

Why This Worldly Perspective May Be Skewing Your Idea of Forgiveness

How many times have we heard this statement, especially when someone is speaking to a brand-new believer? I know I have heard it 100 if not thousands of times since I first came to know that Yeshua (Jesus) is the Messiah. Yet, you can search through the entire Bible and you will not find one place where we are told to forgive ourselves.

We are told to forgive others in the Tanakh (Old Testament). We read over and over about G-D forgiving His people, and we even read about His people forgiving others. But we don't find a verse that commands us to forgive ourselves. When we look into the *Brit Chadashah* (New Testament), again we find many examples of instructions and commandments that tell us to forgive others, but again not one example of a verse that would command us to forgive ourselves.

Someone might ask, "Why is this important?" and, "What does it matter? After all, when a person forgives themselves don't they feel better afterwards?" and, "Isn't forgiving yourself a way to free yourself from the baggage and sins of your past?" The truth is no: Forgiving yourself does not do any of those things. What actually does those things is our understanding the forgiveness of G-D and accepting that He has forgiven us from all our sins.

When we insist on forgiving ourselves, we actually place ourselves in a position to say, "I know G-D forgives me, but that forgiveness is not fully mine until I also forgive myself." This does two things. One, it makes G-D's forgiveness incomplete, and two, it actually places our role in forgiveness above the role of G-D's. His forgiveness becomes

reliant and effective only if we then ratify or sign off on it, as if we were G-D's supervisor.

The truth is that G-D has, through the atonement of Messiah Yeshua, provided forgiveness for all sins of all people, regardless of whether people accept that they have had complete forgiveness provided for them or not. Our role is to accept the gift of forgiveness and then live our lives as new creations.

"Therefore, if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature. Old things have passed away. Look, all things have become new" (2 Cor. 5:17).

We read the following in Luke 7:47 about the woman who anointed Yeshua's feet: "Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little loves little."

Notice that Yeshua said her sins, "which are many," have been forgiven. He did not then instruct her that, in order for her to walk in that forgiveness, she would need to forgive herself.

While some might think this is a "solution in search of a problem," the reality is whenever men assume authority that belongs to G-D, it is a problem and that problem always ends up with false doctrines and ultimately idolatry.

"They turned the truth of God into a lie and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen" (Rom. 1:25).

Simply stated, we, as believers in Yeshua, need only to understand the forgiveness that was provided by His substitutionary sacrifice and accept that forgiveness is ours. Now to work on the forgiveness that is our responsibility,

"For if you forgive men for their sins, your heavenly Father

will also forgive you” (Matt. 6:14). {eoa}

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