

Can We Forgive Ourselves?

The short answer is: no. The long answer is: absolutely not.

I have often heard that after God forgives us, that we need to forgive ourselves: as if God's forgiveness doesn't take care of it all.

I don't believe that it is possible to forgive ourselves because it implies that we don't need God to deal with the law of sin, which is our human weakness.[1] It is the idea that we can fix ourselves without God, which is a humanist attempt to arrive at inner peace without the peace of God. It is a secular attempt to mimic God's forgiveness. The law of sin prevents it. We are trying to fix our feelings without the help of grace; or we give lip service to grace and then proceed with doing it our own way apart from grace. This is not Christianity and is counter to God's plan of being redeemed through Jesus Christ. Real forgiveness only comes from God; therefore, there are no peace and strength for us apart from God and our unconditional trust in Him.

The separation between God's forgiveness and self-forgiveness is artificial. There is no separation between a supposed judicial forgiveness from God and self-forgiveness. Judicial forgiveness is only granted when a law is broken; but Christianity is not of religious law.[2] It is a religion of the Spirit. The Law is written in our hearts through the Holy Spirit within us.[3] This comes about by our humility toward God which opens us up to His Spirit and grace. We release our cares on God in order to have the grace to deal with the effects of the law of sin. [4] This does not come about by attempting to have righteousness before God by obeying religious law because the separation between God and us remains when there isn't faith in Christ. Christ has replaced religious law in the new covenant.[5]

Without humility toward God, there is no grace and no forgiveness. The thought that self-forgiveness implies cooperation with God's grace is false because we need to draw close to God by releasing our cares on Him in order to have grace; therefore, God needs to be part of the process. When we are in the state of the grace that sanctifies us, we are already in the state of cooperation with God's grace, and there is no need for us to do anything more than to continue to walk in the Spirit.[6]

The fruit of the Spirit neutralizes our tendency to sin because it contains God's peace and strength for us: and this is what grace consists of. This is why we are told to be anxious for nothing by casting all of our care on God for receiving grace, instead of relying on our own efforts. Relying on our own efforts thwarts God's strength. Resting in God enhances it. The result is God's peace that passes all understanding along with His strength: and this is what God's forgiveness looks like.

For more information and a FREE download of Peter Aiello's entire book, visit

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[1] Cf. Matthew 26:41; Romans 7:14 thru 8:2; 6:14-18; 8:1-4; Galatians 5:16

[2] Cf. Romans 5:14; 8:1-4.

[3] Cf. John 16:13-15; 14:16-18, 26; Mark 13:11; 2Corinthians 3:2-9; Ezekiel 36:26-27; Jeremiah 31:31-33; Hebrews 8:10; 7:11-12; 24-27; 10:19-23

^[4] Cf. 1Peter 5:5-7; James 4:5-10; Philippians 4:6-7; Proverbs 3:5-6; Matthew 6:25-34; 11:28-30; Psalms 37:7; 55:22; Isaiah 26:3-4; 30:15; 55:7-9; John 6:63; Galatians 5:22-23; Romans 6:13; 8:28

^[5] Cf. John 14:6; Galatians 5:1-6; Hebrews 4:14-16

^[6] Cf. Galatians 5:16-25