

THE “IF” IN FORGIVENESS.

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INTRODUCTION:

A. Read the text: **Luke 17:3.**

B. Regarding the text:

1. We all need God’s forgiveness (**1 John 1:8-10**).
2. And at times we will need our brethren’s forgiveness.
3. Forgiveness is not automatic and unconditional.
4. There are two big *CONDITIONS* in obtaining forgiveness.

I. REPENTANCE (LUKE 17:3).

A. No one can have forgiveness without repentance.

1. The alien sinner must repent and be baptized (**Acts 2:38**).
2. The erring child of God must repent and pray to God (**Acts 8:22**).

B. Repentance is more than being sorry and acting better.

1. “Repent” means to change one’s mind for the better.” (Thayer).
2. Without a change of direction there is no repentance.

C. Repentance involves four elements:

1. Godly sorrow (**2 Cor. 7:9-10**). Not merely being sorry but being genuinely *grieved* over the sin.
 - 1) Could be sorry for many reasons rather than godly sorrow.
 - 2) One must have a sorrowful contrite spirit.
 - 3) Godly sorrow and pride cannot mix – do not demand forgiveness, beg for it.
2. A genuine change of heart ().
3. Confession of sins (**1 John 1:9; James 5:16**).
4. A true change of life (**Matthew 3:8; Acts 26:20**).

II. FORGIVENESS (MATT. 6:14-15).

A. Forgiving others is an essential part of Christian’s character (Colossians 3:12, 13**).**

1. He knows that he also has been forgiven.
2. At some point he will need someone’s forgiveness (**Galatians 6:1**).

B. An unforgiving person cannot please God (Matthew 18:21-35**).**

1. Once the conditions are met, forgiveness is given (**vs. 21-22; Luke 17:3-4**).
2. Punishment will come to those who will not forgive (**vs. 34-35**).

III. CONCLUSION:

A. The Lord wants to forgive you, but you must humble yourself and meet the conditions.

B. Remember: Only the penitent and the forgiving are forgiven.