

# Forgiveness – A Study In Philemon

## The Motivation Of Forgiveness

Bible Reading: Philemon 19-25

### I. INTRODUCTION

*“Forgiveness is the work of God in us.”*

**Motivation:** To provide with an incentive; move to action

#### A. TWO STORIES

1. **Story 1:** Heaviness of Hatred (Restitution).
2. **Story 2:** The Dynamic in Forgiveness (Restoration)

Which story would best represent you? What is your motive for forgiveness – merely restitution for the loss or restoration of the person?

### II. THE MOTIVATION OF DEBT

**READ: PHILEMON 19**

*“Forgiveness is taking responsibility from my side to release the offender from the alienating effect of the offense on our relationship.”* - (Majorie J. Thompson, *The Way of Forgiveness*)

In light of our debt owed to God, we ought to forgive one another and forgive others.

### III. THE MOTIVATION OF BLESSING

**READ: PHILEMON 20**

The word “my” (verse 20) is emphatic in the Greek. It is as if Paul were saying, *“It is my turn to be refreshed by you.”*

Paul had already told Philemon of the refreshment he had been to others (verse 7).

Paul wanted to receive a blessing of joy, which would be derived from Philemon forgiving Onesimus.

#### **IV. THE MOTIVATION OF OBEDIENCE**

##### **READ: PHILEMON 21**

“Forgiveness is one of the eminent signs of the vitality of the Holy Spirit in our midst.” (*The Way of Forgiveness*)

**IMPORTANT:** Obligation may be the point of our obedience, but it ought to be love. We love God because through Christ he has forgiven us ... therefore let us love forgiveness and become obedient in it.

##### **READ: COLOSSIANS 3:12-13**

Our forgiving others is rooted in God's forgiveness of us. Paul says I am confident you will forgive out of your desire to obey.

#### **V. THE MOTIVATION OF ACCOUNTABILITY**

##### **READ: PHILEMON 22**

In this day and age, most do not like accountability – we like the free will of doing what we want and when we want. But in the kingdom of God there is always accountability.

##### **READ: HEBREWS 13:17; ROMANS 14:12**

“Only a free person can live with an uneven score.” – Lewis B. Smedes

#### **VI. THE MOTIVATION OF FELLOWSHIP**

##### **READ: PHILEMON 23-24**

Paul reminds Philemon in a round about way that he, like Paul, is a part of a greater fellowship – the Church.

The Christian life is not lived in a vacuum. Believers do not act alone, independent of the fellowship.

#### **A. 4 VALUABLE TRUTHS OF FELLOWSHIP**

1. We are not alone – we are a part of one another.
2. We cannot act independently of each other.
3. We are responsible to each other to help create the atmosphere of forgiveness.
4. Fellowship with God and His family moves us to forgive.

## **VII. CONCLUSION**

### **READ: PHILEMON 25**

**IMPORTANT:** God's grace is how He forgives us. Grace is the fertile ground from which forgiveness grows out of. Grace motivates us to forgive. Grace is dispensed in forgiveness.

**PASTORAL NOTE:** Many barriers come between people – race, social status, sex, personality differences – but Christ can break down these barriers.

Jesus Christ changed Onesimus' relationship with Philemon from slave to brother. In the same manner, Christ can transform our most hopeless relationships into deep loving friendships.