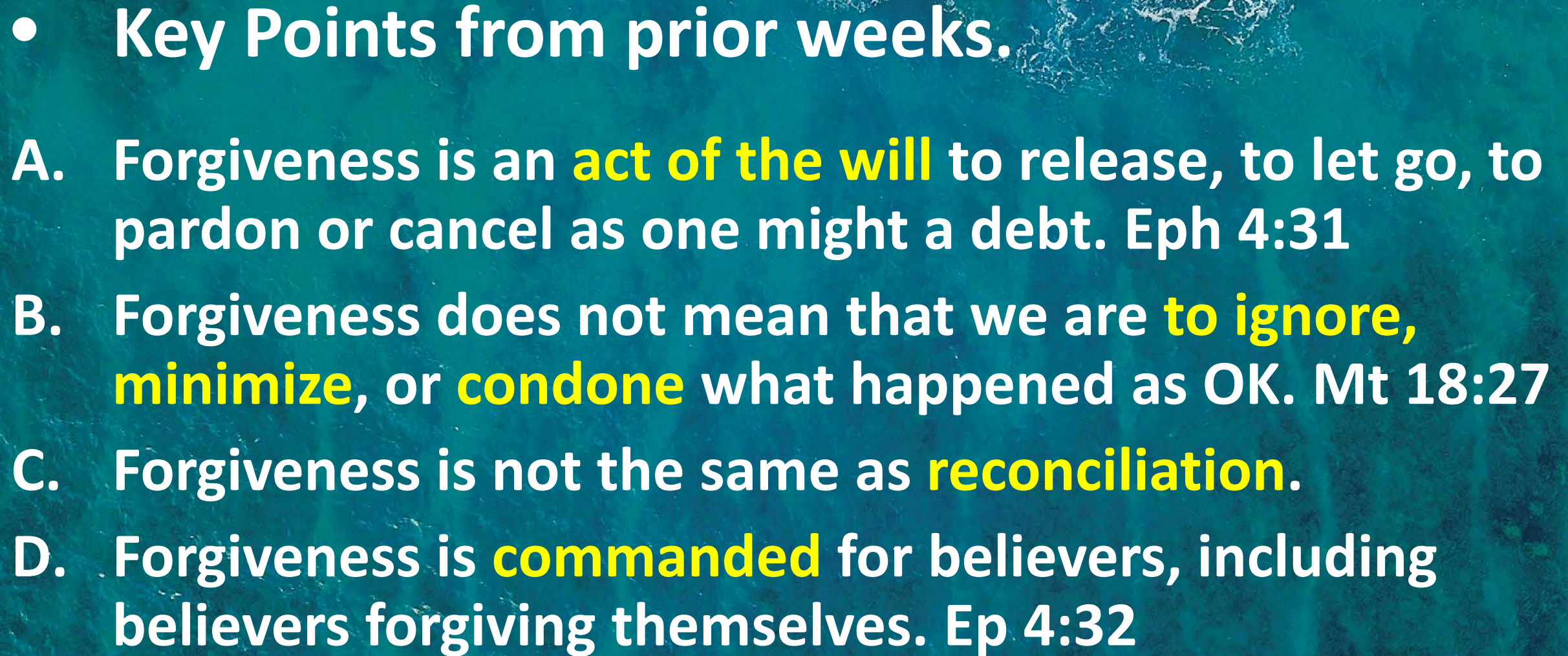




# Forgiveness

How and why it works

*Forgiving God?*  
*Habakkuk 1:1-5*

- 
- **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. We have a limited, one-sided view of suffering.

(Lewis Smedes, "Forgive and Forget")

- Hab. 1:5 "Look among the nations, **and see**; wonder and be astounded. For **I am doing** a work **in your days** that you would **not believe if told**. (ESV)
- Job 2:8-10 Then his wife said to him, "Do you still hold fast your integrity? **Curse God and die.**" 10 But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women would speak. Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil?" **In all this Job did not sin with his lips.** (ESV)



2. Can we observe a divine purpose in pain and suffering?

A. God **does not waste** our pain.

B. Suffering **brings us back** to God.

- Hab 1:6 “I am raising up the Chaldeans...”

- Luke 15:14 “...he began to be in need.”

C. God’s **presence is revealed** in our griefs.

- Ps 22:1, 23:4; 2 Cor 5:19;

D. Suffering **“roots”** our faith. Hab 2:4; 3:17-19



**3. Why does God allow suffering? Does suffering reveal that God does not care?**

**A. We are created in his image; and free will is in his image. Suffering is the fruit of free will.**

**B. To give us the best. (Smedes)**

**C. That we might believe. Heb 11:6-7**

- ..."Lazarus has died, 15 and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe..." (Jn. 11:14-15 ESV)**



## 4. Why should we forgive God?

### A. For **our sake**, not His.

1. I can begin to trust him again.
2. No longer grieve the Holy Spirit.
3. Begin to experience his peace in my life.



## How can I forgive God?/Next Steps

- 1. Identify** your “complaint” against God.
  - Cry out to him about your complaint.
- 2. Acknowledge your limited perspective.**
- 3. Choose to believe that God is still good.**
- 4. Choose to “release him”** from your claim.
- 5. Bless God** in prayer.



## 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

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*“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.”