

# MEN of the BANNER

F O R G I V E N E S S F R O M T H E H E A R T

Then Peter came and said to Him, “Lord how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?” Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven. For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. When he had begun to settle them, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. But since he did not have the means to repay, his lord commanded him to be sold, along with his wife and children and all that he had, and repayment to be made. So the slave fell to the ground and prostrated himself before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me and I will repay you everything.’ And the lord of that slave felt compassion and released him and forgave him the debt. But that slave went out and found one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and he seized him and began to choke him, saying, ‘Pay back what you owe.’ So his fellow slave fell down to the ground and began to plead with him, saying ‘Have patience with me and I will repay you.’ But he was unwilling and went and threw him in prison until he should pay back what was owed. So when his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were deeply grieved and came and reported to their lord all that happened. Then summoning him, his lord said to him, ‘You wicked slave, I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave, in the same way that I had mercy on you? And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him. My heavenly Father will also do the same to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart” (Matthew 18:21-35, NASB)

Know the extent of our debt to God

Repaying God is impossible

The need for God’s mercy

To avoid God’s discipline

Extended to others (Ephesians 4:31, 32)

***The issue is only between God and us.***

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Why should we forgive?

***TO STOP THE PAIN! (Jonah)***

***So that no advantage be taken of us by Satan  
(2 Corinthians 2:10, 11)***

What is forgiveness?

***Not forgetting***

***Not excusing sin***

***Choosing not to take revenge***

***Choosing to live with the consequences of another's sin***

***Choosing not to hold another's sin against them (forgive them)***

Where is the justice?

***IN THE CROSS OF CHRIST***

***Forgiveness is an act of love (1Corinthians 13:5)***

One of the most inspiring stories of forgiveness is that of the late Corrie ten Boom. Corrie was a Christian Dutch woman who was imprisoned, beaten and humiliated in a Nazi concentration camp during World War II. After the war she returned to Germany to preach the good news of God's forgiveness.

At the close of a service in 1947, Corrie's message of forgiveness was put to a severe test. As people filed out of the church, one man came forward to talk to her. She recognized him immediately as one of the guards from the prison skull and crossbones on the cap. She remembered the shame of walking naked past him with thousands of women prisoners. She remembered her sister's slow, terrible death there. Her blood seemed to freeze.

Corrie tried to avoid talking to him, hoping he wouldn't remember her. But he identified himself as a guard at the camp where she had been. He said, "Since that time I have become a Christian, I know that God has forgiven me for the cruel things I did there." Then he stuck out his hand. "Will you forgive me?"

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She stood there with coldness clutching her heart. She did not want to forgive him. She didn't feel like forgiving him. But she knew forgiveness is an act of the will, not an emotion. "Jesus, help me!" She prayed silently. "I can lift my hand. I can do that much. You supply the feeling."

Almost mechanically she reached out to grasp his hand. As they joined hands, a healing warmth seemed to flood her whole being, bringing tears to her eyes, "I forgive you, brother!" she cried. "With my whole heart!" The former guard and the former prisoner grasped each other's hands for a long moment. Forgiveness had healed the hurts of the past.

*(Adapted from a tract by Good News Publisher, Westchester, IL.*

*(This story also appears in the book Stomping out the Darkness by Neil Anderson and Dave Park)*

Why is it so important to forgive?

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Review the definition of "forgiveness." Put the definition in your own words.

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What are the three influences that try to lure us away from God?

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Do you struggle forgiving those who hurt you? \_\_\_\_\_

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FORGIVENESS FROM THE HEART

Why do you think it is so hard sometimes?

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What did you think of the true story of Corrie ten Boom?

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God says that it is wrong to take revenge. Why does He forbid us to do so?

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The most important truth I learned from this session is:

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