, "You don't know how much I have messed up for me to even think I can forgive myself." A few of us would say, "Yes I have forgiven myself for the early mistakes I made in my life, and be in fear of not making the same mistakes again." We know we have forgiven ourselves if we are free from guilt and self-condemnation. Otherwise, we are stuck in the crazy cycle of reliving bad decisions that are done and cannot be changed. It is impossible to continually guilt our conscience in order to make up for past mistakes. The Bible takes a step further than just forgiving oneself. Here is what it says about us if we are in Christ Jesus. *"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."*

Romans 8:1

Jesus died to reconcile us to God

The following are some of the truth about the believer's forgiveness that he or she should camp on, that will bring us to forgiving ourselves. We cannot forgive ourselves before if we don't know and understand the forgiveness of God through Christ Jesus. For it pleased *the Father* that in Him all the fullness should dwell, and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross. And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to

present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight—if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.

Christ arrives right on time to make this happen. He didn't, and doesn't, wait for us to get ready. He presented himself for this sacrificial death when we were far too weak and rebellious to do anything to get ourselves ready. And even if we hadn't been so weak, we wouldn't have known what to do anyway. We can understand someone dying for a person worth dying for, and we can understand how someone good and noble could inspire us to selfless sacrifice. But God put his love on the line for us by offering his Son in sacrificial death while we were of no use whatever to him.

Now that we are set right with God by means of this sacrificial death, the perfect blood sacrifice, there is no longer a question of being at odds with God in any way. If, when we were at our worst, we were put on friendly terms with God by the sacrificial death of his Son, now that we're at our best, just think of how our lives will expand and deepen by means of his resurrection life!

JESUS CHRIST FORGAVE ALL OUR SINS

Those of you who have been with us for a while in this study will agree with us that, "All means all, that's all, all means." **Luke 23:34a** "Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."

When we do not release ourselves from previous indiscretions, we try to make up for them by overcompensating in the present. Perhaps you neglected your child in their early years, and now as an older teenager you've tried to make up for your absence by enabling their poor decisions. Instead, they need to experience the consequences of bad behavior while they are with you, so they can learn and grow into responsible adults and citizens when they are without you. The Bible says, you should train up a child the way they should go, so when they are old they will not depart from it.

Forgiving yourself begins by embracing the truth that your heavenly Father has forgiven you. The grace of God is in abundant supply; no one is beyond its reach. A preacher once said "You cannot outdo God's forgiveness." The Lord loves you unconditionally, and He forgives the objects of His love YOU. Has the grace of God seeped deep into your soul, so you know in your heart and mind that you are set free from the guilt and shame of sin? If not, forgive yourself and trust the Lord to make up for lost time.

"In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace." Ephesians 1:7

When you forgive yourself, you are able to forgive others. Self-forgiveness is a key to unlocking real relationships. Authentic relationship with Christ and Christians comes from forgiveness from your heavenly Father. What have you not released yourself from in forgiveness? Lay it at the altar of God's grace, and He will extinguish it with His eternal and everlasting fire of forgiveness and love.

"This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself'" Matthew 22:38-39

Our understanding of the forgiveness God has extended to us in spite of our disobedience, is the key to forgiving ourselves and forgiving others.

NEW CREATION IN CHRIST

In the New International Version of the Bible, **II Corinthians 5:17** reads: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" In the New Living translation it reads: "What this means is that those who become Christians become new persons. They are not the same anymore, for the old life is gone. A new life has begun!"

While it is not biologically accurate, let us imagine that the life or the essence of the chicken is the yolk. Now what if I said to you that this incubating egg is going to produce a defective and deformed chick because there is something wrong with the yolk? Then imagine if I took that egg and inserted a needle through the shell, through the white and into the yolk and extracted the bad yolk. In its place I inject a new healthy yolk where the old yolk had been, and I placed it back into the incubator until it hatches a perfectly healthy chick.

Now with this being said, how would you answer this question: Is that chicken a changed chicken? The answer is no, it is not. It is an exchanged life. You are not the same. God did not change your life. It is better than that. He exchanged your life. He has taken out the old you, the "sinner" and in exchange, Jesus has come to take His place in you. You are now one with Christ, a **new creation in Christ**. Do you believe this? I hope and pray that you do because the Bible says so. You are now an expression of divine life. The Bible says in **Colossians 3:3,4**: "For you died and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory."

We are not only containers but conduits of divine life. Jesus will both live in us and flow through us. He is all of Himself in you. He is who He is in you. If you have Jesus, you have everything He is and everything He possesses. **I John 4:17b** says: "...as He is so are we in

this world." We will never have a changed life until we experience the exchanged life...Christ in you the hope of glory.

LIFE LESSON: "For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that His life may be revealed in our mortal bodies." **II Corinthians 4:11**

IT'S JESUS CHRIST PLUS NOTHING

Before you were born again, did you ever ask what you would need to do to become a Christian, and were told there's nothing to do, just accept the gift? But then after accepting this gift of salvation you were told what you need to do to live the Christian life. Have you ever been told to be Christ-like, to live as Christ did on earth, to live by all of Jesus' teaching in the gospels? That is impossibility for any of us, since no one can live the Christian life except Jesus.

Example: Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount, you have heard it said, do not murder. But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother and calls him a name shall be in judgment for murder. And whoever looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. Jesus tells us to turn the other cheek, to love our enemies, and pray for those who persecute us. He tells us to be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect. (References: **Matt 5:21-48**) Ask yourself...who can do that?

The Sermon on the Mount is an unattainable goal for the human race, to attain through their own efforts. It is, however, a promise of what will happen in us when Jesus Christ has changed our nature, by putting His own nature in us at salvation. All of Jesus' teaching is meant to be applied to the spirit life He puts within all born again believers. His life in us. It's Jesus Christ plus nothing.

All of Jesus' teaching while here on earth was teaching under the law of the old testament because He had not died on the cross yet. **Hebrews 9:16-17** makes it very clear. "For where a covenant is (also known as a will or testament), there must of necessity be the death of the one who made it. For a covenant is valid only when men are dead, for it is

never in force while the one who made it lives." (NASB) All of Jesus' teachings, including the Sermon on the Mount were before His death on the cross.

Are you getting the picture here? All of Jesus' teaching was meant to be applied to the life He puts within you at salvation. His life! No one can live the "Christian life" apart from Jesus, living in and through you. "The things that are impossible with people are possible with God." **Luke 18:27, NASB**

GOD'S PLAN FOR US

The Word of God tells us in II Corinthians 5:17 "Therefore if anyone is in Christ he is a new creation; the old life is gone, the new has come!" Simply put...Jesus died on the cross for us to give His life to us to live His life through us (God's plan).

People ask the question all the time "What is God's plan for my life?" The answer is God's plan for your life is a person and his name is Jesus Christ...to live in and through you as you abide in Him, wherever He places you and remember God doesn't make mistakes.

If you're an electrician, you handle the power of God.

If you're a baker, you handle the bread of life.

If you're a farmer, you handle the seeds of God's Word.

If you're an accountant, you handle the ledgers of truth.

If you're a truck driver, you handle the deliveries of God.

If you're a pastor, you handle the shepherding of the sheep.

If you're a realtor, you handle the properties of God.

If you're an attorney, you handle the truth to set the prisoners free.

Colossians 3:23 says "Whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God."

When Mary questioned the angel Gabriel by asking "how will this be since I am a virgin?" he replied, "Nothing is impossible with God." How many times have we all said that trying to live the Christian life is impossible? Then one day by God's grace we realized "the things that are impossible with man are possible with God".

LIFE LESSON: God was with Abraham, God was with David and God was with the Apostles while He was here on earth. However, God is not just with us today, He is in us to live His life through us bringing the message of salvation and love to a lost world. That is God's Plan for Us.

Remember this, "Jesus did not come to make bad people good, He came to make dead people live."

Keep It Simple

Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so.

If you have any questions, comments or you know anybody else who will benefit from this study please feel free to give us their email address and they will be added to our mailing list to receive weekly lessons. The email address is santigiemando1@yahoo.com

REMEMBER!! A candle loses nothing by lighting another candle (Ephesians 5:8)

Let's go light another candle