

**Psalm 39:12 “Hear my prayer, O Lord... for I am a stranger with You...”**

***Forgiven and Forgiving***

Respect - defines the existence of any relationship built God's way ó shown by listening

Honesty ó defines the depth of any relationship ó shown by speaking (truth in love)

Commitment ó defines the length of any relationship ó shown by serving

Acceptance ó defines the enjoyment of any relationship ó shown by embracing

**Forgiveness – defines the growth of any relationship – shown by praying**

***How we love to be forgiven, how we struggle to forgive!***

No relationship on earth is perfect because every relationship *I* have on earth includes at least one sinner *ME*. Healthy, growing, satisfying, sanctifying relationships don't just happen by accident, they must be grown. They take time and attention. And the deeper the relationship becomes, the more potential there is for deep hurt. Most of us experience the pain of broken relationships. God Himself endures the pain of broken relationships and has given everything to restore them.

Psalm 99 ð...You were to them *God-who-forgives...ð*

Though the bible is full of the stories of broken relationships, it is also full of the stories of *forgiveness and restored relationships*. Isaac and Ishmael were restored at the grave of Abraham. Esau and Jacob were restored before the death of Isaac. Joseph and his brothers were restored before the death of Jacob. And the very first book of scripture written, **Job**, records the horrible pain of an incredibly close relationship (between Job and his three best friends) disintegrating before our eyes. *Don't miss Job 42:7-10*. God required the forgiveness and restoration of Job and his friends *before* He restored Job's losses. That little phrase *when he prayed for his friends* demonstrated Job's forgiveness of his friends. I forgive those I pray for. Matt 5:9, Matt 5:21-26, Matt 5:43-48 and Matt 6:12-15 all apply, as does Matt 18:21-35 and Eph 4:30-32. I'd encourage you to memorize these passages. We all need them!

The reality is this: *I can't be right with God and wrong with my brother.*

I must forgive as I've been forgiven. While I cannot force reconciliation if my brother is unwilling, I still must resolve the matter fully in my own heart. I must forgive. I must pray FOR those who have hurt me, mistreated me, used me, abused me, and hated me. My Savior did, even as He died. Steven did, even as he died. Job did. Joseph did. They forgave abuse and incredible pain inflicted on purpose.

Our ability to forgive others demonstrates the reality of the gospel we preach! The miracle of God's grace and the power of God's gospel are seen in the way we forgive. Only in Christ Jesus do we find the ability to fully forgive. It's easy to let hurts build into resentment, allowing the devil a foothold in our lives. Resentment is lethal to marriages, families, friends and teams. It hardens the heart, grieves the Spirit, deadens the conscience, and withers the soul. Forgiving and being forgiven restores the heart, reinvigorates relationships, and renews the work of the Spirit in our souls. Bless God for His wonderful forgiveness. ð the blood of Jesus Christ keeps on cleansing us from all sin ð GLORY!

Let me recommend that you do your own Bible study on forgiveness. Someone you know could use it!  
From one forgiven sinner to another ð we sure do love you and pray for you! Adios, Ron