

FORGIVENESS & REPENTANCE

Handout for Lesson 11 of *Thought Provoking Questions*

THE STARTING POINT FOR CHRISTIANS	IMPORTANT DISTINCTIONS REGARDING FORGIVENESS AND REPENTANCE	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) We must love our enemies and pray for our enemies. 2) We must leave vengeance to God and to the government, his minister. 3) We must not be filled with pride. 4) We must follow God as our perfect model for how we should forgive. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) There is a difference between our forgiveness by God and our forgiveness of others. 2) There is a difference between conditional and unconditional forgiveness. 3) There is a difference between a sin against man and a sin against God. 4) There is a difference between sins and annoyances. 5) There is a difference between being the sinner and being the "sinnee." 6) There is a difference between forgiving and being willing to forgive. 7) There is a difference between forgiving the living and forgiving the dead. 8) There is a difference between forgiving someone you know and forgiving a stranger. 9) There is a difference between forgiveness by a Christian to another Christian versus forgiveness by a Christian to a non-Christian. 10) There is a difference between forgiveness based on love and forgiveness based on other motives. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3) What God does is good, and God withholds forgiveness absent repentance. 4) Some argue it is not possible to forgive absent repentance. 5) Why is there a procedure to take problems before the church if we are to forgive such issues absent repentance? 6) Human government is set up by God and is instructed by God not to offer unconditional forgiveness but rather to execute wrath on those that do evil. 7) Unless all forgiveness is unconditional, there must be a line between those we must forgive and those we must not forgive — and in the Bible that line is repentance.
HOW DOES GOD FORGIVE?	ARGUMENTS OFTEN RAISED IN SUPPORT OF THE VIEW THAT REPENTANCE IS NOT REQUIRED	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) God longs to forgive. He is ready, eager, and quick to forgive. 2) God offers forgiveness to all people but does not forgive all people. God loves all people but does not forgive all people. 3) God seeks out sinners. 4) God is not willing that any should perish. He wants to forgive everyone. 5) God does not forgive absent repentance. 6) God is good, forbearing, and long-suffering to those who do not repent. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Just because God does not forgive absent repentance does not mean that he does not impose that requirement upon us. 2) Some verses on forgiveness say nothing about repentance. 3) We must always be willing to forgive, and if we are willing to forgive then we will forgive. 4) Forgiveness of others is healthy for us. It allows us to get over the feelings of bitterness and resentment we might otherwise have. 5) The offender wins if we do not forgive him. 6) It is loving to forgive and we must always be loving. 7) When we forgive unconditionally we are seen as different and that action provides a powerful message to the world. 	
EXAMPLES OF FORGIVENESS (OR THE LACK THEREOF)	ARGUMENTS SUPPORTING THE PROPOSITION THAT REPENTANCE IS REQUIRED	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) There are many Old Testament examples including Esau's forgiveness of Jacob and Joseph's forgiveness of his brothers. 2) Paul and Alexander the copper-smith in 2 Timothy 4:14-15. 3) Paul and the slanderous, false apostles in Corinth. 4) The early church and Rome. 5) The Prodigal Son in Luke 15. 6) Luke 17:3-4. 7) Matthew 18:15-35. 8) Jesus' prayer from the cross. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) We are to forgive as God forgives; we are to forgive as we ourselves have been forgiven — and we are not forgiven absent repentance. 2) We are to follow the model in Luke 17:3-4 and that model requires repentance. 	