

No. 68 “Continue . . . Forgiving One Another Freely”

PLEASE NOTE: Speak with warmth and tenderness, keeping in mind that some have been deeply hurt by others who have shown little or no remorse. If you wish, you may use the provided artwork to illustrate the point indicated

WHY DO WE NEED TO FORGIVE OTHERS FREELY? (4 min.)

All of us are imperfect, so we need both to extend and to receive forgiveness (Ec 7:20; Jas 3:2)

Just as Jehovah has freely forgiven us, we “must also do the same” [Read Colossians 3:13]

Forgiving others freely means more than just saying, ‘I forgive you’

It includes forgiving *willingly* and *genuinely* even when we have “a cause for complaint”

Forgiving others freely can be difficult to do, especially when we feel hurt

Let us consider three things that can help us to forgive freely: (1) understanding what forgiveness means and what it does not mean, (2) imitating Jehovah’s forgiveness, and (3) focusing on the benefits of being forgiving

UNDERSTAND WHAT FORGIVENESS MEANS AND WHAT IT DOES NOT MEAN (10 min.)

[See the “Bible Questions Answered” article “What Is Forgiveness?”]

Forgiveness does not mean condoning or minimizing an offense; nor does it mean pretending it never happened

When Jehovah forgives us, he certainly is not condoning or minimizing our sins

Forgiveness does not mean allowing others to take advantage of us (Pr 14:15)

Forgiveness does not mean pardoning an offender when there is no valid basis for doing so

Jehovah does not pardon willful, malicious wrongdoers who show no remorse, and he does not require us to do so

Put simply, forgiveness involves *choosing* to let go of resentment over an offense

When we nurture resentment, we hurt ourselves, not the offender (Ps 37:8; w22.06 10 ¶10)

If an offender seems unrepentant, we can confidently leave the matter in Jehovah’s hands rather than let it embitter us (Ro 12:19-21; w22.06 10 ¶11)

IMITATE JEHOVAH’S FORGIVENESS (10 min.)

Consider how Jehovah forgives:

Jehovah *wants* to forgive whenever possible, even when provoked (Ne 9:17; Ps 86:5)

He does not expect perfection of imperfect people (Ps 103:13, 14)

He forgives us repeatedly; we need his forgiveness each day (Mt 6:12)

He lets go of resentment over past offenses; when he forgives, he forgets (Ps 103:9, 12; c/ 262 ¶9)

Once he has forgiven a sin, he forgets in the sense that he puts the matter behind him and takes no further action against the wrongdoer (Jer 31:34; c/ 265-266 ¶16-17)

How can we imitate Jehovah’s forgiveness?

We can imitate him by not being quick to take offense (Pr 29:22; Ec 7:9)

Often, we can forgive without requiring an apology (1Pe 4:8)

We should be willing to make allowances for the shortcomings of others and to forgive repeatedly if necessary (Mt 18:21, 22)

Once we have forgiven someone, we can forgive and forget by choosing not to bring the matter up in the future (Pr 17:9)

FOCUS ON THE BENEFITS OF BEING FORGIVING (6 min.)

When we forgive, we benefit ourselves and others [Image 1]

We safeguard our physical and emotional health (Pr 14:30; g18.1 10-11)

We promote peaceful relationships with others (Jas 3:18)

We contribute to the peace of the congregation (Eph 4:1-3, 32)

Most important, we protect our precious relationship with Jehovah (Mt 6:14, 15)

May we always make Jehovah rejoice by forgiving others freely!

[Adhere closely to the outlined material, and observe the indicated timing of each section.

Not all cited texts need to be read or commented on. See *Reminders for Those Assigned Public Talks* (S-141)]

TO BE COVERED IN 30 MINUTES

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S-34-E No. 68 9/22