

The Corinthian Letters, Lesson 53, 1st Corinthians 13, "Love is the Answer, Part 6"

- ✍ When the subject of forgiveness arises, we can be certain that we are dealing with people's real needs. Not a soul who hasn't been mistreated or hurt us in some way by someone who should have acted differently. It also tells us why this particular facet of biblical love is such a hill to climb: "love keeps no record of wrongs suffered" or "forgives." References: Colossians 3:13 Luke 6:37, Matthew 18:21-22, Mark 11:25, and Ephesians 4:31-32.

1. Love keeps no record of wrong in fact it breaks the record doesn't it?

- ✓ Back in the days of the dinosaurs they used to record music on a vinyl disc called a record! They gouged grooves into the vinyl by the sound that was recorded. They would call this "cutting a record." The grooves were irreversible and once they were done you could never go back and change them. Similar to this is the record of wrongs done to us: can't be undone, erased, it can only be broken. That is the way love acts, it breaks the record. Love doesn't keep books, it closes them.

2. Love is a powerful thing, arguably one of the most powerful acts there is, if not the most powerful.

- ✓ Whatever love does is extremely powerful, including and especially in the area of forgiveness. Forgiveness seems like weakness to our messed-up way of thinking (seems stronger to hold a grudge and take revenge). "Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone. Romans 12:18," notice what love through forgiveness overcomes (elsewhere: covers a multitude of sins).

3. So, let's get a grip on what real biblical forgiveness is, and is not.

- ✓ One, does not make light of sin, addresses wrong head on. Doesn't excuse sin but calls it what it is. Forgiveness calls sin, sin. Two, forgiveness isn't free, there is always a price to pay for any sin. When we forgive we choose to absorb the price of the sin committed. This exactly how God forgave us!! Three, forgiveness is not earned, if our forgiveness requires a person to "pay for it" or even "ask for it" before we forgive, it's not real forgiveness. Four, forgiveness is an act of faith, it says, "I believe that God is in control and that he will thoroughly handle justice where and when it is needed." Five, forgiveness involves forgetting, "keeps no record of wrong," and "remembers our sins no more." This means you don't use it anymore as a weapon, as a thought; it's not brought up again. Six, forgiveness like all aspects of love, it requires an act of God in your life.
- ✓ Biblical rules of forgiveness: "Love does not rejoice in unrighteousness but rejoices in the truth."
 - 1) Granted quickly, do not let the sun set on your anger.
 - 2) Granted privately, Matthew 18:15, and Proverbs 17:9.
 - 3) Granted freely, doesn't require them to pay and absorbs the debt.

4. Truth and unrighteousness are mutually exclusive in the same way the light and darkness are mutually exclusive.

- ✓ Love hates unrighteousness: reference Ephesians 5:8-9, and John 8:12, love wants what is best for you always and unrighteousness or darkness isn't what's best. Consider what the darkness of unrighteousness does:
 - 1) Darkness blinds you in the physical world you cannot see without light. In the spiritual world you cannot see without truth. When someone indulges in unrighteousness, it blinds them so that even more darkness can come over them.
 - 2) Darkness enslaves if the whole world were dark, or blind and I alone could see, I could tell you whatever I wanted, and you would have no way of verifying it. Darkness would make you dependent upon me for your reality. When we sin, it darkens our understanding, and we allow the devil to describe reality for us. Truth or light makes us free of his reality.

In most cases when we commit sin we aren't telling anyone, and if someone asks us about it, we tend to lie. It's the nature of the disease called unrighteousness, grows best in the dark. Like a bad bacterium, if you expose them to light, they die. Sin exposed by "The Light" dies. This is why love rejoices in the truth because nothing bad grows in the light of it. Love doesn't want anything bad to grow in the one it loves so it rejoices with the truth.
