

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF SINFULNESS

God's love is manifested in many ways in the world and in your life: healing, provision for your needs, peace in your heart, answers to your prayers, and so forth. But there are two primary manifestations of his love that God wants you to experience in your life and then to share with those with whom you come into contact. These are *giving* and *forgiving*.

If God had not given, you would not know true love. Love is expressed in giving. And giving is expressed in service. Jesus said that he did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as atonement for sin. The ultimate goal of God's sending his Son is to make you at-one (atonement) with him through the forgiveness of your sins.

So *forgiving* is the other manifestation of God's love for you. Forgiving simply means to give *before*: *-fore give*. Through the death of his Son, Jesus Christ God the Father fore-gave you before you asked for forgiveness.

But it is important and necessary for you to acknowledge your sins and faults to him and to ask for his forgiveness to be applied to you. "If you say that you have no sin, you deceive yourself, and the truth is not in you. If you confess your sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive you your sins and cleanse you from all unrighteousness. If you say that you have not sinned, you make him a liar, and his word is not in you." 1 John 1:8-10 "But if you do sin, you have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; he is the atoning sacrifice for your sins, and not for yours only but also for the sins of the whole world. 1 John 2:1b-2

The other aspect of this prayer is that the Father wants you to forgive others in the same way and with the same attitude as Jesus forgave you. "Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your transgressions." Mark 11:25

Note: you are to *forgive* others, even before or whether they ever ask for forgiveness and even if they never admit any offense against you. Pray that the Father forgives your offenses in the same way as you forgive those who offend you. "If you forgive others their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your transgressions. Matthew 6:14 & 15

Are you, then, to do nothing to the person who offends you? Yes, if possible. 'If your brother or sister sins, you must rebuke the offender. If there is repentance, you must forgive. If the same person sins against you seven times a day, turns back to you seven times and says, 'I repent', you must forgive.'" Luke 17:3 & 4 This is exactly the way Jesus and the Father forgive you, no matter how often you sin, as long as you truly turn back (repent) and ask for forgiveness.

What are some clues as to whether you are forgiving someone or not? Well, the opposite of forgiveness is unforgiveness. Ask the holy Spirit to search your heart for anyone

whom you have not yet forgiven. That person may not even know whether he or she has done anything that needs to be forgiven. Or maybe that person just didn't know what he or she was doing.

By the way, it is extremely important that you forgive yourself when you have done something wrong. If almighty God can forgive your sins and faults, it is the utmost of arrogance to say that you cannot forgive yourself!

What are some other clues that you haven't forgive - yourself or others? One is *hurt* and *anger*. With whom are you angry? Who has hurt you or is hurting you? Your parents, relatives, friends, children, spouse, boss or coworker, someone at church, your Pastor or other spiritual leader, yourself, God? Yes, it is possible to get mad at God. Go ahead and admit it! After all, he already knows. He made you and knows all your weaknesses. That is why he sent Jesus, you know.

Another indication of unforgiveness, and probably the most destructive, is *bitterness* and *hatred*. Are you harboring bitterness or hatred against anyone? Even God? Clue: who is the object of your blame?

Love is manifested in *giving* and *forgiving*. If you abide in giving and forgiving, you abide in God, and he abides in you. Your sins will be forgiven. Quietly forgive each one that the Father brings to mind and give that person or situation over to God.

--Patrick J. Hession