

## A Spirit of Forgiveness

### Forgiveness the foundation of God's grace to us.

- Forgiveness is foundational to every aspect of our Christian lives, **Mark 11:21-26**.
- Why did Jesus speak of faith and prayer followed by forgiveness? Because without forgiveness, faith and prayer will not work or at the very least, be hindered.
- Forgiveness is completely within our control. **It stems from a decision of the will and not from the emotions, just like love.** Emotions are involved, but only as a secondary consideration. *Your emotions will follow your faith!*
- OUR OWN forgiveness is conditional, **Matt. 6:12, Matt. 6:14-15**.

### Unforgiveness is a trap of the devil, Luke 17:1-4.

- The word *offences* in the Greek is the word *skandalon*. It means the moveable stick or trigger of a trap. It is the trigger that seals the trap around its victim.
- Jesus guaranteed that *offences* would come, the question is how do we handle them.
- When we hold onto *offences*, we become trapped by them. Until we are willing to give them up, they bind us to sin and sin to us.
- A root of bitterness does not just defile one, it defiles many, **Heb. 12:14-15**.
- *Unforgiveness defiles. It defiles everything we do. Prayer, bible study, praise, worship, tithes and offerings, good deeds, etc.*
- Flesh and blood are not your enemy, **Eph. 6:12**.

### How do we develop a spirit of forgiveness?

- Consciously make a decision to act on **God's command (His Word)** to forgive whoever has offended you, *by faith!*
- Purposefully release your feelings over to God.
- We must realize that as humans, forgiveness involves an emotional process.
- A process indicates time. We must be consistent and repetitive in forgiving others.
- Ask God for help in overcoming your feelings. Begin, with the help of God, to refuse anger, resentment, unforgiveness, and bitterness to dwell in your head or your heart.
- Begin an intentional effort to pray for whoever has offended you. You become intimate with the one **to** whom you pray and **for** whom you pray, **Matt. 5:43-48**.
- Every time that the devil reminds you and those old feelings come back, double up on your praying for the offender.

### An awesome example, Stephen in Acts 7.

- Stephen's eyes were on Jesus and he was not offended by the actions of those who stoned him.
- If our eyes are on ourselves we will be offended.
- If our eyes are on our accusers, we will be offended.
- Jesus told us to *pick up your cross and follow me*.
- Notice that not one of Steven's murderers asked for forgiveness.
- Steven's act of forgiveness was incredibly vital, because the man who minded the coats of the witnesses of Steven's execution, was none other than the Apostle Paul.