

FORGIVING & BEING FORGIVEN

R. JAY WAGGONER



Developed as a study course by Emmaus Correspondence School, founded in 1942.

Forgiving & Being Forgiven

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STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS

*F*orgiving & Being Forgiven concisely presents what the Bible teaches about the one crucial matter in every relationship—the need to forgive one another. Whether you need to forgive someone who has offended you, or you need to be forgiven, *Forgiving & Being Forgiven* is your guide for repairing the damage.

LESSONS YOU WILL STUDY

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Course Components

This course has two parts: this study course and the exam booklet.

How To Study

This study has four chapters, and each chapter has its own exam. Begin by asking God to help you understand the material. Read the chapter through at least twice, once to get a general idea of its contents and then again, slowly, looking up any Bible references given.

Begin studying immediately, or if you are in a group, as soon as the group begins. We suggest that you keep a regular schedule by trying to complete at least one chapter per week.

Exams

In the exam booklet there is one exam for each chapter (exam 1 covers chapter 1 of the course). Do not answer the questions by what you think or have always believed. The questions are designed to find out if you understand the material given in the course.

After you have completed each chapter, review the related exam and see how well you know the answers. If you find that you are having difficulty answering the questions, review the material until you think you can answer the questions. It is important that you read the Bible passages referenced as some questions may be based on the Bible text.

How Your Exams Are Graded

Your instructor will mark any incorrectly answered questions. You will be referred back to the place in the course where the correct answer is to be found. After finishing this course with a passing average, you will be awarded a certificate.

If you enrolled in a class, submit your exam papers to the leader or secretary of the class who will send them for the entire group to the Correspondence School.

See the back of the exam booklet for more information on returning the exams for grading.



WHEN WE ARE AT FAULT

Our relationships are vital. Relationships with other human beings are the foundation stones of our society. Relationships are crucial to the success and wellbeing of families, businesses, churches, and communities. They are also vital to the wellbeing of every individual. God created within us the need to interact with other human beings. Dr. Paul Faulkner, in his book *Making Things Right When Things Go Wrong*, cites an amazing study that connects health and wellbeing with social interaction.

Lisa Berkman and her colleagues at the University of California in Berkeley made an intensive study of 7,000 adults over a period of nine years. They found that people with weak social ties to others had a two-to-five times higher death rate than folks with strong social ties. That's a startling statistic! They're saying that a person with few or no friends is far more likely to die prematurely than a person with a lot of friends. This finding held true, regardless of whether the person smoked, drank, exercised, jogged, or was overweight.¹

**God created us
with the need to
interact with other
human beings.**

Relationships are certainly crucial to the individual. Furthermore, one can only wonder what the effect of broken relationships may be on a whole generation of young people. According to an article in *USA Today* in 1999, 23 percent of U.S. children were living in single-parent households in 1960, and by 1990 that figure had increased to 42 percent.²

In spite of their connection to our health and wellbeing, and in spite of their importance to society in general, relationships often fail. John C. Maxwell, in his book *Be a People Person* (pp. 118-119), identifies a common

process that relationships go through before ending in separation. He says that relationships begin with a **honeymoon stage** in which the parties are temporarily blinded to the negative traits of the other person in the excitement of finding someone who meets a need in their lives. The honeymoon stage is followed by the **specific irritation stage**, in which reality sets in and negative irritating traits are noticed. The third stage is the **general discomfort stage**, in which specific irritations pile up and the parties begin to express their discomfort.

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**In spite of their
importance to
society in general,
relationships
often fail.**
————— ❧ —————

The **try harder stage** follows, in which the parties increase efforts to solve their problems. Unfortunately, by this point it is often hard for them to separate the problem from the person. The **exhaustion stage** follows, when the parties tend to throw up their hands and quit on the relationship. **Separation** is the final stage.³ Simply put, every unresolved irritation brings about a degree of emotional distance between two people. With each irritation there is more and more distance until the relationship falls apart.

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**Reconciliation
can be achieved if
we follow biblical
principles.**
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Relationships need not follow this pattern. Reconciliation can be achieved if we follow biblical principles. In Matthew 5:23-26 the Lord Jesus Christ provides us with the principles needed to repair relationships

that we have damaged. When we have damaged a relationship with another person, we need to do what is necessary to achieve reconciliation. Two steps are necessary.

1. ADMIT GUILT

The first step to repairing a damaged relationship is to admit guilt and take responsibility for our actions. This is clear in verses 23 and 24.

“Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.”

When Convicted

Steps toward reconciliation should be taken immediately upon remembering that we have offended someone. If our conscience is operating rightly it will accuse us when we are guilty (John 8:9; Rom. 2:15). As

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**Some folks never
 seem to admit
 doing wrong.**
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someone once said, “Your conscience may not keep you from doing wrong, but it keeps you from enjoying it.” Some folks never seem to admit doing wrong. When confronted they either claim they didn’t mean to offend or they accuse the offended party of being overly sensitive.

Those who do not admit sin may do so for three reasons. Some have personality types that find it hard to admit a mistake. Others have a poor self-concept and compensate by never admitting a fault. Still others are motivated by pride and just will not humble themselves. Everyone needs to be able to admit guilt both to themselves and to others.

We must not excuse ourselves for the above reasons. The repeated refusal to acknowledge guilt will render our conscience insensitive. Once our conscience ceases to function correctly we are in grave danger; our moral rudder is gone.

Before We Worship

It is not unusual to be confronted with our sin when we come to worship. Jesus spoke of just such an occurrence in verse 23. At this point in time, the Old Testament Mosaic law was still operative. They worshipped God by

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**How often we
 attempt to worship
 God while we are
 estranged from a
 fellow believer!**
 ————— ❧ —————

offering animal sacrifices. Here, Jesus was anticipating offenders bringing a trespass offering to God while neglecting reconciliation on the human level. Therefore, He instructed them to dispense with their worship until they were reconciled with the one they had offended.

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**Reconciliation
 should precede
 worship.**
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How often we attempt to worship God while we are estranged from a fellow believer! What if Jesus Himself were to meet us at the front door of the church next Sunday? Would He invite us in to worship or

send us away to be reconciled to a brother we had offended? Reconciliation should precede worship. Upon becoming aware of any offense committed against a brother, reconciliation should become our first priority.

To the Offended Party

We must confess our sins to the Lord, not as a means of maintaining salvation, but in order to please God and avoid His loving discipline. The word *confess* in 1 John 1:9 carries the basic idea of agreement. We have to agree with God's assessment of every thought, word or action. If sin is against God and no other person, then confession to God is all that is needed. No one else needs to know.

It is often not enough, however, to confess our sins to God alone. James 5:16 says, "Confess your trespasses to one another . . ." Obviously this does not mean that every sin must be confessed publicly. But when a sin affects another human being, we must confess that sin to the one we have offended. This is what James indicates in this verse—in fact, a different form of the word *confess* appears in James 5:16 than does in 1 John 1:9. In James the word that is used specifically refers to open or public confession before other people in addition to God.

Man has been excusing his sin since the very beginning. Adam tried to shift the blame to Eve, and Eve to the serpent (Gen. 3:12-13). We often use such excuses as "I'm under a lot of stress" and "I don't feel well." One major excuse in today's society is, "I was abused as

a child." Excuses may point to real and even tragic circumstances in our past, but they never excuse us from what we choose to do in the present. Isaac, Moses, and Daniel all turned out well, but each could have used his past as an excuse. Isaac could have forsaken God and blamed it on his father's trying to kill him. Moses, forsaken by his mother, might have followed the ways of Egypt. Daniel, kidnapped at a tender age, could have denied his God with good excuse.

Confession of sin does not come easy for fallen men, but it is essential to our spiritual health in general and our relationships in particular. As Proverbs 28:13 says, "He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy." Admitting our guilt is the first step to repairing any relationship we have damaged.

**Man has been
excusing his sin
since the very
beginning.**

2. MAKE AMENDS

The second step to repairing a relationship is to make amends for our offense. Confession is necessary, but it is often not enough. If some material or physical damage has been done, an attempt to repair the damage (or at least the expense of it) should be made.

The Mosaic law contained provisions for restitution, and this was what Jesus had in mind in verses 25 and 26.

————— ❧ —————
**Confession is
 necessary, but it is
 often not enough.**
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*“Agree with your adversary
 quickly, while you are on the way
 with him, lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, the judge
 hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison.
 Assuredly, I say to you, you will by no means get out of there till
 you have paid the last penny.”*

Willingly and Quickly

We must take the initiative to bring about reconciliation and do so as quickly as possible. Roman law allowed a plaintiff to forcibly bring the accused with him to court. Verse 25 says to agree with an adversary quickly, while “on the way.” This means coming to an agreement before reaching the courtroom. We should settle any matter in which we are at fault out of court promptly paying whatever is owed. Settling a matter may only require a specific apology that acknowledges the pain we have caused. Offering a gift may also be a means of achieving an agreement. This is what Jacob did for Esau when he returned to the land (Gen. 32-33). Most wives would testify that flowers and chocolate go a long ways toward achieving reconciliation!

Sometimes renewed commitments are what’s needed, both expressed and demonstrated. John the Baptist asked those coming to him for baptism to bear fruits worthy of repentance (Luke 3:8). After Peter’s denial of Jesus, the Lord told him to feed His sheep (John 21:17). Actual payment for damages or payment in excess of them may be what’s required. The case of Zacchaeus, the chief tax collector who returned four-fold to those he had cheated, is a good example for us to follow even though we are not subject to the specific Old Testament laws that he was (Luke 19:1-10).

Lest We Suffer the Consequences

We should make whatever amends are necessary in view of the possible consequences. In Jesus' day, offenders could end up in prison. There they would remain until they had paid all that was owed. This was not a pleasant proposition! Today, we need not fear imprisonment, but huge monetary awards may be ordered in civil cases. Without question, it is wise to avoid such a possibility.

CONCLUSION

When we have offended someone, repairing that relationship requires admitting guilt and making amends. Reconciliation certainly benefits the one we have offended, but it is also beneficial to us. We will be able to worship with a clear conscience and avoid any costly consequences of our offense. And who can measure the value of a friendship salvaged? As Martha Mason put it, "The richest man in the world is not the one who still has the first dollar he ever earned—it's the man who still has his first friend."²⁴

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EXAM BOOKLET AK '14 (1 UNIT) FBF

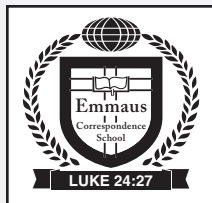
STUDENT NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

ADDRESS

CITY, STATE, ZIP

COURSE GRADE: _____

INSTRUCTOR



Exam developed by Emmas Correspondence School, founded in 1942.

A NOTE ON THE EXAMS

The exams are designed to check your knowledge of the course material and the Scriptures. After you have studied a chapter, review the exam questions for that lesson. If you have difficulty in answering the questions, re-read the material. If questions contain a Scripture reference, you may use your Bible to help you answer them. If your instructor has provided a single page Answer Sheet, record your answer on that sheet. This exam contains the following types of questions:

MULTIPLE CHOICE

You will be asked to write in the letter of the correct answer at the space on the right. Here is an example:

The color of grass is

- A. blue C. yellow
B. green D. orange

 B

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

Questions headed this way are designed to help you express your ideas and feelings. You may freely state your own opinions in answer to such questions.

RETURNING THE EXAM

See the back of this exam booklet for instructions on returning your exam for grading.

DO NOT PHOTOCOPY THESE EXAM PAGES

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CHAPTER 1 EXAM

WHEN WE ARE AT FAULT

EXAM GRADE

Before starting this exam, write your name and address on the front of this Exam Booklet.

Directions: Read each question carefully and write the letter of the correct answer in the blank space on the right. Use the separate answer sheet if provided.

1. Interpersonal relationships are
 - A. more trouble than they are worth
 - B. vital for the wellbeing of every person
 - C. optional for those who want them
 - D. something that will draw you away from God_____

2. In which of the following passages did Jesus tell us how to reconcile difficult relationships?
 - A. 1 John 1:9
 - C. Luke 3:8
 - B. Matthew 5:23-26
 - D. Mark 10:17-22_____

3. The first step to repairing a damaged relationship is to
 - A. analyze the steps leading up to the separation
 - B. confront the person we have hurt with his guilt
 - C. wait awhile to see if things resolve themselves
 - D. admit guilt and take responsibility for our actions_____

4. Habitually refusing to take responsibility for our offenses against others
 - A. desensitizes our conscience
 - B. helps us cope with our sinful nature
 - C. salves our conscience
 - D. demonstrates good self-control_____

5. According to Jesus, at what point should we try to make things right with someone we've sinned against?
 - A. when *they* bring up the offense
 - B. when we are sure they actually were offended
 - C. when we can't keep quiet about it anymore
 - D. immediately after we realize we've offended them_____

- 6. Why should we confess our sins to the Lord on a day-to-day basis?
 - A. to maintain our salvation
 - B. to earn God's favor
 - C. to please God and avoid His loving discipline
 - D. to avoid eternal judgment_____

- 7. What does the word *confess* mean in 1 John 1:9?
 - A. tell all the details to a church leader
 - B. explain to God why you did what you did
 - C. wallow in grief over what you did
 - D. agree with God that what you did was sin_____

- 8. When is it enough to confess our sin to God and no one else?
 - A. when the offended person is no longer speaking to us
 - B. when the person offended lives far away
 - C. when our sin is against God alone
 - D. when it's a minor offense_____

- 9. We must try to bring about reconciliation
 - A. when the offended one comes to us
 - B. as quickly as possible
 - C. as soon as the problem becomes known to the church
 - D. when others pressure us to do so_____

- 10. The story of Zacchaeus in Luke 19 illustrates the biblical principle of making amends. Which of the following is a good example of that for us?
 - A. offering a nonspecific apology to avoid bringing up the pain
 - B. paying for damages, maybe even extra
 - C. avoiding a renewed commitment
 - D. promising anything to get the person to forgive you_____

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

What have you learned about the relationship between forgiveness and physical health?
