

HOW DO WE FORGIVE?



LUKE 6:37-38

Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.

LUKE 6:37-38 (part of a larger context)

But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. Do to others as you would have them do to you.

'If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.

FOUNDATIONS OF FORGIVING

Forgiving always starts with our perspective on **life**:

- **What is our basic theory of life?**
 - Eat or be eaten? Life stinks & then you die? Don't get mad, get even?
 - We're helpless in the face of life's troubles?
 - Life is basically good, with some bad in it?
 - Other theories?
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FOUNDATIONS OF FORGIVING

Forgiving always starts with our perspective on **events**:

- **How do we respond to life's events?**
 - Do we see the bad in events, and look cynically at things that happen to us?
 - Do we feel powerless in the face of events around us?
 - Do we tend to see the good around us, and even in events, seeing what's possible?
 - others?
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FOUNDATIONS OF FORGIVING

Forgiving always starts with our perspective on **people**:

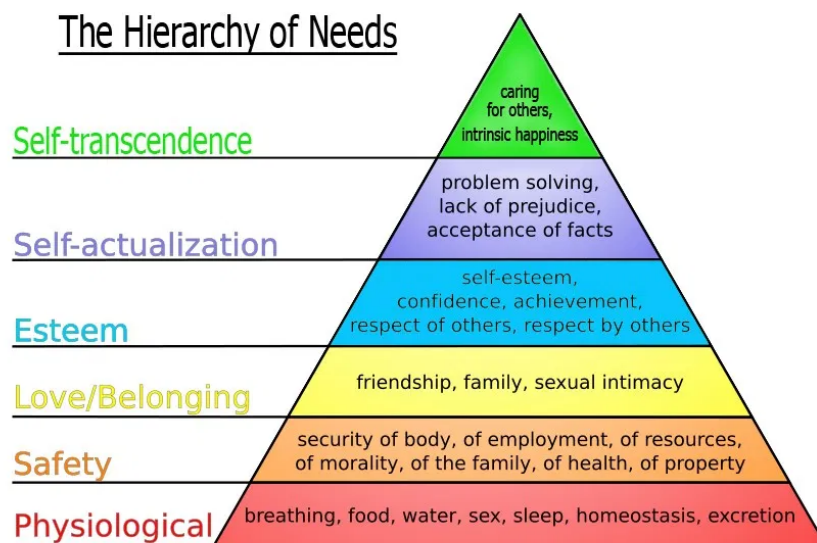
- **How do we regard other people?**
 - Do we see people as basically bad till proven good?
 - Do we see others as an impediment to what we are doing?
 - Do we look to love other people till they've proven unlovable?
 - Do we consider people as basically good, even when they do bad?
 - others?
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FOUNDATIONS OF FORGIVING

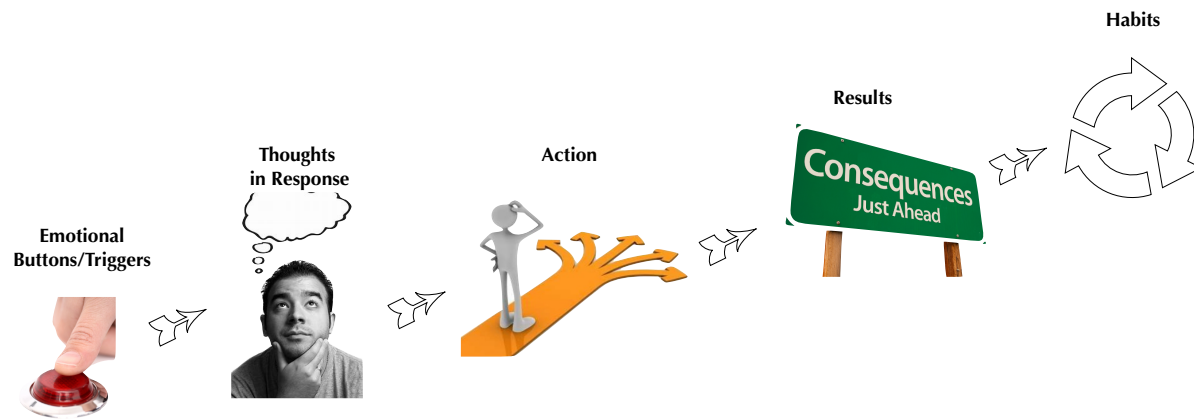
The BIG question when it comes to forgiving others is:

- do we have a perspective captured by pain and hurt,
 - or one that helps us see the person and events from a different perspective?
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The Hierarchy of Needs



FORGIVING IS AN INTENTIONAL ACT THAT'S INTENTIONALLY BUILT



PERSPECTIVES THAT LEAD TO FORGIVENESS

Can we look beyond our pain to see the person and the act from their perspective?

- Do we recognize that they may be acting out of their own pain?
 - Do we recognize that they may have mental or emotional problems that led to their act?
 - Do we recognize that they have acted out of more base fears and concerns?
 - Do we see them as people who are captivated by pain and need to be forgiven "For they know not what they do?"
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PERSPECTIVES THAT LEAD TO FORGIVENESS

Can we look beyond our pain to see the person, the act, and ourselves from a long-term perspective?

- Forgiveness helps us, others, and all of life long-term
 - It releases us from resentment and bitterness
 - It releases others from their pain
 - It creates the context for healing and possibility:
 - Germany after WWII, vs. after WWI?
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PERSPECTIVES THAT LEAD TO FORGIVENESS

- Can we look beyond our pain to see the person, the act, and ourselves from God's perspective?
 - Ultimately true forgiveness comes from God, not ourselves
 - Forgiveness is an act of love that reconnects us with the source of love~God
 - Real forgiveness is ultimately something God does through us, not something we do:
 - Corrie ten Boom's forgiveness
 - 1 John 4:7-21
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PERSPECTIVES THAT LEAD TO FORGIVENESS

1 John 4:7-21

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit...

God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them... We love because he first loved us. Those who say, "I love God," and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.

SO HOW DO WE FORGIVE?

- Real forgiveness begins when we change perspectives on the event and the person:
 - By seeking God's perspective on life, the event, and the other;
 - By trying to develop compassion for the perpetrator, recognizing that s/he may "not know what s/he is doing;"
 - By seeking long-term what is best for you and all others
 - Real forgiveness happens when we prayerfully seek God to forgive through us
 - Real forgiveness happens when we decide to release ourselves from captivity to pain, and open up to God's love;
 - real forgiveness does not require repentance from the other, only our repenting for making pain stronger than God's love
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