

Discipleship Guide
Lesson 11
Forgiveness of Sins

"I believe in . . . the forgiveness of sins. . . ."

As a result of studying this lesson, the student will:

- (1) rejoice in Jesus' forgiveness of his or her sins;
- (2) understand the importance of forgiving others.

Old Testament Perspective

Reading

The student should read Psalm 32 and answer the following questions:

1. What qualities of a blessed person are listed in this Psalm?
2. What did the Psalmist David need to continue doing in order for God's hand of "conviction of sin" to be upon him?
3. What did David do with his sins?

Comment and Reading

The student should read Psalm 51. King David wrote this psalm after confronting his sin of sleeping with another man's wife and subsequently plotting her husband's death. After reading the text, answer the following questions:

4. Against whom did David sin?
5. What would David do if he was forgiven?
6. According to verses 16-17, what sacrifice does God desire of us?

Comment

The Bible begins human history with the story of Adam and Eve. Though they started well, they fell into sin when they disobeyed God's commands. Sin might be called "rationalized self-will." As we previously mentioned, God extended forgiveness to them by covering their nakedness with the skins of animals (see Genesis 3:21). The shedding of blood was always necessary for God to impart the forgiveness of sins, first through animal sacrifices in the tabernacle and the temple, then through the death of Y'shua. We Jewish people knew that God's offer of forgiveness exalted him above any other claimed god (see Micah 7:18).

A New Covenant

Comment and Reading

The student should read Hebrews 9:1-10:10. This is a reference to Yom Kippur, the annual Day of Atonement. After reading the text, answer the following questions:

7. What object did the high priest take with him into the tabernacle once a year? For what purpose did he take this object into the tabernacle?

8. What would not be possible without the shedding of blood?

9. Why was the high priest's annual act symbolic (see 9:9)?

10. From the context of this passage, for what did Jesus' death make provision—once for all?

Jesus' Authority to Forgive Sins

Reading

The student should read Mark 2 and answer the following questions:

11. What startled the scribes who watched Y'shua relate to the paralytic man lowered down through the roof?

12. If only God can ultimately forgive sins, what does this passage say about Y'shua?

Comment and Reading

The student should read John 8. As you read this story of a woman taken in adultery, consider the fact that adultery is not a solitary act. Though one person was brought up on charges, two must have been "caught in the act." I imagine that the man who was caught in adultery might have been one of the scribes or Pharisees who brought the woman to Jesus.

13. What motivated this courtlike scene?

14. What did Jesus offer the woman?

15. What does Jesus tell the forgiven woman to avoid?

16. How can someone be "free indeed" (see 8:32, 36).

Comment

In Jewish law, two witnesses have to testify in order to begin the execution of judgment. When no one was there to throw the first stone, the woman was freed—not on a technicality by a clever defense attorney, but by the inability of the witnesses to continue the mockery of injustice. In this way the woman was forgiven in a forensic sense. God allowed the woman to be free (see 8:32) and the men to be humiliated so that mercy triumphed over judgment (James 2:13).

Sin and the Believer

Reading

The student should read 1 John 1:1-2:14. This book is not the *Gospel* of John, but a short teaching epistle written to believers. After reading the text, answer the following questions:

17. What happens as we walk in “the light”?
18. How and when do we deceive ourselves?
19. How does God manifest his faithfulness to us?
20. Why did John write this teaching?
21. If we sin—and confess that sin—what role does Jesus take on our behalf? Why?
22. Why are our sins forgiven us?

Comment

This passage indicates that believers need to continue to search their lives and confess the areas in which they fall short of the target of Christlikeness and righteousness.

Forgiving Others

Reading

The student should read Matthew 6 and review Matthew 18 (read in lesson 10), especially verses 21-35. After reading the text, answer the following question:

23. What happens to the person who does not forgive others?

Comment

Forgiveness is not just a nice idea. On a human level, it is a decision we must make and an action we must extend to everyone by the power of the Holy Spirit. We should ask God in prayer to show us the names or faces of all the people we have to forgive, then by a decision of the will, say, “I forgive so-and-so.” That prayer in faith will bring healing to you and to your

relationship; your prayer can be a conduit of grace through which God works his good. Not forgiving another doesn't effect them; it only hurts you!

Memory Verse: Leviticus 17:11

“For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.”