

2025 BIBLE STUDY SERIES
THEME: “HOPE IN THE FACE OF DIFFICULTY”

February 19, 2025

FREEDOM FOUND IN FORGIVENESS:
“Providing Forgiveness in Community”
Matthew 6:14-15 and Galatians 6:1-17

Topics

- Reflection Questions
- Important Emphasis
- Key Terms
- Scripture Reference
- Outline
- Introduction
- Background and Context
- Exploring The Text
- Check For Understanding
- Life Application

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

A. Why is forgiveness crucial for our spiritual well-being?

B. How does forgiving others impact our relationship with God?

IMPORTANT EMPHASIS

Spiritual Community

Why? Why is spiritual community so rare? I suspect it has to do with the requirement of brokenness. We'd much rather be impressively intact than broken... But only broken people share community. Larry Crabb *The safest Place on Earth*

The church is described by a Greek word *Ekklesia*. This is articulated as an assembly, local body of believers, or the visible and invisible church. This is New Testament terminology. The church is described as a family; a godly gathering, affiliates that are attached to Jesus. Lastly we are viewed as Crabb defines as a Spiritual Community.

The church is a community of people on a Journey to God!

I love the church. I do not want to write about the church as a problem, a source of conflict, a place of controversy, but as the Body of Christ for us here and now. Henri Nouwen

I speak of spiritual community as a gathering of people who experience a kind of togetherness that only the holy Spirit makes possible who move in good directions- and want to because the spirit is at work.

Visible Spiritual Community

Community in Eden **Genesis 1:26**

Community in the Early Church **Acts 4:32-33**

Community in the Epistles **Galatians 6 and Matthew 6**

Galatians Community

Martin Luther spoke about Galatians as "My Own epistle to which I have plighted my troth"

Paul is credited as the author of Galatians. The original audience is not complete known but there are theories concerning the place it was written and the location that letter was sent to this community.

Judaizers were Jewish Christians who believed that a number of ceremonial practices of the Old Testament were still binding on the New Testament Church.

- Paul's Apostleship- his calling to apostleship and his Gospel
- Salvation by faith- Justification by Faith
- Legalism versus Freedom- This liberation is not freedom to sin, but freedom to serve one another in love.
- Belief in Circumcision vs Belief in Christ

Bearing one another's burdens Galatians 6

- Assistant- Spiritual
- Action- Restoration
- Allocation- Through Gentleness
- Avoid- Being Tempted

Bearing one another's burdens? What does this Mean? How do we perform such an act? How does **Matthew 11:28-30** affect our understanding of our role in the burden bearing.

Paul gives several emphases here and that is related to our

Our Thinking: **Galatians 6:3**

Our Working: **Galatians 6:4**

Our Sharing: **Galatians 6:6**

Our Sowing: **Galatians 6:8**

Our Reaping: **Galatians 6:9-10**

Sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.

Matthean Community Thematic Thrust:

Matthew 6:14-15

We need to become more aware of how badly we want to know Jesus!

Spiritual togetherness, what I call connecting, creates movement. Togetherness in Christ encourages movement toward Christ.

Cancellation of offense

Consequence of Offense

KEY TERMS

Bear
Burdens
Christ
Circumcision
Corruption
Deceives
Eternal Life
Examine
Flesh
Forgive
Forgiving
Gentleness
God
Good

Household of Faith
One Another
Persecuted
Reap
Restore
Sow
Spiritual
The cross of Christ
The Law
Transgressions
Trespass/Trespases
Uncircumcision
Walk

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE**Matthew 6:14-15 (NASB 1995)**

¹⁴ For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.

Galatians 6:1-17 (NASB 1995)

¹ Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; *each one* looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted.

² Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.

³ For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself.

⁴ But each one must examine his own work, and then he will have *reason for* boasting in regard to himself alone, and not in regard to another.

⁵ For each one will bear his own load.

⁶ The one who is taught the word is to share all good things with the one who teaches *him*.

⁷ Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.

⁸ For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.

⁹ Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary.

¹⁰ So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.

¹¹ See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand.

¹² Those who desire to make a good showing in the flesh try to compel you to be circumcised, simply so that they will not be persecuted for the cross of Christ.

¹³ For those who are circumcised do not even keep the Law themselves, but they desire to have you circumcised so that they may boast in your flesh.

¹⁴ But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

¹⁵ For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.

¹⁶ And those who will walk by this rule, peace and mercy *be* upon them, and upon the Israel of God.

¹⁷ From now on let no one cause trouble for me, for I bear on my body the brand-marks of Jesus.

OUTLINE

- I. **Providing Forgiveness** (Matthew 6:14-15)
 - A. Find Freedom When You Forgive
 - B. Find God's Favor When You Forgive
 - C. Find Abject Failure When You Do Not Forgive
- II. **Forgiveness in Community** (Galatians 6:1-17)
 - A. Brotherhood and Benevolence
 - B. Spirit and Sowing
 - C. Creation and Compassion

INTRODUCTION

To recap on our journey in the **Bible Study Series: "Freedom Found In Forgiveness,"** we first explored what it truly means to be forgiven. We studied about God's Forgiveness in Micah 7:1-20 and Hebrews 8:1-13. Next, we learned about Personal Forgiveness in Psalms 51:1-10. Our final lesson in this series pulls everything together to show us—as Francis Schaeffer asks, "How shall we then live?" We shall live well by "Providing Forgiveness in Community," (Matt 6:14-15; Gal 6:1-17).

Forgiveness and mutual support lie at the heart of Christian discipleship, as vividly portrayed in both Matthew 6:14-15 and Galatians 6:1-17. These passages underscore the essential virtues of mercy, compassion, and communal responsibility. In Matthew, Jesus emphasizes the importance of forgiving others to receive divine forgiveness, highlighting the mutual, shared, and communal nature of grace. Similarly, Paul, in his letter to the Galatians, stresses the significance of bearing one another's burdens, fostering a spirit of humility, and reflecting Christ's love in our interactions. Together, these scriptures offer a profound blueprint for building a faith community grounded in love, empathy, accountability, and the transformative power of forgiveness.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Matthew 6:14-15 is part of the **Sermon on the Mount**, which spans chapters 5 through 7 in the Gospel of Matthew. This sermon contains some of Jesus' most profound teachings on ethics, discipleship, and spirituality. The verses in Matthew chapter 6:14-15, follow immediately after the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13), where Jesus teaches His disciples how to pray. The focus on forgiveness in verses 14-15 underscores a crucial part of the Lord's Prayer: "Forgive us our debts (or trespasses), as we also have forgiven our debtors." The central idea is that God's forgiveness of our sins is tied to our willingness to forgive others. Forgiveness is a fundamental theme in Jesus' teachings, highlighting God's grace and urging believers to extend the same grace to others. These teachings stress the importance of maintaining healthy, forgiving relationships within the community of believers.

Galatians 6:1-17 is the concluding chapter of Paul's letter to the Galatians. This chapter summarizes Paul's call to live out the gospel through humility, mutual support, personal responsibility, and unwavering commitment to Christ. Paul provides practical guidance on living a life in the Spirit. Paul's message in Galatians 6 emphasizes restoration, responsibility, and community. He advises gently restoring those caught in sin and **bearing each other's burdens**, fulfilling Christ's law. Personal accountability is highlighted through self-examination and carrying one's own load. The principle of sowing and reaping is introduced, encouraging actions that please the Spirit for eternal rewards. Paul urges perseverance in doing good and stresses generosity, especially towards fellow believers. He concludes by contrasting boasting in the flesh with boasting in the cross, emphasizing the new creation in Christ.

CHECKING FOR UNDERSTANDING

1. What lies at the heart of Christian discipleship? (Introduction)
2. What does Jesus emphasize in Matthew 6:14-15? (Introduction)
3. What well-known preaching event is Matthew 6:14-15 a part of? (Background/Context)
4. What do Matthew 6:14-15 follow in Matthew Chapter 6? (Background/Context)
5. What message does the apostle Paul emphasize in Galatians 6? (Background/Context)

EXPLORING THE TEXT**I. Providing Forgiveness (Matthew 6:14-15)**

¹⁴ For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.

A. Find Freedom When You Forgive (v. 14)

forgive others for their transgressions. Offenses or faults.

Question – What about the repeat offender who refuses to repent and turn to or back to God?

Yes, we are to forgive those who repeatedly offend us, with the idea that forgiveness is not about condoning the behavior but rather releasing or freeing ourselves from the burden of resentment and bitterness. There is the hope that the offender may change their ways; this is particularly emphasized in the Bible where Jesus instructs to forgive "seventy times seven" (**Matthew 18:21-22**), signifying an unlimited capacity for forgiveness. By this is meant, that when a person asks forgiveness, we are cordially and forever to pardon the offense; we are to declare our willingness to forgive them. Even if they do not ask forgiveness, we are still to treat them kindly; not to harbor malice; not to speak ill of them; to be ready to do them good; and always be prepared to declare them forgiven when they ask for it.

B. Find God's Favor When You Forgive (v. 14)

Your heavenly Father will also forgive you

Showing mercy to others leads to receiving mercy from God. Unlike a king who would never forgive countless betrayals, Christ offers forgiveness to one who is truly repentant, highlighting the importance of accepting salvation on such favorable terms.

forgive their transgressions (Ephesians 4:31-32; Romans 12:17-21)

These passages encourage Christians to get rid of negative behaviors and embrace kindness and forgiveness—not to exchange evil for evil. These verses emphasize the importance of maintaining unity and love within the Christian community.

C. Find Abject [hopeless] Failure When You Do Not Forgive (v. 15)

if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions

Jesus gave a startling warning about forgiveness: “If you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins” (see also **Matthew 6:12**). Living in relationship with God requires constant repentance of the sins that plague us. Because believers must come to God constantly for confession and forgiveness, refusing to forgive others reveals a lack of appreciation for the mercy received from God. All people are on common ground as sinners in need of God's forgiveness. If we don't forgive others, we are in fact denying and rejecting God's forgiveness of us. Later, Jesus told a parable depicting such a situation (**Matthew 18:23-35**).

CHECKING FOR UNDERSTANDING

6. If forgiveness is not about condoning the behavior, then what is it? (v. 14)
7. What does showing mercy to others lead to in our relationship with God? (v. 14)
8. If we do not forgive others, what are we doing? (v. 15)

EXPLORING THE TEXT**II. Forgiveness in Community (Galatians 6:1-17)****A. Brotherhood and Benevolence (Galatians 6:1-6)**

¹Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted. ²Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ. ³For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. ⁴But each one

must examine his own work, and then he will have reason for boasting in regard to himself alone, and not in regard to another. ⁵ For each one will bear his own load. ⁶ The one who is taught the word is to share all good things with the one who teaches him.

Galatians 6:1-6 emphasizes the importance of bearing one another's burdens and fostering a spirit of gentleness and humility within the Christian community. Additionally, there is an emphasis on the importance of spiritual maturity and community support among believers. It advises restoring those caught in sin with gentleness while being cautious of personal temptation. Believers are encouraged to bear each other's burdens, embodying the law of Christ through love and compassion. Humility is highlighted, warning against pride and self-deception. Individuals are urged to examine their actions, taking pride in personal accountability without comparison to others (2 Corinthians 10:12). While sharing burdens, personal responsibility for one's conduct remains crucial. Additionally, it stresses the importance of supporting and showing gratitude to spiritual teachers.

B. Spirit and Sowing (Galatians 6:7-10)

⁷ Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. ⁸ For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. ⁹ Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. ¹⁰ So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.

This text emphasizes the principle of sowing and reaping, suggesting that actions have consequences (**Proverbs 11:18b; Proverbs 22:8a**). It warns against deception and mocking God, highlighting that those who act selfishly will face negative outcomes, while those who act in accordance with spiritual values will gain eternal rewards. It encourages perseverance in doing good, promising that efforts will be rewarded in due time, and stresses the importance of helping others, particularly fellow believers in their household of faith.

C. Creation and Compassion (Galatians 6:11-17)

¹¹ See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand. ¹² Those who desire to make a good showing in the flesh try to compel you to be circumcised, simply so that they will not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. ¹³ For those who are circumcised do not even keep the Law themselves, but they desire to have you circumcised so that they may boast in your flesh. ¹⁴ But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. ¹⁵ For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. ¹⁶ And those who will walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God. ¹⁷ From now on let no one cause trouble for me, for I bear on my body the brand-marks of Jesus.

This passage discusses the author's emphasis on writing personally and criticizes those who promote circumcision to avoid persecution for the cross of Christ. It highlights that true boasting

should only be in the cross of Jesus, as circumcision or uncircumcision holds no value compared to being a new creation. The author calls for peace and mercy on those who follow this principle and mentions bearing the marks of Jesus on their body.

In Galatians 6:17, "bearing the marks of Jesus in the body" refers to the physical scars and sufferings Apostle Paul endured while preaching the Gospel, essentially signifying his deep commitment to Christ and his willingness to endure hardship for the sake of his faith, similar to the concept of a slave bearing the marks of their owner; it's a metaphor for living a life dedicated to Christ, marked by the challenges and trials that come with following him.

Paul concludes his letter by addressing the ***Judaizers***, who were pressuring Galatian believers to be circumcised to avoid persecution for teaching that only the cross of Christ can save. He criticizes their motives, highlighting their desire for pride and recognition rather than true adherence to the law, which they themselves cannot fully keep. Paul contrasts this with his own boasting, which is solely in the cross of Christ, emphasizing that salvation is not about outward rituals like circumcision but about being transformed into new people through faith in Jesus. He stresses that salvation is by grace through faith, urging the Galatians to live by this principle to experience mercy and peace. Paul ends with a call for the Galatians to stand firm against false teachings, reminding them of the scars he bears for the gospel as a testament to his commitment to Christ.

Judaizers were a group of early Jewish Christians who believed that Gentile converts should follow Jewish law. The term comes from the Greek word *Ioudaizein*, which means "to adopt Jewish customs". The issue of Gentile's having to be circumcised was settled at the Council of Jerusalem around 50 CE and is recorded in **Acts 15:2-35**.

CHECKING FOR UNDERSTANDING

9. What important traits does the apostle Paul emphasize for the Christian Community? (6:1-6).
10. Compare the life outcomes of those who act selfishly within the Christian community versus those who act in accordance with spiritual values.

LIFE APPLICATION

Think about it—

- Reflect on areas in your life where you need to practice forgiveness.

- Identify ways you can support and restore others in your community.

RESOURCES

Adult Questions for LESSONMaker, LOGOS Bible Software.

Anchor Bible Dictionary.

Barnes' Notes on the New Testament.

Life Application New Testament Commentary.