
BIBLE TALK

Welcome to Bible Talk. This week we are discussing this question: **How do you forgive someone after they have committed adultery?**

The Bible teaches that we must forgive people who trespass against us:

Matthew 6:12

¹² And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors.

Matthew 6:14-15

¹⁴ "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

¹⁵ "But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

But forgiveness is to be given only when the guilty party has repented. In other words, if a man is still committing adultery, there is no forgiveness until he stops and repents.

Luke 17:3-4

³ "Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and **if he repents**, forgive him.

⁴ "And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, 'I repent,' you shall forgive him."

Notice the "if" clause. If a man does not repent, there can be no forgiveness. God does not forgive anyone unless they repent (Lk. 13:3). We cannot forgive what God will not forgive. We cannot be more generous than Him.

So ... if a husband repents, he should be forgiven. However, this does not mean the wife must take the husband back. Forgiveness does not mean the innocent wife must now

trust the unfaithful husband. Forgiveness is one thing; trust is another thing – they are not the same thing.

- **"Forgiveness"** is a gift of grace that is undeserved -- unearned.
- **"Trust"** is not a gift. Trust is something that one must earn.

The Bible warns us over and over again not trust in men:

Psalms 146:3

³ Do not put your trust in princes, Nor in a son of man, in whom there is no help.

Men must first prove themselves faithful before they are trusted:

1 Corinthians 4:2

² Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.

A woman marries a man because she trusts him. She dated him and he proved himself trustworthy. He earned her confidence. Now ... when he commits adultery ... he destroyed that trust. He proved he cannot be trusted. He demonstrated that, when tempted enough, he will violate his marriage vows and commit adultery with another woman. He must once again earn the trust of his wife – if he can at all. The wife must forgive if he repents, but this does not mean she is obligated to trust someone who has betrayed her trust.

The innocent spouse has the right to divorce and remarry:

Matthew 19:9

⁹ "And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery."

This privilege of remarrying was given only to the innocent party. The guilty adulterer was given no right to contract another marriage.

One last thing should be noted: If the wife forgives the husband and decides to take him back and live with him, she may not later reconsider her decision and divorce him for his unfaithfulness. When a woman takes back her husband, she, in essence, "renews her vows" to live with him and be faithful to him.

Proverbs 20:25

²⁵ It is a snare for a man to devote rashly something as holy, And afterward to reconsider his vows.

Notice carefully, people may not "*reconsider*" their vows. Once they have been made, men must stick with their vows. So once a wife has recommitted to taking back a wayward husband, she may not, in days ahead, reconsider and divorce him for his past mistakes. However, if the husband commits adultery afresh, the recurrence of this sin may cause the wife to divorce her husband – not because of past sins, but because of current sin.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Well ... thanks for listening to our message this week. We invite you to visit our website www.WillOfTheLord.com. There you may download the notes and the audio file of the message you just listened to.

Call again next week when we consider a new subject on **Bible Talk**.