

# UNPACKING THE CHURCH: CLEARING UP CONFUSION

## UNDERSTANDING FORGIVENESS

### I. What is forgiveness?

- a. Forgiveness is a “letting go” or “carrying away” (Exod. 32:32; Ps. 32:5 and 1 Jn 1:9 and Luke 17:4. Cf. Leviticus 16:21-22).

nāšā = “lift, carry, take” ἀφίημι (apheime) = “send off or away, let go”

- b. God’s forgiveness is His promise not to remember the offense against us (Jer. 31:34; Ps. 79:8; 103:12).

*God does not forget the offense; He chooses not to remember it.*

- c. God’s forgiveness always leads to reconciliation, a full restoration of relationship (2 Cor. 5:18-21).

### II. Is God’s forgiveness conditional?

- a. God’s forgiveness was conditioned upon Christ’s payment (Heb. 9:19-28; 1 Peter 1:18-19).
- b. We were positionally forgiven in Christ when the payment was made (Ps. 32:1-2; 130:3-4; 1 Jn. 2:1-2).
- c. But God does not grant forgiveness apart from repentance and confession (Ps. 32:5; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 1 Jn. 1:9).

### III. How are we to forgive?

a. We must forgive as God has forgiven us (Matt. 18:23-35; Eph. 4:32).

i. We must maintain a heart attitude of readiness to forgive.

ii. If the person refuses to repent, we must forgive *positionally*,

iii. We must stand ready to fully forgive and to reconcile the relationship.

b. Forgiveness is granted fully when there is repentance (Matt. 18:22; Luke 17:4).

c. In forgiving we make a promise to let the offense go.

i. We do not continue to bring it up with the person.

ii. We do not bring it up with others.

iii. We do not dwell on it in our own minds but **choose** to let it go.

d. True (full) forgiveness leads to full reconciliation and restoration of relationship (2 Cor. 5:18-19)/

e. Forgiveness is **NOT** necessarily forgetting, although the offense may very well be forgotten over time.

### IV. Offenses are often overlooked or let go because of love (1 Peter 4:8)