

6. OTHER ERRORS CONCERNING FORGIVENESS

1. Forgive and forget?
 - a. The difference between "not remembering" (active, a choice made) and "forgetting" (passive, often beyond one's control).

 - b. Indeed, forgiving is the only sure pathway to forgetting.

2. "Apologizing" — An "apology" is a defense (e.g., 1 Pet. 3:15) — like one offered as a defense made at a court trial. "Apologizing" then is in reality defending oneself against a charge of doing wrong — opposite of what confession of sin and seeking of forgiveness is all about.

When someone asks, "Will you forgive me?," they are *admitting their wrongdoing* — taking responsibility for it — and asking you for a *very specific* (and perhaps costly) *action* on your part — a declarative promise not to hold their offense against them in the future.

When forgiveness is asked, the offended party is under *obligation* to respond actively — to grant the request, or not — in which case he/she becomes an offender.

3. "Forgiving God?" (cf. Gen. 18: 25; Job 1:22)

4. What about forgiving *oneself*?

However unloved and worthless we once felt, and however much self-hate and condemnation we once nursed, we must now see that by loving us enough to redeem us God gave us value, and by forgiving us completely he obligated us to forgive ourselves and made it sin for us not to. (J. I. Packer, "Soldier, Son, Pilgrim: Christian Know Thyself," in *Eternity*, April 1988, p. 33)

Much of this kind of talk is associated with the emphasis upon "self-esteem."

Nowhere in the Bible are we commanded to forgive ourselves — nor is it appropriately extrapolated from the fact that God forgives us.

5. What are we to do when we (or others) are eaten up with guilt or remorse? (Rom. 8:33–34).

6. What about the "unforgivable sin?" (Matt. 12:22–32)

In attributing the works of the Holy Spirit to an Beelzebub, unclean spirit, the Jewish leaders had blasphemed the Holy Spirit — the very epitome of hardness of heart to the truth of God.

The "unpardonable sin" is unpardonable because it is "unrepentable" due to the hardened stubbornness of the heart involved. One who is concerned he/she might have committed it (e.g., due to previous participation in occultic or satanic practices) are not likely to have done so.

What about 1 John 5:16, where John tells us not to pray for the one who has committed a "sin unto death?" John is not saying that the Christian must determine whether a brother has committed a sin that leads to death (see 1 Cor. 11:30) or not before he prays that God will give him life (presumably to raise him from a sickbed). It is proper to pray for his healing at all times; don't trouble yourself to try to find out all the details. Don't try to second-guess God. Just go ahead and pray in all cases.

7. Conclusion