

How can I be and feel forgiven?

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Micah 7:19 (NCV)

¹⁹ You will have mercy on us again; you will conquer our sins. You will throw away all our sins into the deepest part of the sea.

"Forgive and forget" is how the old saying goes. But is it that simple?

- 1) A boy who was dumped by his girlfriend says, "She really hurt my feelings. How can I ever forgive her for what she did to me?"
- 2) A girl whose father sexually abused her for years asks, "Why should I forgive him for that?"
- 3) The drug dealer who wants to turn his life around wonders, "Will God really forgive me for all I have done?"
- 4) How do we forgive others who have wronged us? How do we accept God's forgiveness?

The Real Need for Forgiveness

God hates sin; He cannot stand to look at its ugliness. Therefore, unconfessed sin in our lives comes between us and damages our relationship with the Lord.

"Surely the arm of the Lord is not too short to save, or his ear too dull to hear, but your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that He will not hear." ([Isaiah 59:1-2](#))

Not only does unforgiveness come between us and God, it also breaks our relationships with others.

"He who covers over an offense promotes love, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends." ([Proverbs 17:9](#))

The Requirements for Forgiveness

Because God hates sin, the price for forgiveness is high. Scripture gives the following requirements for forgiveness:

- **Sacrifice.** [Hebrews 9:22](#) says that **"without the shedding of Blood, there is no forgiveness."** In the Old Testament, a sacrifice of an unblemished lamb was required to satisfy God's wrath. Jesus, the sinless Son of God, died on the cross and became the ultimate sacrifice for sin. Jesus bought our forgiveness when he died on the cross.

"For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God." ([1 Peter 3:18a](#))

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

- **Forgiveness of others.** Another requirement for forgiveness of sins is that we forgive others. [1 Corinthians 13:5](#) says that **"real love keeps no record of wrongs."** Remember that [Proverbs 17:9](#) tells us that a real friend will forgive. God has also made forgiving others a requirement for receiving His forgiveness.

"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." ([Matthew 6:14,15](#))

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

- **Confession of sin.** We must admit our sins to God if our relationship with Him is to be restored completely. Looking back at the real need for forgiveness, we see that unconfessed sin can separate us in our relationship with God. Confession is the way to restore that relationship with the Lord, remembering that it is for our own benefit that we confess to return to the Lord because **He is faithful even when we are not** ([2 Timothy 2:13](#)).

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." ([1 John 1:9](#))

- **Repentance.** We must decide to change, to turn from our sins.

"Therefore this is what the Lord says, 'If you repent, I will restore you that you may serve me.'" ([Jeremiah 15:19a](#))

The Results of Forgiveness.

The Bible promises the following benefits of God's forgiveness:

- **Happiness.** When we know God's forgiveness, we are blessed (happy).

"Blessed (happy) is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed (happy) is the man whose sin the Lord doesn't count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit." ([Psalm 32:1,2](#))

- **God chooses not to hold our sins against us.** Another result of forgiveness is that God doesn't keep a record of our sins, He does not hold them against us. Because the blood of Christ covered our sins, God chooses to put them out of His mind.

"I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more." ([Isaiah 43:25](#))

- **God removes our sin from us. "It is possible for the Lord to look at us without seeing our sins because when he forgave us, he removed our sins as far as the east is from the west" ([Psalm 103:12](#))**
- **We can forgive ourselves.** When we are forgiven, we can forgive ourselves and go on with our lives.

"Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus." ([Philippians 3:13,14](#))