

## Forgiveness

We rarely see a true 'Win-Win' situation. Forgiveness is one of them. Forgiveness benefits the forgiver as much as it does the forgiven. When you are offended or insulted, cheated or physically injured, it is so tempting to seek revenge or compensation. We sometimes even give such things the nice name of 'closure'. But just think of the cold facts. As they say in Accounting Principles, 'What are the Income, the Costs, the prior Net Worth and the final Balance?' The Offender has a Liability which he cannot repay, and you have a reduction in Income in the fact that you are injured and probably angry, but you have the doubtful Asset that you are "In the Right". So, what can you do?

You can collect an Income from a law suit, a foreclosure, a lien, a confiscation or a conviction and sentence. Actions such as these may reduce the other person's Assets, but do they increase yours? You can decrease the opponent's Assets by an act of revenge. But what is your status after you have acted? Have you gained as much as the other person has lost? If not, you may have turned the situation into a 'Lose-Lose' event. Is it worth it? Is your anger reduced or have you simply suppressed it?

Forgiveness is the intelligent action to deal with two problems - your anger and the other person's guilt. And you may have to take the first step.

Forgiveness had an early start in the history of the World. God was faced with a murder right at the start. He could have destroyed Cain for killing his brother Abel. That would not have appeased his anger; he had made man in his image and likeness and would have considered the whole project as a failure if he had destroyed the product of his work so early on. The first capital crime resulted in Cain having to do forced labor, but also having a mark put on him 'lest anyone finding him should kill him'. He had to live with his guilt. The human race descended from his younger brother Seth.

The Book of Leviticus is full of the ways to deal with problems and wrong-doings. Chapter after chapter lists all kinds and reasons for sins, whether deliberate or accidental. They stress the importance of accepting responsibility, the need for action and the need for someone to pay, but they also say "He shall be forgiven". Often the only one who has the ability to pay is the one who has been wronged. Forgiveness is not easy and can be costly, but it has great rewards. The apostle Peter said 'Be kind to one another, compassionate, forgiving one another, as God also in Christ has forgiven you.'

Forgiveness is not dependent on the offender's admission of guilt or desire for forgiveness. If we are the offenders, we can benefit from forgiveness only by accepting responsibility and guilt for what we have done. Making a mistake, an error in judgment or a bad decision is not accepting responsibility. We must admit that what we did was wrong.