

- ↳ We are going to spend our time together looking mostly at the counterfeits to forgiveness. If we want to have a good grasp on what forgiveness is, we have to eliminate what it isn't.
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What forgiveness isn't.

- 1) Excusing is not forgiving.
 - ✓ Excusing is not forgiveness. Sin is never excusable; God never excuses sin. Your sin will never be swept under the rug, and our forgiving of others will not work if that is our approach. Proverbs 19:11, you still have to say it was wrong, but that you're going to overlook it. Excusing places the blame on something else besides the person who sinned, again, God will never do that! Jesus isn't to blame for our sins, Jesus paid the price for them. Forgiveness says, "this was wrong, you did this to me, but I choose forgive you." C.S. Lewis, "Christianity means to forgive the inexcusable because God has forgiven the inexcusable in you." Again, our example is God; He doesn't excuse sin or misplace blame, He places clear blame on the sinner and then forgives the sin.
- 2) Trust and/or reconciliation is not forgiving.
 - ✓ Forgiveness isn't the same as trusting, John 2:24-25. God forgives people without trusting them all the time! Somebody may chaff at the idea that God doesn't trust us. To those people I have a question: Do you trust yourself 100%? God forgiveness of our sin is our reason to forgive other's sins. Nevertheless, others have to come up with the reason for us to trust them. Jesus earned the reason for us to forgive, they have to earn the reason for us to trust. Reconciliation is similar, "if you really forgive then you will reconcile the relationship." This is not true! We forgive regardless of whether or not the person changes or repents. Reconciliation requires two parties coming together and making adjustments to their lives. God has reconciled Himself to the world through the blood of Jesus but that doesn't mean that the whole world is going to heaven. They have to reconcile themselves to Him, 2nd Corinthians 5:18-19, 20. Sometimes the best way to forgive and to walk in forgiveness with someone else is to stay away from them!
- 3) Forgiving isn't forgetting.
 - ✓ Your mind is not a hard drive that can be reformatted, so the information is permanently deleted, memories are there permanently. Forgiveness is agreeing to live with the consequences of someone else's sin and that often includes the memories. Part of forgiveness is choosing to not dwell on memories or the past events. **Forgiveness isn't truly forgetting just refusing to recall or dwell on the past. Alexander Pope** reminds us: "to err is human, but to forgive is divine."

Humans do err often, that is why we must learn to forgive, but true forgiveness is a God thing. True forgiveness is a miracle of God, and that is why we are called to depend on Him, otherwise forgiveness is impossible!
