

**Forgiving Others**  
**"Of you it is required to forgive"**  
**Outline - Mike Baird**

Forgiving others.....	2
Forgive to be forgiven.....	2
It is a sin to not forgive .....	2
"Judge not" is a companion principle.....	2
Difference between "final judgment" and intermediate judgment .....	3
We set the standard or rule by which we will be judged .....	3
When we do not forgive someone we "judge" them not worthy of receiving the blessings of the atonement.....	3
The doctrine of restoration is also companion to "forgive to be forgiven".....	3
We must forgive to find peace .....	4
Stumbling blocks .....	4
Others don't need to be punished or repent that we might forgive them.....	5
Forgo Revenge.....	5
Forgetting is not forgiving .....	6
Do not be offended .....	6
Do not look to be offended .....	7
How often must we forgive? .....	7
Does forgiving someone mean must trust them? .....	7
Scripture examples of forgiving others .....	8
Christ.....	8
Joseph (in Egypt).....	8
Nephi.....	8
Modern examples of forgiving others .....	8
Stories .....	9
Irrigation Water .....	9
Snake bite.....	10
References .....	11

## Forgiving others

- 8 steps to forgiveness
  - Recognize, remorse, abandon, confess, restitution, **Forgive to be forgiven**, Keep all the commandments, take of the Sacrament worthily
- David E Sorenson:  
(At bottom of this paper) "Irrigation Water" ("Forgiveness Will Change Bitterness to Love," Ensign, May 2003, 10)

## Forgive to be forgiven

- Matthew 6:14-15  
"For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:  
But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."
- Moroni 7:18  
"And now, my brethren, seeing that ye know the light by which ye may judge, which light is the light of Christ, see that ye do not judge wrongfully; for with that same judgment which ye judge ye shall also be judged"

## It is a sin to not forgive

- D&C 64:7-12  
"ye ought to forgive one another; for he that forgiveth not his brother his trespasses standeth condemned before the Lord; for there *remaineth in him the greater sin*.  
I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men"

## "Judge not" is a companion principle

- See "Judge not" by Mike Baird  
( <http://mikebaird.net/Church/GospelTopics/JudgeNot.pdf> )
- "*There remaineth in him the greater sin*"
  - How can that be? Answer:
    - Matt 7:1-2  
"Judge not, that ye be not judged.  
For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again"

- Luke 6:37-38  
*" Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven"*

### ***Difference between "final judgment" and intermediate judgment***

- We do not make a final judgment but we must make intermediate judgments See "Judge Not" by Mike Baird  
( <http://mikebaird.net/Church/GospelTopics/JudgeNot.pdf> )

### ***We set the standard or rule by which we will be judged***

- We do not know the power of motivating forces or particular set of circumstances in a person's life that a person faces
  - Perhaps we are weaker and would not even do as well in the given circumstances!
  - In which case we are condemning ourselves!
- Christ Alone understands not only our sins but the pressures that leads us to commit them
- Thus in effect when he says Judge not and forgive all he is preserving us from transforming our ignorance into rules of judgment by which we will condemn ourselves

### ***When we do not forgive someone we "judge" them not worthy of receiving the blessings of the atonement***

- We perform final judgment and in effect put our selves in the Lord's place and "forgive whom we will forgive" instead of letting the Lord "forgive whom I will forgive"

### ***The doctrine of restoration is also companion to "forgive to be forgiven"***

- Alma 41:13-15  
*"see that you are merciful unto your brethren; deal justly, judge righteously, and do good continually; and if ye do all these things then shall ye receive your reward; yea, ye shall have mercy restored unto you again; ye shall have justice restored unto you again; ye shall have a righteous judgment restored unto you again; and ye shall have good rewarded unto you again.  
For that which ye do send out shall return unto you again, and be restored"*

## **We must forgive to find peace**

- Matt 5:7  
"Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy"
- Gordon B Hinckley:  
"If there be any who nurture in their hearts the poisonous brew of enmity toward another, I plead with you to ask the Lord for strength to forgive. This expression of desire will be of the very substance of your repentance. It may not be easy, and it may not come quickly. But if you will seek it with sincerity and cultivate it, it will come. And even though he whom you have forgiven continues to pursue and threaten you, you will know you have done what you could to make a reconciliation. There will come into your heart a peace otherwise unattainable." ("Of You It Is Required to Forgive," Ensign, June 1991, 2)

## **Stumbling blocks**

- The following is a list of stumbling blocks we may have in our path to forgiving others
  - Pride (see Ezra Taft Benson, "Beware of Pride," Ensign, May 1989, 4)
  - Lack of knowledge
    - Not understanding the Atonement
  - Lack of Faith
  - Brass Serpent (too simple)
  - Caught up in the injury itself – becomes our focus
  - Wallowing in our misery
  - We want others to repent before we forgive them
  - Hard heart (hardened by sin)

## **Others don't need to be punished or repent that we might forgive them**

- We sometimes feel that others must repent before we can forgive them or we sometimes feel that a person must be punished for their sins or crimes before we can forgive them
- Sometimes we feel "cheated" because someone was not "punished" by the church. They weren't excommunicated like we think they should have been and so forth.
- Our forgiveness of a person has nothing to do with their repentance or with their being punished or not
- Anonymous:  
"Thank you for helping me to realize what it is that I need to do. Thank you for "calling me to repentance" so to speak. What you did was empower me. I have been bumping up against a wall time after time because I have wanted others to do what I needed to do myself. Once again it is clear that the Lord is unchanging and that he "will not vary from what he has said." The Lord has asked us to forgive all men and when we are not willing to do that...we sin. I was asking the Lord to change others so I could forgive. Change -----, make him repent, change ---- make HER forgive and heal, when really the only one that I can really change is MYSELF. I now have the power to really do something because it is MY responsibility, not ----'s, not ----'s, but MINE and the Lord's. The Lord will help me let go and he will take this bitterness from me when I have changed my life in the way I need to enable me to let go."  
(Personal Experience shared in her words, Feb 2004)

## **Forgo Revenge**

- H Burke Peterson:  
"The wise and the happy person removes first the impurities from within. The longer the poison of resentment and unforgiveness stays in a body, the greater and longer lasting is its destructive effect. As long as we blame others for our condition or circumstance and build a wall of self-justification around ourselves, our strength will diminish and our power and ability to rise above our situation will fade away. The poison of revenge, or of unforgiving thoughts or attitudes, unless removed, will destroy the soul in which it is harbored."  
("Removing the Poison of an Unforgiving Spirit," Ensign, Nov. 1983, 59)
- H Burke Peterson:  
(At bottom of this paper)"Snake bite" ("Removing the Poison of an Unforgiving Spirit," Ensign, Nov. 1983, 59)

## **Forgetting is not forgiving**

- Anonymous

"When I was a teenager, I was very wronged by someone. It was quite devastating to me at that age and I harbored harsh feelings toward this person for a long time. Years went by and I hardly ever thought about the event or that person, reasoning in my mind that I had forgiven him. One day, about 10 years after the incident, I was attending a racquetball tournament my husband was involved in. A man passed by us and greeted my husband. I recognized him as someone I knew, but couldn't remember from where. I asked my husband what his name was, and as soon as he told me I was immediately overcome with intense feelings of hatred and bitterness. Instantly I knew that, although the hurt he caused had been far from my thoughts over many years, I had not truly forgiven him. That was a very poignant lesson for me about what it takes to really forgive someone. It's not just in the forgetting" (Personal Experience in her words, Jul, 2005)

## **Do not be offended**

- About Frazier Eaton

"When the Kirtland Temple was completed, many Saints gathered for the dedication. The seats in the temple filled quickly, and many people were allowed to stand, but still not everyone could be accommodated inside the building. Elder Frazier Eaton, who had given \$700 for the building of the temple, arrived after it had been filled, so he was not allowed inside for the dedication. The dedication was repeated the next day for those who could not be accommodated the first day, but this did not satisfy Frazier Eaton, and he apostatized." (George A. Smith, in Journal of Discourses, 11:9.)

- The Savior suffered scoffs and scorns for us too

- Steven R Covey:

"Since the Lord suffered for all, this includes any who would ever trespass against me. Then why should I suffer because someone injured me? If I would repent and receive Christ, I would have the desire and power to return good for evil, to bless rather than to defend and judge. For in receiving him, I draw my self-esteem from that relationship and from his definition of me, rather than from the sometimes unkind, inconsistent, or fickle opinions of others" ("Likening the Scriptures Unto Ourselves," Ensign, Sept. 1974, 77)

## **Do not look to be offended**

- Sometimes we are too quick to be offended
- How can we not?
  - Know you are a son/daughter of God

## **How often must we forgive?**

- Matthew 18:21-22  
"Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?  
Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, *Until seventy times seven*"

## **Does forgiving someone mean must trust them?**

- No
  - Example - if you loan money to someone and they "steal" by refusing to pay. You may forgive them but that does not mean you are required to loan money to this person in the future
  - Example – if someone sexually abused your child you may forgive them but you would not be required to place your child in circumstances where you had to "trust" the person to not do further abuse
- Matthew 5:39-42  
"Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:  
But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.  
And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also.  
And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.  
Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away"
  - Doesn't this scripture imply I must trust even though I forgive?
    - No
    - James E Talmage:  
"Of old the principle of retaliation had been tolerated, by which one who had suffered injury could exact or inflict a penalty of the same nature as the offense. Thus an eye was demanded for the loss of an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a life for a life. fn In contrast, Christ taught that men

should rather suffer than do evil, even to the extent of submission without resistance under certain implied conditions. His forceful illustrations—that if one were smitten on one cheek he should turn the other to the smiter; that if a man took another's coat by process of law, the loser should allow his cloak to be taken also; that if one was pressed into service to carry another's burden a mile, he should willingly go two miles; that one should readily give or lend as asked—are not to be construed as commanding abject subservience to unjust demands, nor as an abrogation of the principle of self-protection. These instructions were directed primarily to the apostles, who would be professedly devoted to the work of the kingdom to the exclusion of all other interests. In their ministry it would be better to suffer material loss or personal indignity and imposition at the hands of wicked oppressors, than to bring about an impairment of efficiency and a hindrance in work through resistance and contention. To such as these the Beatitudes were particularly applicable—Blessed are the meek, the peace-makers, and they that are persecuted for righteousness' sake." (Jesus the Christ, 219.)

### **Scripture examples of forgiving others**

#### ***Christ***

- Luke 23:34  
"Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do"

#### ***Joseph (in Egypt)***

- Genesis 45:4-8  
"Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life "

#### ***Nephi***

- 1 Nephi 7:16-21  
"And it came to pass that I did frankly forgive them all that they had done"

### **Modern examples of forgiving others**

- "During World War II there were terrible examples of man's inhumanity to man. After the war was over and the concentration camps were opened, there was much hatred among the weak and emaciated survivors. In one camp, observers noticed a native of Poland who seemed so robust and peaceful they



thought he must have only recently been imprisoned. They were surprised to learn that he had been there over six years! Then, they reasoned, he must not have suffered the terrible atrocities to his family members that most of the prisoners had. But in questioning him, they learned how soldiers had come to his city, lined up against a wall his wife, two daughters, and three small sons, then opened fire with a machine gun. Though he begged to die with them, he had been kept alive because of his knowledge and ability in language translation.

This Polish father said: "I had to decide right then ... whether to let myself hate the soldiers who had done this. It was an easy decision, really. I was a lawyer. In my practice I had seen ... what hate could do to people's minds and bodies. Hate had just killed the six people who mattered most to me in the world. I decided then that I would spend the rest of my life—whether it was a few days or many years—loving every person I came in contact with." "(George G. Ritchie with Elizabeth Sherrill, *Return from Tomorrow*, Waco, Texas: Chosen Books, 1978, p. 116.)

## **Stories**

### ***Irrigation Water***

I grew up in a small farming town where water was the lifeblood of the community. I remember the people of our society constantly watching, worrying, and praying over the rain, irrigation rights, and water in general. ...

Under the stress and strain of our climate, sometimes people weren't always at their best. Occasionally, neighbors would squabble over one farmer taking too long a turn from the irrigation ditch. That's how it started with two men who lived near our mountain pasture, whom I will call Chet and Walt. These two neighbors began to quarrel over water from the irrigation ditch they shared. It was innocent enough at first, but over the years the two men allowed their disagreements to turn into resentment and then arguments—even to the point of threats.

One July morning both men felt they were once again short of water. Each went to the ditch to see what had happened, each in his own mind reckoning the other had stolen his water. They arrived at the headgate at the same time. Angry words were exchanged; a scuffle ensued. Walt was a large man with great strength. Chet was small, wiry, and tenacious. In the heat of the scuffle, the shovels the men were carrying were used as weapons. Walt accidentally struck one of Chet's eyes with the shovel, leaving him blind in that eye.

Months and years passed, yet Chet could not forget nor forgive. The anger that he felt over losing his eye boiled inside him, and his hatred grew more intense. One

day, Chet went to his barn, took down the gun from its rack, got on his horse, and rode down to the headgate of the ditch. He put a dam in the ditch and diverted the water away from Walt's farm, knowing that Walt would soon come to see what had happened. Then Chet slipped into the brush and waited. When Walt appeared, Chet shot him dead. Then he got on his horse, went back to his home, and called the sheriff to inform him that he had just shot Walt. Chet was tried and convicted of murder and sentenced to life in prison. ("Forgiveness Will Change Bitterness to Love," Ensign, May 2003, 10)

### ***Snake bite***

For much of our lives, we lived in central Arizona. Some years ago a group of teenagers from the local high school went on an all-day picnic into the desert on the outskirts of Phoenix. ...

These young people were picnicking and playing, and during their frolicking, one of the girls was bitten on the ankle by a rattlesnake. As is the case with such a bite, the rattler's fangs released venom almost immediately into her bloodstream.

This very moment was a time of critical decision. They could immediately begin to extract the poison from her leg, or they could search out the snake and destroy it. Their decision made, the girl and her young friends pursued the snake. It slipped quickly into the undergrowth and avoided them for fifteen or twenty minutes. Finally, they found it, and rocks and stones soon avenged the infliction.

Then they remembered: their companion had been bitten! They became aware of her discomfort, as by now the venom had had time to move from the surface of the skin deep into the tissues of her foot and leg. Within another thirty minutes they were at the emergency room of the hospital. By then, the venom was well into its work of destruction.

A couple of days later I was informed of the incident and was asked by some young members of the Church to visit their friend in the hospital. As I entered her room, I saw a pathetic sight. Her foot and leg were elevated—swollen almost beyond recognition. The tissue in her limb had been destroyed by the poison, and a few days later it was found her leg would have to be amputated below the knee.

It was a senseless sacrifice, this price of revenge. How much better it would have been if, after the young woman had been bitten, there had been an extraction of

the venom from the leg in a process known to all desert dwellers. ("Removing the Poison of an Unforgiving Spirit," Ensign, Nov. 1983, 59)

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