

WEEK TWO: HOW GOD VIEWS FORGIVENESS

NOT AVAILABLE ON DEMAND...only true VICTIMS can forgive. No one can demand it from us unless or until we are ready to offer it. When people hurt us, we want them to pay for it. Let them grovel, crawl on their knees to beg our forgiveness. Deep inside us, there is a CALCULATOR, the internal way we TRACK DEBTS, what people owe us for the wrongs that they've done. Our CALCULATORS can malfunction, computing WHO OWES WHAT TO WHOM. Who is on your debtor list?

WHO OWES YOU? WHAT ARE YOU OWED: AN APOLOGY, A 2ND CHANCE, A FRESH START, AN EXPLANATION, A THANK YOU

That one who OWES YOU, OWNS YOU. When we resent them, we become their slave. Trying to even the score leaves us empty. We should toss our CALCULATORS. Our refusal to forgive is SIGN that we have lost sight of the DEBT WE OWE GOD. Have we forgotten OUR DEBT to him? Our debt isn't small: the BIG TAB of spurning his love, and breaking his heart. We are overdrawn at the bank; all accounts read "Insufficient funds". We run a HIGHER TAB WITH GOD than anyone will ever owe us.

HOW GOD VIEWS OUR DEBTS... God is forgiving by nature, or he would've WASHED HIS HANDS OF US. Once we bring God into it, things change. With God, all things are possible. Forgiveness COSTS SOMEONE SOMETHING; imagine WHAT IT COST GOD. Where would we be if, instead of love, God had shown us hate? What if Jesus looked down from the Cross, "I'm sorry, there's no room for grace" Through his death, God did with our debt what we can never do with debt others owe us: HE PAID IT HIMSELF. He repaired what we broke, bearing the cost of our sin in his Son, reconciling not only humanity to God but humans one to another.

WALKING ON HOLY GROUND...forgiveness is like walking on HOLY GROUND: we remove shoes, proceed with caution, and know that God is present. Jesus even linked forgiveness to our relationship with God, including in PRAYER HE TAUGHT his followers.

IF YOU FORGIVE OTHERS YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER WILL FORGIVE YOU...BUT IF YOU DON'T FORGIVE OTHERS, NEITHER WILL YOUR FATHER FORGIVE YOU.

Imagine if God forgive us to the degree that we've forgiven others. We would be toast. If he showed us mercy the same way we show it, we'd have to close the church. God doesn't KEEP TRACK OF SINS; he REMOVES them. Being merciful is the proper way to live before a merciful God. By forgiving, we mirror what God has done for us. We don't earn his forgiveness by letting others off hook that he'll let us off the hook. God trashed HIS CALCULATOR long ago.