



# Forgiveness

How and why it works

*Moving Beyond Forgiveness to  
Reconciliation*

*Matthew 5:17, 21-24*



- **Key Points from prior weeks.**

- A. Forgiveness is an **act of the will** to release, to let go, to pardon or cancel as one might a debt. Eph 4:31
- B. Forgiveness does not mean that we are **to ignore, minimize, or condone** what happened as OK. Mt 18:27
- C. Forgiveness is not the same as **reconciliation**.
- D. Forgiveness is **commanded** for believers, including believers forgiving themselves. Ep 4:32

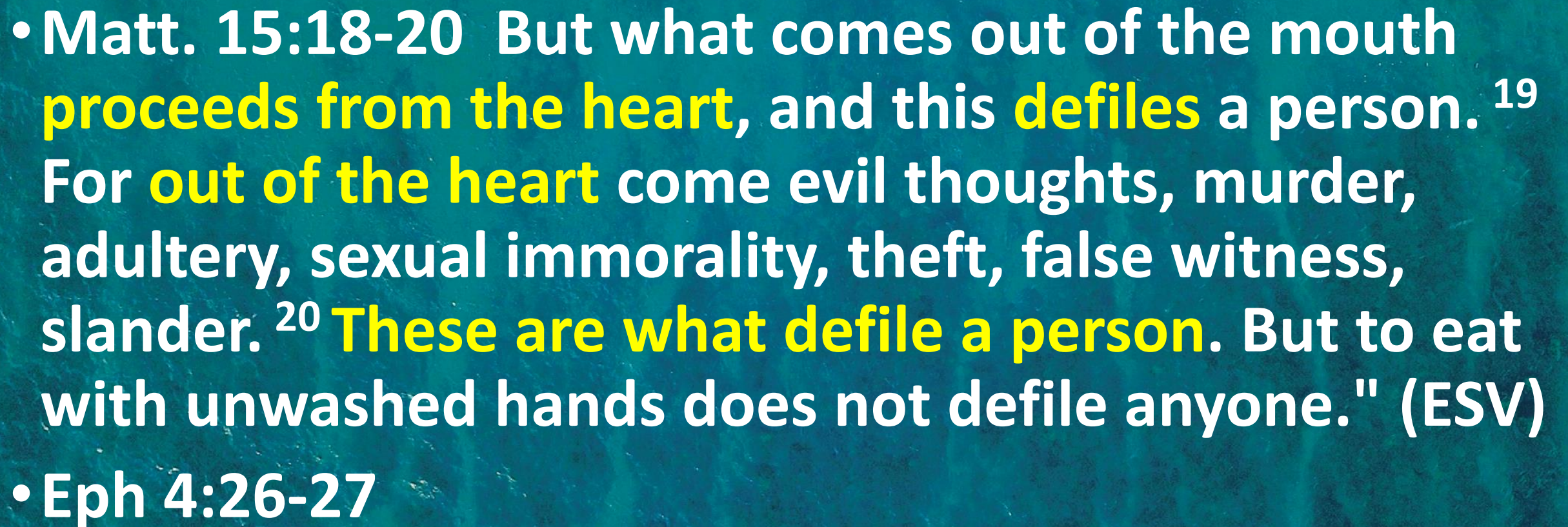


1. Jesus likens anger in our hearts to ***murder***.

- “You have heard that it was said, You shall not murder... But I say to you that everyone who is **angry** with his brother will be liable to **judgment** ... to the **council** ... to the **hell of fire**.” Matt 5:21, 22

- Matt 15:18-20

- Forgiveness is the remedy to remove anger from my heart. Matt 6:12, 14

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- Matt. 15:18-20 But what comes out of the mouth **proceeds from the heart**, and this **defiles** a person. <sup>19</sup> For **out of the heart** come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. <sup>20</sup> **These are what defile a person.** But to eat with unwashed hands does not defile anyone." (ESV)
  - Eph 4:26-27



## 2. Reconciliation *follows* forgiveness.

- Matt 5:23 So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your gift there before the altar and go. **First be reconciled to your brother**, and then come and offer your gift.”

### 3. We are “ambassadors” of reconciliation for God.

- 2 Cor 5:18 All this is from God, **who through Christ reconciled us to himself** and gave us the ministry of **reconciliation**; <sup>19</sup> that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and **entrusting to us the message of reconciliation**. <sup>20</sup> Therefore, we are **ambassadors** for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be **reconciled to God**.



4. I am called to **reconcile** when I am the **offender, the guilty party.**

**A. Matt 5:22** – if you have anger in your heart against someone ...

- Most times – do not go to them.

**B. Matt 5:23** – if someone has anger against you:

- Most times – go to them to resolve.



## 5. It takes two to reconcile.

- Rom 12:18 If possible, **so far as it depends on you**, live **peaceably** with all.
- Rom 14:19 So then let us **pursue what makes for peace** and for mutual upbuilding.
- Heb 12:14 **Strive for peace with everyone**, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.





## Next Steps.

1. Consider those who have “something against you.” (That is, you are the “guilty” party in the circumstances).
  - Take steps to “make peace” by going to them:
    1. Apologize for your actions.
    2. Ask them to forgive you;
    3. Give them a reason to feel “safe.”



## Additional Resources

- ***Choosing Forgiveness*, Nancy DeMoss. Moody Publishers.**
- ***Forgive & Forget*, Lewis Smedes, Harper One Publishers.**
- ***Total Forgiveness*, RT Kendal, Charisma House Publishers.**



# Forgiveness

How and why it works

*“The outcome of our lives is not determined by what happens to us but by how we respond to what happens to us.”*

- Nancy Demos. “Choosing Forgiveness.”



# Forgiveness

How and why it works

*“Resentment/anger/bitterness often make us feel that we keep those who hurt us in an emotional prison. Over time we come to realize that it has not been the offender that remains in jail but us. Our hatred affects us emotionally more than it affects the one who hurt us.”*

- Robert Enright, “Forgiveness is a Choice.”