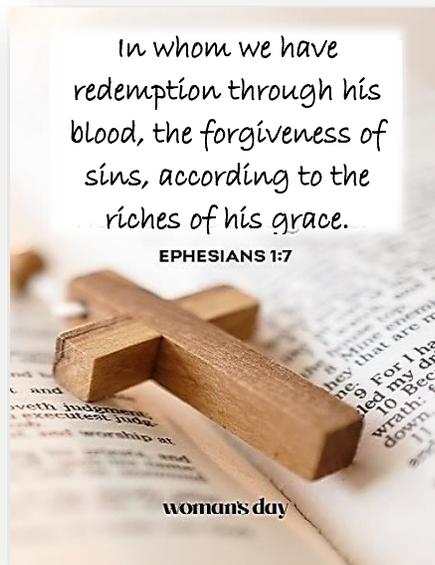


## October Bulletin Insert - 2021

# *Seek Forgiveness and to Forgive*

by Pat Chadwick



**There are two topics in this month's theme, both necessary and vital to our spiritual wellbeing: #1. To seek forgiveness and #2. To forgive.**

**#1.** Since it is sometimes hard for people to understand and accept God's forgiveness, I want to share a testimony about my own struggle in hopes that it would be helpful to others.

In my youth, there came a time when I sought to understand God's forgiveness. Oh, I had been taught and even believed Christ died for the sins of mankind and thus we could be forgiven but it seemed like a deep theological issue. Not something that applied to me personally. I just could not seem to wrap my head around how I could personally be forgiven. I had sincerely repented and had changed direction in my life, yet I did not feel forgiven. So, I began to pray to understand forgiveness.

I decided to read about the crucifixion of Christ in all four gospels thinking that this might bring me to a better understanding of forgiveness. One morning while reading about Christ dying on the cross, a sweet and warm Spirit flowed over me and my mind was enlightened. Suddenly I knew without a shadow of a doubt that when Christ hung on that cross he thought of me, he knew me personally, he knew my name and the sins I would commit. It was not just a broad brush of dying for mankind that happened on that cross but, a unique moment in time, when he personally died for each of us. It was very, very personal. He knew and thought of each one ever to be born and need forgiveness. It was revealed to me, that when he cried out, "My God why hast thou forsaken me," at that moment, he carried all our sins. God's Spirit monetarily withdrew from him and he alone carried the sins of all of us. Yet, it was a personal thing.

***And at the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me (Mark 15:39)?*** I was stunned. Never had I thought of his hanging on that wicked cross and thinking of me personally, or actually carrying my sins and my pain and regret over my sins. I wept over his goodness and mercy and great sacrifice for me. It was suddenly so real, so meaningful and so personal and I understood how he could forgive my sins for he died for me personally. I felt forgiven and a great load was lifted off of me that morning. What a majestic gift was given to each of us that day on the cross. The gift of forgiveness and salvation. Oh, what a great and precious gift!

I had never thought much about the blood of Jesus but after this experience it became precious to me, for it was shed for me. I knew then and know now, that if I had been the only person born, who had sinned, he would have still gone to that cross just for me.

John the Revelator introduces Jesus in the beginning of Revelations this way: ***And unto him who loved us, be glory; who washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God, his Father. To him be glory and dominion, forever and ever. Amen (Revelations 1:6).***

We can seek forgiveness and be forgiven because we have been washed in his blood.

#2. Along with this forgiveness that is so freely offered to us from our Heavenly Father comes the second point: **Just as He has forgiven us, we must forgive others. If we don't forgive others we can't be forgiven. Jesus really means this!**

*And when ye stand praying, forgive if ye have aught against any; that your Father also who is in heaven, may forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father who is in heaven forgive your trespasses (Mark 11: 27-28).*



We often find it difficult to forgive others because our emotions get in the way. For this reason, I would share with you the following testimony. When Hal and I were putting our marriage back together, I carried a lot of bitterness and deep anger against him. I carried a whole list of things in my mind he had done that I felt I could not forgive him for. My emotions ruled my thinking. I was praying to be able to forgive him but just didn't see how that was possible considering how I "felt".

Then one day at a garage sell, of all places, the Lord drew my attention to a worn and tattered little book called, *Christian's Secret of a Happy Life*. I thought, "Well, I would like to know what secrets led to a happy life." And it was marked free, so I took it. It had been written in 1888 by Hannah Whitall Smith, a Quaker. This particular copy was published in 1916. It had seen a better day but within the covers of this tattered book lay the answer to my current dilemma on how to forgive Hal. That is why God led me to it.



**Quote from Hannah Whitall Smith, "Cease to consider your emotions, for they are only servants; and regard simply your will, which is the real king in your heart."**

Hannah's basic secret about forgiveness was that if you pray and tell God you have forgiven a person, then believe it. **Believe it and act accordingly!** We cannot always control our emotions but we can control our will and our actions. I

would describe her wisdom and instructions as this: **"Act Out Forgiveness"** then your emotions will, in time, come along side your actions. Don't let your emotions lead you in these matters. **Emotions can be like naughty children, sometimes you have to ignore them and sit them in a corner. Even spank them and say, "I'm not paying attention to you, your naughty." Say to yourself, "How would I treat this individual if I had forgiven him or her?" And treat them accordingly.**

So, I prayed and told God I had forgiven Hal and then I made a list of things I would do for Hal if I had forgiven him and loved him. It was not always easy but I did those things on the list, even when I did not feel like it. I found out Hannah was indeed correct. My emotions did, eventually, come along side of my actions. I think this is an important element in forgiving

others. Too often we let our emotions lead us when in reality we just need to tell God we have forgiven the person and act accordingly. Even make a list and follow it, if necessary. Remember your will is the king, emotions are just servants. Don't let them rule you.





## Digging Deeper

**F. Henry Edwards** in his book, “*Fundamentals*” p. 128-132, says concerning Sin and Forgiveness: “The nature of sin involves both misuse of power entrusted to us by God, and also the worst

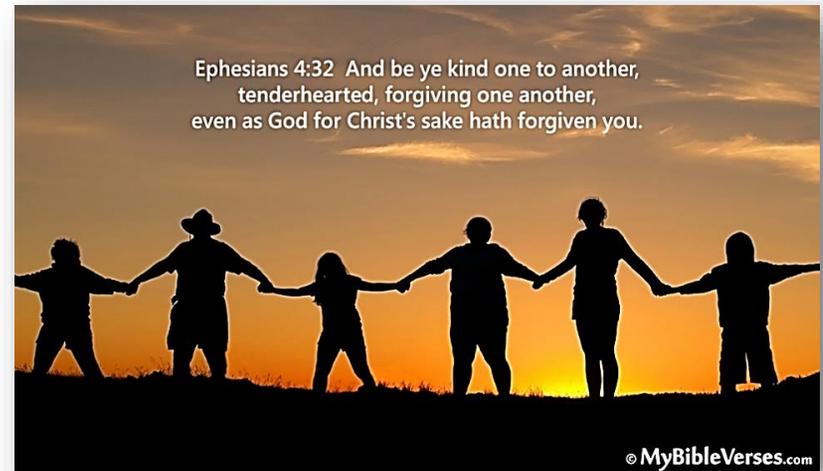
kind of ingratitude and disloyalty. The most immediate and disastrous result of sin is alienation from God, breaking personal relations with him. This does not mean that our Heavenly Father ceases to love us when we sin, but it does mean that we cease to be comfortable in his presence, and his Spirit is withdrawn from us...**Our Heavenly Father is eager to forgive us, both individually and collectively.** Many years ago, he said, *‘I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake (Isaiah 43:25).’*

For the individual, this forgiveness involves restoration of the relationship broken by sin...Such restoration is not easy; it is worse than useless unless it is accompanied by inner change (action) a spiritual readjustment...We must be sincerely sorry for our sins, anxious to make all restitution in our power, and hungry for readmission to God’s family circle. **Our Father never ceases to love us; but he does not forgive us until we have repented...Repentance is not mere emotionalism and it is not just a change in mind it is an upward change in the direction of a man’s life. Our Heavenly Father wants to forgive us and has done his part...our response to his pleading is repentance.”**

*Behold, he who has repented of his sins, the same is forgiven, and I, the Lord remembereth them no more (Doctrine and Covenants 58:9c).*



*As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us (Psalms 103:12).*



## Digging Deeper with Apostle Charles Neff

*The hastening time is here and greater unity than ever before is necessary if the forces of opposition are to be met (Doctrine and Covenants 135:2b).*

**Apostle Charles Neff** - On the topic of forgiving others, from “*Twelve Sermons*” p. 83-84. Bro. Neff says: “It is interesting to note that the scriptures in the book of James about calling the elders for the laying on of hands also instructs: *“Confess your faults one to another, and pray for one another, that ye may be healed (James 5:16).”* This emphasizes the importance of right relationships in the matter of physical, mental and spiritual well-being.

Perhaps we would be well advised to take this personally. When we have ill feelings toward someone or are burdened down with a sense of guilt because of our faults, it is a good time to seek healing. We can best do this by declaring, **“I believe in Christ”**. I believe his major message to all mankind was and is that we are all worthwhile. **This means I am worthwhile and have purpose. It means the person who has offended me, or whom I have delt unjustly, is likewise worthwhile**

**and has purpose. The worth of both of us is diminished because of alienation. I will go to that person, confess my condition, and pledge myself to henceforth recognize him as a person of worthwhile purpose.**

The need for healing, in the sense of developing health-giving unity, also applies to the corporate life of the church. Congregational leaders are called to muster the skills and courage to provide healing leadership. A leader's main role is to help men understand their worth, and to acknowledge the fact that they can be healed of sickness related to relationships. **Body unity is the objective; it is imperative if the body is to live.**"

*See that ye love one another (Doctrine and Covenants 85:38a).*

*But now are they many members, yet but one body...There should be no schism in the body (1 Corinthians 12:20, 25).*

*Wherefore I say unto you, that ye ought to forgive one another, for he that forgiveth not his brother his trespasses, standeth condemned before the Lord, for there remaineth in him the greater sin. I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men; and ye ought to say in your hearts, Let God judge between me and thee, and reward thee according to thy deeds (Doctrine and Covenants 64:2d-e).*

## Digging Deeper with Elbert A. Smith



*Only in the peace of fraternity and the unity of those caught up in the spirit of Zion's redemption can the work of the Lord be accomplished. To this task let the church devote its energies (Doctrine and Covenants 136:3c).*

**Elbert A. Smith** - In the book, "*Selected Writings*", speaks about *Peace and Good Will Among Men*, saying: "How do we get on with our fellow workers in the church? Several times in the Doctrine and Covenants, coming through 3 successive prophets and using a variety of words, is this divine injunction: "Let contention cease". We will never know how much our personal troubles have cost the church...**How many times have you forgiven someone you cannot work with? Once? Twice? Three Times? Or seventy times seven?** *Then came Peter to him and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times? Jesus said unto him, I say not unto thee, until seven times; but, until seventy times seven (Matthew 18:21-22). **We need a practical, everyday application of the spirit of the gospel of Jesus Christ right here among ourselves...**This admonition to priesthood applies to all Saints, "*Be patient and not contentious so far as you can agree, work together without heat, confusion, or malice (Doctrine and Covenants 122:16a).**

*Remember and keep the commandments, be alert to keep out of the church and from its members those forces which make for disunity, and in harmony and saintly accord be about the task of freeing Zion from her bondage (Doctrine and Covenants 137:6b).*

## Action Section

I think we all know what we need to do = Repent of Our Sins and Seek Forgiveness from God and Forgive Anyone We Have Aught Against.



**Make October a Month of Reconciliation with Your God and Your Fellowman.**