

## FORGIVENESS

The following day, a local tax collector invited the teacher to his home to dine with other tax collectors. The tax collectors were known to eat and drink in excess, as well as participate in unlawful behavior, such as taking advantage of the poor and uneducated.

As the teacher shared a meal with the tax collectors, He told them stories to illustrate love and forgiveness. When the evening came to an end, many of the tax collectors had acquired great respect and admiration for this new teacher.

The following day, a political leader asked the teacher why He associated with people who indulged in reckless living. The teacher knew the town's inhabitants would judge Him because of His association with such people. He replied to the political leader and said that His purpose was not to serve the healthy, but the sick. He then began to address the crowd . . .

THE TEN TESTAMENTS

I have not come to call the righteous,  
but sinners to repentance.  
Luke 5:32



## TESTAMENT II

### I WILL FORGIVE MY NEIGHBOR

Creating relationships is necessary for a successful life. The relationships I form allow me to function in a world where everyone depends on each other. Relationships are built with love and trust—similar to the way a rosebush thrives with water and sunlight. Nurture and tender loving care must be given to both. When people experience harm to their relationships (anything from a simple misunderstanding to a hurtful verbal attack), it's as if a drought or darkness stunts the growth. As a result, the relationship becomes damaged and the healing power of forgiveness becomes necessary in order to restore the relationship to the point where they can love and trust one another again.

I will practice forgiveness.

I find it difficult to communicate with someone whom I have injured until I apologize and ask for forgiveness. My guilty conscience prompts me to convey my sorrow and remorse to the other person as soon as possible. To postpone an apology may result in ill-feelings and resentment toward each other. I will courageously approach my neighbor and say the words, "I am sorry; please forgive me. I made a mistake, and I promise not to allow it to happen again. What can I do to make it right?" I hope that my neighbor will understand that I value our relationship and will forgive me for my offense.

Forgiveness is a two-way street. The relationship with my neighbor can be saved only if there is a mutual desire to restore the relationship. Both parties must participate in the forgiveness process. My apology and my neighbor's acceptance of the apology must mutually occur in order for the healing power of forgiveness to be effective.

Likewise, if my neighbor offends me and asks for my forgiveness, I will forgive him or her as soon as possible. I will treat my

THE TEN TESTAMENTS

Be merciful,  
just as your Father is merciful.  
Luke 6:36



## FORGIVENESS

neighbor the same way I like to be treated. This is love. This is forgiveness.

I will practice forgiveness.

Occasionally, I must search my heart to see if I have resentful feelings toward anyone. If I have any feelings of anger or revenge, then I probably haven't forgiven a trespass that occurred in the past. Something that my neighbor did or said is still causing me to feel angry or resentful. I must forgive this person as soon as possible in order to restore the healthy and loving attitude God would have me to possess. This act of forgiveness clears my conscience of any regret and restores my inner peace.

Likewise, if I have offended anyone in the past and have not yet asked for forgiveness, I will seek out that individual to ask for forgiveness. There is no need to move forward knowing someone is hurt or angry about something I did or said in the past. He or she is probably waiting for my long-overdue apology.

To commit an offense against my neighbor is also to commit an offense against God. I must ask both my neighbor and my God to forgive me. God gives us all access to Him, and I know He will forgive me when I reach out to Him. God is the source of my strength, and He holds the ultimate power to forgive me when I commit an offense or a wrongdoing. God's forgiveness and healing power give me the strength to find a way to live in harmony with my neighbor. After all, God's forgiveness allows a wrongdoer to be saved, not condemned.

The process of asking God for forgiveness restores my relationship with Him. If I do not ask God for forgiveness, then I'm denying His presence in my life. God loves me so much; He is willing to forgive me. He gives me another chance to discover His grace and divine love. To ask God for forgiveness communicates that I love Him and want to restore His grace in my life. I am saying to God, "I love You. I'm sorry. Please forgive me."

## THE TEN TESTAMENTS

Do not repay anyone evil for evil . . .  
Do not take revenge.  
Romans 12:17, 19

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Forgive,  
and you will be forgiven.  
Luke 6:37



## FORGIVENESS

After God and my neighbor forgive me, then I can forgive myself. When I forgive myself and know that God has restored His grace within me, it becomes easier to move forward with a clear conscience. I can now enjoy a healthy relationship with God, my neighbor, and myself.

I will practice forgiveness.

Forgiveness plays an important role in keeping people happy. When a husband and wife learn to forgive each other, it's easier to enjoy a long and prosperous marriage. A dispute or a quarrel in a marital relationship becomes an opportunity for both parties to forgive each other and learn from their mistakes. When both husband and wife learn to forgive, they develop a better understanding of each other as well as a stronger relationship.

Everyone at one time or another can use the healing power of forgiveness to restore love and trust in a relationship. When I am involved in a relationship where discord exists, I will use the power of forgiveness to mend the relationship as soon as possible.

I will practice forgiveness.